

**Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 1, 2019
7:30pm Clifford B. Green Building**

Present: Diane Wimmer, Jeannine Noel, Dana Heilemann, **Carolyn Teed-Ives**, and April Lamothe; Recording Secretary

Also Present: Normand Thibeault, Janet Booth, Aaron Kerouac, J. Douglas Hartin, Elaine Arters, and Austin Tanner

- 1) **Call to Order:** Diane Wimmer called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Diane Wimmer welcomed Carolyn Teed-Ives to the Commission.
- 2) **Approval of Previous Minutes:** Jeannine Noel made one correction on the March Report under 4) New Business, c) Sustainability Project so the sentence should read “the Commission discussed topics that have øf already been completed.” Jeannine Noel made a motion to approve the minutes of February and Report of March 2019 with the correction. Dana Heilemann seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.
- 3) **Budget 2018-19 and 2019-20:** Diane Wimmer has not heard anything about the budget yet.
- 4) **New Business:** Diane Wimmer reported that there is a gravel operation, but when Planning & Zoning was going through new permits, they realized the driveway went through a conservation easement that prohibits motorized vehicles in the easements. Jeannine Noel said the driveway can not be moved due to the terrain. Diane Wimmer suggested moving the area in question to another side of the current easement. The Commission reviewed natural resources over the land in question. Discussion ensued.
 - Normand Thibeault Jr. of Killingly Engineering Associates who represents the Applicant who currently has an application for Planning & Zoning Commission. He mentioned that he did receive Wetlands approval for this application. The site in question is actually a quarry, not a gravel operation. Normand Thibeault commented that the easement was placed over the driveway in 1993, when the driveway has been used since the early 1950s. Normand Thibeault said J. Douglas Hartin of H&E Company, LLC, the current operator of the quarry, has used the driveway for seventeen years and there could be a legal ramification of him using the road for so many years. Normand Thibeault suggested that the perimeter woods along the brook would be a better property for the easement. Discussion ensued.
 - Dana Heilemann asked for more information about the quarry. Normand Thibeault said that it is a small operation and they pre-split meaning they drill down, place a small charge, and create a split in the rockface of Connecticut bluestone. Then they pull the rockface down and split it by hand. He said that there are about three trucks a week at a maximum using the driveway.
 - Discussion ensued about wetland soils and resources.
 - Diane Wimmer asked the Commission their thoughts on the swap. Jeannine Noel said that she would like the land near cornfield and Route 169. Dana Heilemann said she would like the easement to go further north to protect the State prime agricultural soil. Diane Wimmer said that she likes the land near Route 169 with a thinner corridor near the cornfield. She does not want to segment the easement. Discussion ensued.

- ◆ Diane Wimmer made a motion to accept a swap as proposed by Planning & Zoning to replace in kind an area that will be removed from the existing easement beginning at a point along Route 169 and going North to the edge of the tree line, then a westerly direction along the edge of the cornfield and parallel to Blackwell Brook in an amount equal or greater than that portion of land removed from the existing Conservation easement, which is 25ft East of the center line of the existing driveway. Carolyn Teed-Ives seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed 4-0.

Jeannine Noel made a motion to move Public Comment to number 5 on the agenda. Dana Heilemann seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.

- 5) **Public Comment:** Janet Booth asked about the procedure in the Town to know where the easements are and who holds the easement. Diane Wimmer replied that the Town owns this particular easement. Janet Booth asked how this easement was not known. Diane Wimmer explained that there has been a quarry there since the 1950s and then there was a subdivision took place in 1993 and the quarry kept on working. This issue came to light when they had to get their permit. Janet Booth said that the easement looks intentional, like someone had an intention there to keep the quarry from happening. She said that the Conservation Commission is negating the original intentions of the easement. Diane Wimmer replied that conservation easements with a subdivision is a percentage of land put aside to keep it in its natural form. The easement was not to stop anyone from building; there was a large lot which was split so land was set aside. Janet Booth asked about the outcropping. Diane Wimmer said that there was certain square footage of the land that was set aside and is not sure why it was choose, but with tonight's decision, the square footage of the outcropping is going along Route 169, protecting that land. Diane Wimmer said that currently there is no overlay of other conservation easements/lands, which NECCOG will be working on. She also mentioned that not all the conservation easements belong to the Town, many belong to the owner, but there are deed restrictions placed on the property. Elaine Arters said that would be nice to think that it was done for that reason, but sometimes people obtain easements in order to reduce taxes. Normand Thibeault said that the configuration of the easement might have been a way to have the 3.3 acre easement and still be to develop all of the lots. Diane Wimmer explained how subdivisions are created.
- 6) **Subdivision Review:** None
- 7) **Quorum:** There is a quorum present.
- 8) **Sustainability Project:** Diane Wimmer said that Colleen would be needed in order to move forward.
- 9) **Other:**
 - a) **Earth Day:** Diane Wimmer stated that the Town is holding Earth Day on April 13, 2019 and there will be a shred truck available to the public at the Community Center, but the public is limited to two boxes of paper each.
 - b) **Plants:** Diane Wimmer and Jeannine Noel went to a wild flower and pollinator workshop, where they suggested planting native flowers. Discussion ensued about plants. The Vermont Wildflower Farm has seed mixes for \$19.55 for a quarter pound bag. Dana Heilemann made a motion to get flowers from Vermont Wildflower Farm up to \$100.00. Jeannine Noel seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.

10) Old Business: Jeannine Noel was in touch with Michael Oatley and the members will get together at Willimantic Brewery one Sunday. Jeannine Noel also mentioned that Michael Oatley said that the signs at the disc golf need to be replaced.

- Diane Wimmer has not heard back from Doug Gagnon; she will try one more time to get ahold of him.

11) Adjournment: Jeannine Noel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:27pm. Dana Heilemann seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.

Sincerely Submitted,
April Lamothe
Recording Secretary