

Conservation Commission Meeting
Sharon Community Center
December 19, 2019

Peg Arguimbau, Chair, Keevin Geller, Stephen Cremer, Michael Donatelle and Alan Westman were the members present. Jon Wasserman arrived at 7:50pm. Not Present: Meredith Avery. 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 7:37pm

Update of Cranberry Bogs - *Bob Shelmerdine, Fred Bottomley spoke on the project.*

Bob Shelmerdine spoke recapping how and where they are today.

Shelmerdine explained that the Sharon bogs encompassed approximately 35 acres.

Commercial land totaling approximately 60 acres is behind the bogs. Of those 60 acres, approximately 35 acres will be conveyed to either the Town or the Conservation Commission per written agreement between the developer and the town.

For about ten years the cranberry bogs were harvested by Fred Bottomley. In order to develop the property, the developer needed to work in/near the bogs. Lots of things have transpired over the years, and at this point in time, work has been pretty much completed (with a few things remaining; see below) and the developer is now ready to convey the bogs to the Conservation Commission with some conditions.

- When permission was granted to the developer to put a road through the bogs, the developer was required to replicate the bogs. Work on replication is almost complete. Remaining work to be done includes spreading of sand (which must wait until spring, prior to the planting of vines.) The contractor for the project along with the engineer has been working with Bottomley.
- Compensatory storage area has been worked on and is almost complete. This is part of the commercial development. Meister has asked for as-builts. Shelmerdine informed Commission it will be about two weeks before those plans are completed.

The roadway which was put in runs along the edge of the bogs. The contractor and engineer have been asked if there was anything else on their part which needed to be done.

Shelmerdine explained to Commission members that the roadway runs from South Main Street all the way to the back of the property, per the State roadway layout. Utilities have been installed and will cover Sharon Galleries (commercial component) as well as the 192 rental units (residential component). Sewer lines and a water treatment facility have also been completed; this is also used by the assisted living facility.

Conveyance of Cranberry bogs to the Commission: as per the Memorandum of Understanding, the cranberry bogs are to be conveyed to the Commission in working order. To do so at this time, the bogs must be restored. Shelmerdine explained that his client would like to work with the Commission, noting what remains to be done and associated costs. Shelmerdine believes the cost to restore the bogs to working order will be approximately \$64,000. In addition, Shelmerdine was thinking that the funds could be put into an escrow account along with the deed. Once an understanding between the developer and the Commission is ironed out, the funds would then be available for the town to begin restoration

of the bogs. Regarding the deed, Shelmerdine mentioned there were a couple of trigger points. 1) There is a drop dead date for the town to receive the deed – when the first building permit on the commercial side is pulled. 2) With regards to the MOU (2007), the developer would deed the 35 acres to the Commission; however, a portion of the acreage would need to remain in reserve for the developer in case the developer needs the acreage for remaining development at the site. Developer would not build on this acreage, the land would be held for the developer for calculations purposes if needed. This is outlined in the MOU.

Shelmerdine then briefly discussed history of the project and the level of permits required. One permit required was from Natural Heritage. An endangered species was found on a parcel of land located across the street. Because of this, building restrictions were imposed which Shelmerdine quickly discussed.

At his point, Meister informed Shelmerdine that he thought it would be best for Shelmerdine and Bottomley return for future discussions.

Fred Bottomley then spoke. He noted that he has been working with town now for about twelve years, with respect to the cranberry bogs. He wanted to clarify a couple of statements made by Shelmerdine 1.) Conservation Restriction and easement to come to the Commission. At back side of the rear bogs which abuts the pond, the roadway slopes dramatically. There will need to be an easement for maintenance of the roadway along with maintaining the bogs. 2.) Bottomley is not sure \$64,000 will cover the expense of returning the bogs to working order. His calculations show that the figure would be closer to \$130,000.

Bottomley also explained to Commission, that if the Commission elects to take the bogs prior to the MOU kicking in, fees for his services will go into escrow. He noted that at that point, someone would need to be found to run the bogs. He mentioned that many towns have committees set up to run town owned bogs. He also mentioned that he had a list of 26 items which needed to be completed. 90 percent of the tasks on the list have been completed. There are some things which still needed to be completed, but will need to wait until the spring. At that point Bottomley and Shelmerdine needed to leave. It was requested the Bottomley return and continue his discussion with the Commission at a meeting in January.

Next meeting dates: January 16th and January 30th. Then back to the first and third Thursdays of the month.

January 16 is Meisters official last day. Folks are welcome to stop by the meeting to say their goodbyes and wish Meister well. After the meeting, Commission members may do out and celebrate Meister's service to the town.

This was Donatelle's last meeting. He mentioned that he has someone who may be interested in joining the Commission.

Arguimbua informed Commission that Meister would be available to return as a consultant if needed, until someone has been hired to fill his vacancy.

Discussion: Turf Fields Sharon High School

Debbie Tatro from Sustainable Sharon and Plastic Free Sharon showed a power point presentation on PFAS and the potential impact on wetlands, drinking water, and people. The power point is on file in office and posted on the Sustainable Sharon website:

<https://sustainablesharon.org/>

Discussion after the presentation:

- Commission member Geller expressed concern about voting on something in which we don't have an actual product and facts.
- Tatro countered that PFAS is not regulated and that most likely will not show up on data sheets
- Mesiter believes PFAS is important and should be looked into. Burden of proof lies on the contractor.
 - Discussion is not one of turf vs grass, but rather the safety of a turf field.
- There should be a presentation using natural grass in lieu of turf, examples of programs that work and how
- General concern about PFAS, however nothing has been determined at this time. Need additional info

Arguimbau explained that tonight's presentation was to provide the Commission with information on PFAS. No vote will be taken. Once a filing has been made and all information has been provided, then a vote will be taken. Arguimbau assured audience members that the Commission would not approve anything which they believed to be harmful to the wetlands, drinking water or people.

Motion to adjourn and meet again on January 16th

Cremer, Geller 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm