

Conservation Commission Meeting
Sharon Community Center
October 6, 2016 - DRAFT

Peg Arguimbau, Chair, Stephen Cremer and Keevin Geller were the members present. Jon Wasserman came late 7:55pm. Linda Orel, Alan Westman, and Meredith Avery were not present. The Conservation Administrator, Greg Meister, was also present.

A sign-in sheet is on file in the office listing other attendees of the meeting.

Meeting started at 7:45pm

7:45 PM – Vouchers were passed around for signatures.

8:00PM – Hearing Continuance: Notice of Intent

Eversource, 63 Canton Street, Switching Station

Doug Vigneau, VHB and Denise Bartone, Eversource.

An updated planting plan was passed around to Commission members for review.

Eversource has worked with landscape architect and engineering to try to bring the switching station out of the 50 foot buffer.

- Though they could not move the switching station, they were able to create a ten foot buffer between the switching station and the edge of the wetlands by moving the proposed replication of wetlands towards the right of way, which will then attach to existing wetlands.
- Trees as well as shrubbery will be replanted on the site which will be compatible with the area and the switching station. The maximum height of the trees will be about 10 to 20 feet in height.
- The trees will be interspersed with shrubbery. Conservation seed mix will be used in the triangle area.
- A temporary underground line trench will be put in and back filled with wetland soil.
- There will be a total of 150 square feet of disturbance. The replication of wetlands has not yet been designed.

Arguimbau and Meister were at the site today. They asked that the area be clearly marked, and that the ten foot buffer zone is clearly defined and identified. Bartone informed the Commission that the entire right-of-way would be flagged, beginning in the Town of Walpole and continuing into Sharon.

The concern of the Commission on this project is that Eversource was proposing to clearcut the entire 50 foot buffer zone. The Commission has never before allowed any work within the 50 foot buffer zone, whether for new construction or a limited project. As a public utility, this project falls under “limited project” status. Though the

Commission is allowed to not enforce normal performance standards, this does not mean that the public utility is not exempt.

- Put into orders: Orange construction fence will be used to delineate the work area.
- Show clearly on the planting plan that there will be 10 foot no tree clearing area.

This hearing will close pending receipt of new plans.

Vigneau asked if the Commission would like for him to return to explain plantings and to close out the hearing (same planting plan as already submitted). Commission feels he does not need to come back.

Motion: Close hearing pending receipt of replication plans.
Geller, Wasserman 3-1-0 (Motion Passed)

Orel sent an email to Arguimbau asking her to read into the record the report she wrote-up on her meeting with Fred Turkington, Town Manager. This email and reprot is on file in the office.

Both Arguimbau and Meister spoke about how the Commission should be brought into discussions such as these early on to avoid such situations as this, and that the Commission should never be singled out and mentioned in such an agreement (Host Agreement).

The Commission was very appreciative of Eversource's hard work and bringing back a portion of the 50 foot buffer zone.

8:15pm – Spectra Update. There was no discussion on Spectra.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2016:

- Grammatical corrections

Motion: Approval of meeting minutes as amended.
Cremer, Geller 3-0-1 (Motion Passed)

August 4, 2016:

Motion to accept meeting minutes as submitted
2-0-2 Wasserman, Arguimbau (Motion Passed)

August 18, 2016

Motion: approval of meeting minutes as submitted
Geller, Cremer 4-0-0 (Motion Passed)

September 8, 2016

- Grammatical corrections

Motion: Approval of meeting minutes as amended
Wasserman, Cremer 4-0-0 (Motion Passed)

September 22

Host Community Agreement. At Section #4 of agreement, include the sentence beginning at “The Town agrees....”

Motion: To approve meeting minutes as amended
Cremer, Wasserman 3-0-1 (Motion Passed)

There was a brief discussion of the special Town Meeting warrant.

Cranberry Bogs

Following up on Bottomly’s presentation on Thursday, September 22nd, Meister gave Commission members a brief update.

- The area at the first pond was excavated and dredged, and filled in with silt.
- The pump house has no way to get water
- Bottomly has asked the Commission for permission to bring in an excavator to cut down trees along the perimeter of the woods so that a swale could be created that would allow water to get down to the first bog.

Arguimbau and Meister met with the contractor at the bogs. He believes that he will not need to cut down all the trees, that some of the trees can be saved. He will put ribbons on those trees he believes can be saved.

Brief discussion of farm plan and rights associated with it, and the rights of the Commission and balancing the two.

Meister looks at work currently being done at the bogs as maintenance, not new construction so then exemptions would be applicable. If work being performed were to be considered “new activity”, then there would be no exemptions. After looking at the area, Meister believes that Bottomly’s request seems reasonable. Once the work has been completed, he believes that some of the trees will grow back.

Gavins Pond – Article 97

For review: members have received in their packets a copy of a letter prepared by Town Counsel Lisa Whalen. Meister informed Commission members that no articles will be taken by the Board of Selectman for this Town Meeting. Commission may look into bringing this Article up for the May Town Meeting.

Town Master Plan and Open Space Plan

The Town is putting together a Town Master Plan and is looking for members from various Town Boards and Committees. It is also time to work on the Towns Open Space plan. Arguimbau was planning on volunteering to be the Commissions representative on the Town Master Plan and that perhaps can represent the Commission on the Open Space plan. She believes that much of the same data, similar questions, and demographics cross over between both committees. The Planning Board has received a number of resumes from Town residents wishing to serve on the Town Master Plan. Four members of the Committee will consist of Community–At-Large members. Due to the number of resumes received from interested town residents in helping out, Commission members were asked if they would be interested in having a Community Member represent the Commission. Arguimbau will reach out to the Planning Board Secretary to discuss.

Other Business

Arguimbau informed the Commission that there were a number of “discussion” items on the agenda that needed to be reviewed such as open space, drought related issues, wetland issues, etc... With full agendas this past month, it has been difficult to find the time to discuss. Perhaps at the next meeting (October 20th) schedule hearings for 9pm, and put topics for discussion at 8pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 20th.

Motion to adjourn

Cremer, Wasserman 4-0-0 (Motion Passed)

Meeting adjourned at 10.15pm