



Williamsburg Conservation Commission  
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Meeting Minutes  
March 14, 2024  
via Zoom

Commissioners present – Joe Rogers, Andrew MacLachlan, Melinda McCall

Members of the public present – Thomas Hodgkins, Michael Schafer, Stevenson Ramsburgh, Sally Loomis

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

NOI: 92 Ashfield Road, Michael Schafer, Huntley Associates, representative for Carolyn duBois

Mr. Schafer presented plans for the first part of a two-phase plan to stabilize the river bank and protect the bridge abutments which are currently being scoured during heavy river flows and are in danger of collapse. River flow is being pinched upstream by a pile of rocks which deflects river flow toward the bank below the house, increasing erosion along that bank. The first phase of the stabilization plan is to pull the rocks out of the river, widening the channel, slowing flow, and protecting the eastern bank. This phase needs to be done as soon as possible. Ms. DuBois hopes to stabilize the bank and abutments with boulders within a year if finances allow.

- The plan shows an access path from the road to the stream, as well as a temporary storage area for the removed boulders which is located above the flood zone. The bank will be protected by swamp mats. The curves, steepness, and vulnerability of the site require smaller machinery. A small crawler with a hammer attachment that can break up the larger rocks will allow for minimal disturbance. A number of trees will need to be removed, one large one and many hemlock saplings. Because this project is intended to be done in two phases, DEP is allowing restoration work to be delayed.
- Feedback from commissioners was that
  - Extra mats may be needed to protect the steepest bank.
  - Tree protection is needed at the sharp turn.
  - A plan is needed that will allow the second part of the projects to get credit for the improvements in river flow.
  - A more robust planting plan is needed for the riverfront.
  - What will happen if the second phase doesn't happen? How can we guarantee that the site is left in good condition? Could the OOC be left open, worded in such a way that replanting is required but may be delayed until phase 2 is completed or dropped?
- Mr. Schafer agreed to provide the following extra information:
  - An expanded restoration planting plan (about 40 trees and shrubs)
  - Notes about impacts of soil disturbance at the steep embankment
  - Plans for tree protection
  - The volume of the boulders removed from the stream to document flow improvement

- Address that the intent is to do all restoration other than the plantings, which would be held off until September or a time otherwise approved by the Commission.

The hearing was continued until March 28, 2024.

RDA: 5 Valley View Road, Stevenson Ramsburgh, renovation of existing house with expansion

The existing house is derelict but the foundation is good. The existing first floor walls will be fortified, and a second story added. An extension will be added to the back, built on either a crawl space or piers. A silt fence will be placed between the construction zone and the resource area. There is not much grade so run-off is not a concern. Stockpiles of debris need to be contained away from the resource areas.

Most of the trees that were cut in the wetland need to be removed. A request was made to use biodegradable chain oil to reduce pollution. As compensation for the loss of trees, it was suggested the clay cat litter and rubbish that has accumulated on the slope should be removed. A grading excavator be used to scoop up the waste above the wetland then the slope could then be seeded and stabilized. Some native shrubs and forbs will be planted around the site. Mr. Ramsburgh will send his list.

If a plan is made to pave the driveway, an RDA would need to be submitted as a separate project. If gravel is used, no permit is necessary but special consideration should be given to protecting the adjacent wetland.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to issue a Negative 3 finding with the aforementioned conditions.

COC: A Request for a Certificate of Compliance for the NOI for clean-up of hazardous materials at 74 Village Hill was submitted by Thomas Hodgkins, and accompanied by stamped plans and a letter certifying the work done by Eco-Genesis. Commissioners had visited the site and reported that conditions look good and that the site showed stability through the recent heavy rains. One of the special conditions of the Order issued in October, 2022 was that the seeding of disturbed areas show a 70% stability. One more growing season is required to meet that standard. Therefore, Commissioners agreed to issue a partial Certificate of Completion. Mr. Hodgkins is concerned that an on-going order could affect the sale-ability of the property and asked if a promissory note with his personal guarantee would suffice to allow a full COC. Commissioners will check with the town's legal counsel about this possible course of action.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to issue a partial COC for the 74 Village Hill Road clean-up with the exception of the 70% vegetative cover.

Conservation Restriction, 20 South Street, MacLachlan and Caplis.

Sally Loomis requested a letter of support in the form of a Recommended Municipal Certification for the placement of a conservation restriction of 20 acres of open field that lies behind the stream that runs behind the house, to be held by Hilltown Land Trust. The field will be kept open by annual mowing.

A motion was made and approved by JR and MM, with AM abstaining.

Enforcements: Tabled until March 28.

Discussions: Tabled until March 28.

Minutes: Tabled until March 28.

Next Meeting: March 28, 2024.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda McCall

Secretary - Williamsburg Conservation Commission