



**Waltham Conservation Commission  
November 18, 2021  
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting took place via public Zoom call with participation information posted at City Hall, Government Center, and on the Commission's page of the City web site. Zoom information was circulated directly to all applicants and others on the public agenda.

Meeting called to order at 7:01PM.

**Attendees:** Chair Philip Moser, Vice Chair Bill Doyle, Michael Donovan, Bradley Baker, Matthew Deveau, Gerard Dufromont

**Absent:** none

**Public Meeting**

**Request for Determination of Applicability**

**Applicant:** Beaver Group LLC

**Property Location:** 117 Beaver Street

**Project Description:** Remove and replace failing retaining wall supporting driveway and utility pole.

John O'Gorman appeared for the applicant. He explained the site conditions and the need for this repair and provided photos and a site plan. The Commission inquired into specific details of the nature of the wetlands at that location, including the exact location of Beaver Brook and the type of vegetation on site. Applicant provided satisfactory responses. [Mr. O'Gorman experienced technical difficulties during this portion of the meeting, resulting in delays while he reconnected. The Commission did not move ahead on items until he was able to respond.] Some trimming will be required for workers to reach the area, but they will attempt to minimize disturbance to what is required to complete the work and for worker safety (the removal of some poison ivy was mentioned). The Commission also determined that disturbance to the area for this work would be less than the potential disturbance if the existing retaining wall fails into the wetland. Regarding encroachment into the wetlands, Mr. O'Gorman believes the proposed block system will result in less encroachment than the current wall. Mr. O'Gorman was willing to provide daily reports to the Commission office as work proceeds, and to notify the office when a start date is known. The preference is to do the work as soon as possible to avoid collapse of the wall.

Mr. Doyle moved to issue a negative determination with the following conditions: (1) applicant will submit daily summary reports with photos – an email with attached cell phone photos will be sufficient; (2) applicant will notify the Commission at least one week in advance of the start of work. Seconded by Mr. Donovan. All present in favor. **Motion passed.**

## **Public Meeting**

### **Request for Determination of Applicability**

**Applicant:** Gregory Regan

**Property Location:** 2 Chesterbrook Road

**Project Description:** Remove and replace 3 hazard trees.

Applicant described the site conditions and the reason for wanting to remove these trees (1 Maple, 2 Spruce). The Commission agreed with the need to remove the Maple and discussed the state, and species identification, of the others. Mr. Moser noted that the Commission does not make hazard assessment, it rather focuses on Wetlands Protection Act requirements in areas under jurisdiction. Mr. Baker noted that replacement species diversity should be a concern, and that in some recent cases applicants misidentified trees before replacement. He recommended a site visit to confirm species before deciding on replacements.

Motion to issue a negative determination by Mr. Doyle, with conditions that (1) these trees be replaced with trees of at least 2" caliper; (2) in a ratio of 2 replacements per 1 removed (species of replacement to be determined only after a site visit); and (3) the stumps of the removed trees will be left in place and not grinded. Seconded by Mr. Deveau. All present in favor. **Motion passed.**

Mr. Regan offered to host a site visit on 11/19 at 9AM. The removal work is currently scheduled for 12/18. Mr. Regan offered to provide the Commission with a quote and description of the trees from a removal service. It was suggested that the species of replacement trees, and their planting, will be determined in the spring.

[Mr. Baker and Mr. Donovan followed up with a site visit on 11/19. The applicant provided the Commission with a removal proposal and quote from a certified arborist to include in the file.]

## **Public Meeting**

### **Request for Certificate of Compliance (DEP File # 316-0740)**

**Applicant:** Alexander Trakimas

**Property Location:** 785 Beaver Street (CHCH).

Mr. Trakimas was present along with Gwen Pjasek, CFO of Chapel Hill Chauncy Hall, and Al Umina, director of facilities at CHCH. Mr. Trakimas summarized the project. Work has been completed, landscaping has been stabilized. Mr. Donovan has visited the site, agrees that it looks great and supports the granting of the certificate. Mr. Donovan motioned to issue a certificate of compliance. Mr. Deveau seconded. All present approved. **Motion passed.**

## **Commission Business**

- Approval of meeting minutes from 11-4-2021. Motion to approve by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. Dufromont. All present in favor. **Minutes approved.**
- Storer Conservation Land Encroachment. No update from Mr. Moser.
- Seeking public input on potential conservation parcels that could be purchased using the expendable portion of the Conservation Trust. Mr. Moser updated the Commission on the parcels suggested by city councilors. These have been identified and reviewed by the city treasurer. Two parcels are in tax arrears and the city is already moving to foreclose. Other parcels are large and beyond the trust fund budget, but might be looked into. At least one is owned by the state, and they have made reduced cost transfers of property to the city in the past.

## **Correspondence**

- 1432 Main Street: Goddard Consulting has submitted a required report on the restoration plantings. Currently approximately 95% vegetative cover and 100% tree/shrub survival (75% required for each). Monitoring to continue for 2 years.
  - Mr. Moser and Mr. Baker have visited the site. The Commission agreed to issue them a letter thanking them for this update and the work so far. The letter will also remind them of the condition regarding invasive control and ask for an update in spring 2022.
- John Pizzi of the City Engineering Department has raised concerns about the property at 187 Lexington Street. It received a COC in April, 2010, DEP 316-0541. Engineering has been asked to issue a certificate of occupancy but they feel the site might not have fulfilled conditions of the OOC from ConCom. He has provided a site report and requests that ConCom review.
  - The Commission discussed the location, recent visits nearby regarding flooding, known site conditions, and the appropriateness of the Commission getting involved, since a COC was issued 11 years ago. The Commission agreed to request additional information from the site owner's representative regarding ongoing maintenance requirements and to stay in contact with the representative and engineering.
- 200 Smith Street. Matt Kuchins of Outdoor Pride (landscaping contractor) requests the Commission's approval to use Muck Pucks, a biological control product, to clear algae from two wetland pools adjacent to Smith Street which have become filled with sludge and cause an unpleasant odor in the neighborhood. He has provided documentation from the manufacturer. Commission office has reached out to MA DEP and Cambridge Water for opinions. DEP has responded (see letter), advises caution.
  - The Commission discussed this inquiry, especially regarding both what they hope to accomplish and what they would be allowed to do. They declined to approve this action at this time, and believe an NOI might be required. They will reconsider after hearing any additional input from DEP and Cambridge Water. Commission office will notify correspondent.
- Leo Garneau of Northeastern Consulting Forestry Services has requested that a site visit be scheduled for 385-AFT Winter Street ("Across from 81 Wyman Street" in DEP 316-0784). This is to review Phase 1 work and approve beginning of Phase 2. They have worked with Mass DOT to identify trees planned for removal in Phase 2 and have submitted details to the Commission.
  - Mr. Moser noted that the approvals to date for this project allow invasive removal in Phase 1, but require an NOI to be filed for any tree removal. Site visit will be deferred while the Commission office communicates with Mr. Garneau regarding the anticipated plans (filing an RDA or NOI, or other action).

## **Old Business**

- None

## **Site Visit Reports**

- Mr. Donovan noted that Prospect Hill Park is now open and that fencing has been removed.
- Mt. Feake trees / phenology (Brad Baker). Mr. Baker has been attempting to document ongoing changes (phenology) at multiple sites. He would like to maintain the photos and site visit reports permanently as a record for the Commission. Discussion.
  - It was agreed that the Commission office can maintain this archive. A Dropbox location will be created. Further action to be determined.

## **Committee Reports**

- **CPC:** Meeting on November 16, 2021. Mr. Doyle reported that the CPC reviewed 2 applications at this meeting. 92 Felton Street (the old city dog pound) was granted \$400,000 for improvements, mostly to make it safer and protect it from deterioration. 56 Chestnut Street was granted \$85,000 for design services. Neither project has known Conservation Commission requirements.

### **New Business**

- Community Engagement / Volunteer contact list. (Brad Baker). Mr. Baker noted a recent volunteer interaction and recommended that the Commission invest effort into creating a database or similar to keep track of all persons who have offered to volunteer on Commission projects. This could be used to quickly reach out when volunteers are needed.  
Mr. Moser agreed that this is a good idea and that once the Commission office has a new hire, this might expand to include a quarterly newsletter or similar.
- Mr. Moser updated the Commission regarding hiring the new Conservation Agent position. A qualified and promising candidate was interviewed and Mr. Moser requested that the city make an offer. No response has been received.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Deveau, seconded by Mr. Doyle. All present in favor. **Motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:11PM.