

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 3, 2021

5:15 P.M.

Meeting Held Via Zoom Conference

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Mr. O'Hazo, Ms. Dupuis

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Conroy

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Ms. Rawson

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Mr. Macdonald

CLERK: Mr. Buell

Others: Ms. Hansen, Mr. Hileman

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:18 P.M. and seated Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Mr. O'Hazo, Ms. Dupuis, and Ms. Rawson (for Mr. Conroy.)

Approval of Minutes February 3, 2021

Motion: To Approve the minutes from the February 3, 2021 Meeting as written by Ms. Frank, seconded by Mr. O'Hazo. Passed 5-0.

New Preston Open Space All Habitat Proposal

Ms. Payne welcomed Ms. Hansen from All Habitat to the meeting, and asked that she elaborate on the proposed treatment plan of the phragmites in the New Preston Open Space, and answer the questions which had been brought forward at the February 3, 2021 Conservation Commission meeting. Ms. Payne went on to ask if All Habitat had any successful herbicide-free treatment plans available to deal with the phragmites.

Ms. Hansen informed the Commission that mowing the phragmites is a regular part of their treatment plan and that All Habitat pairs this treatment with the use of herbicides which help to eliminate the root system which she described as "very intensive" and hard to eliminate without chemicals. She stated to the Commission that in the past All Habitat has attempted herbicide-free treatment of phragmites by preforming frequent mowing but that this has been a costly endeavor which ultimately did not result in the elimination of the infestation. She went on to explain that when herbicides are used to treat the phragmites, the ongoing treatment of

the plants becomes considerably easier to manage after several years, and that in instances where only mowing is employed to deal with the problem, the ongoing infestation does not typically improve and in some instances even gets worse. Ms. Frank asked how All Habitat would mow the phragmites in the pond, and was informed that with the use of special equipment, the phragmites would be cut at water level. Ms. Dupuis asked if All Habitat could dig up the phragmites but was told that All Habitat does not have the means to properly eradicate the phragmites in this manner.

Ms. Rawson asked Ms. Hansen how the phragmites on the neighboring properties would impact the infestation. Ms. Hansen stated that All Habitat's treatment plan would still be effective even with neighboring seed sources, but that this would eventually cause some problems in regard to the phragmites returning.

Ms. Frank asked Ms. Hansen about the timeline of the treatment plan and was informed that in June and July All Habitat would be able to perform their first treatment of the property. She indicated that in late summer, around September, phragmites typically begin seed head development and that All Habitat generally preforms a second treatment at this time. She went on to state that their mowing of phragmites usually is done during the winter months when the plants are dormant, between November and March.

Ms. Rawson indicated that in the proposal which had been given to the Conservation Commission, All Habitat does not clearly state how much herbicide will be used and asked Ms. Hansen to provide some more detail regarding this. Ms. Hansen explained that the herbicide they use to treat phragmites is Imazapyr which is a CT DEEP approved aquatic herbicide. She went on to state that All Habitat limits the use of this herbicide to one pint per acre but that the specific amount that would be used is dependent on the density of the phragmites in the area. She stated that in the first year of treatment more herbicide will be used, and that as the phragmite population shrinks they will be able to begin selective spot treatment which will require the use of less herbicide. Ms. Rawson asked how much herbicide will be listed in the permit process and was told that All Habitat will apply for 1 pint per acre and that since the infestation area is 2.9 acres, 2.9 pints will be listed in the application. Ms. Hansen went on to inform the Commission that the legal limit for this herbicide is 6 pints per acre and that All Habitat has found high success with a much smaller rate of herbicide than the legally allowed 6 pints per acre.

Following Ms. Hansen's presentation, the Commission held brief conversation regarding an article which Ms. Dupuis had forwarded to the rest of the Commission regarding Phragmites.

Ms. Frank informed the Commission that since their last meeting she had done research regarding alternative treatments for the phragmites in the New Preston Open Space. She went on to say that she found sources which suggested cutting phragmites 5-6 inches under the water which, according to these sources, effectively caused the phragmites to drown. She indicated that she had reached out to the Lake Waramaug Task Force who referred her to a

company named New England Aquatic, which had done substantial work to help clean Lake Waramaug. After getting in contact with this company, Ms. Frank described the infestation at the New Preston Open Space and asked if they had ever used this method of dealing with phragmites, but was informed that they had not. She asked if this is something they would be willing to attempt and they provided her with a quote for the work. Ms. Frank proposed to the Commission that they attempt this method of dealing with the phragmites in a specific region of the pond to hopefully eliminate the infestation. She proposed taking photos and designating a specific area to attempt this work to see how this treatment affects the phragmites in comparison to the rest of the area. Ms. Payne suggested that they preform a site consultation with New England Aquatic to see if they are able to do the suggested work.

Sustainability Committee

Ms. Payne stated to the Commission that the Sustainability Committee is moving forward on many projects and that she still wished for members from the Conservation Commission to join the Sustainability Committee. Ms. Frank informed the Commission that 2 new members were appointed to the Sustainability Committee this month.

Ms. Payne went on to state that the Sustainability Committee is looking into the Natural Resource Inventory Report which, as she stated at last month's meeting, requires updated maps. She indicated that Ms. Rawson had shared two maps which she believed to be very helpful and asked Ms. Rawson to elaborate on these maps. Ms. Rawson stated that these maps, which were prepared by the Northwest CT Land Conservancy, depict core forests, which she described as forests with over 250 continuous acres of land, climate resilient areas within Washington, and habitats which contain endangered species.

Revisit Guidance re Solar Panel Placement

Ms. Payne informed the Commission that the Sustainability Committee is still looking into the Solar Panel placement guidelines and suggested that the Conservation Commission reach out to Mr. Furse regarding this.

LID/LOW Impact Development and Tree Regulations

Ms. Payne stated that since the Zoning Commission had come to a decision on section 12.8 that she would like to push to have the tree regulation changes brought to this commission.

Western Ct Clean Air Action Report

Ms. Frank stated to the Commission that the monitors have finally been recalibrated and that she will be picking them up on Friday, 3/5/2021 to be brought to Shepaug Valley High School. She indicated that Mr. Gewanter had been working with Mr. O'Leary who is the Director of Facilities for Region 12 to get the monitors set up at the high school.

Cell Tower Choice of Site in Kent CT

Ms. Payne asked Ms. Dupuis for an update on this project and Ms. Dupuis explained that a location was decided upon but given the that the tower is not in Washington the Conservation Commission should detach itself from any involvement regarding its placement.

Other and/or Old Business

Ms. Payne asked Ms. Frank if she had reached out to anyone regarding her proposal to have native trees planted at the Town of Washington's Community Center. Ms. Frank reported that she had not, but that she would do so before the next Conservation Commission Meeting.

Ms. Payne indicated that she had sent the Conservation Commission an email regarding the proposed legislation which would enable towns to provide more funding for land conservation and stated that this legislation would considered by the State Legislature on Monday, 3/8/2021. Ms. Rawson informed the commission that the CLCC and other groups are seeking public support for this legislation and that section 3 is municipal funding option for Conservation and Climate resiliency. Ms. Rawson went on to state that members of the Commission interested in showing support for this legislation should follow the instructions in the email to do so.

Ms. Payne reported that she still has the informational sign for the New Preston falls in her possession and that with the warmer weather she will be able to get this put in place.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:59 P:M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dennis Buell

Town of Washington

Conservation Commission Clerk

3-10-2021