

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING JULY 19, 2023 MINUTES

Present: Bill Llewelyn (phone), Charlie Blanker, Robin Conley, Tori Luksha, Sarah Kerns

Absent: Mike Barry

Guests: Mallory Sullivan, Bill & Jill Crooker

Charlie opened the discussion at 7:09 pm.

The hearing of the **Public Safety Complex Notice of Intent (NOI)** should be closed pending official notice from Town Administrator.

We discussed the **Cease & Desist Order** at 15 Millers Falls Road issued by ConsCom. The property owner has so far not allowed a site visit. Tori and others spoke with Mark Stinson, EPA director for Western Mass. He suggested that the enforcement letter be amended to a restoration and that the property owner hire a wetlands specialist. ConsCom needs to mail a certified letter to the property owner to such effect. There is a 60-day appeal period for her response. The disturbed land appears to be reseeded. Tori called FirstLight and inquired about the corrugated metal piping which the landowner said was from FirstLight. The spokesperson for FirstLight said it was not from their land. The property owner has not contacted ConsCom since last meeting, but ConsCom will continue to encourage her to attend an upcoming meeting.

Mallory Sullivan is **submitting a Lands Grant Program application** to the Mass Dept of Energy and Environmental Affairs for 53 acres in the Mill Brook wetlands adjacent to the property Northfield owns. Maps were presented. The land grant is a top priority for the Open Space Committee, and the land will fall under ConsCom's jurisdiction. This program does not require that Northfield purchase the property. The grant will reimburse up to 56% of costs incurred for surveying, purchase, legal fees, and other associated costs. Mallory informed us of other grants specifically designed for trails creation and maintenance. Robin voiced her concerns about the extent of the invasive plants in this area, and Mallory stated other grants can address restoration. Charlie clarified the proposal before us as requiring ConsCom's approval of the grant application, but purchase of the land and associated costs require town approval at Annual Town Meeting.

Bill and Jill Crooker of 181 Old Bernardston Road informed ConsCom of **stormwater runoff issues** that occur on their property since the adjacent land of a proposed gravel pit was altered. Jill shared photographs of the runoff after a rain event at a ZBA hearing regarding the proposed gravel pit, but the photos were considered insufficient evidence of the source. The Crookers followed up with an engineering study in February 2022, and a well-documented report was submitted. There has been another rain event that affected their property. Charlie recommended that the Crookers meet with ZBA regarding this issue, stating that storm water runoff is in violation of the ZBA Order of Conditions. ConsCom will be involved since the trails on King Philip's Hill, which is under the jurisdiction of ConsCom, are also affected.

Tori will attend the upcoming **Open Meeting Law workshop**. Bill informed us that **David Cameron, Wetlands Scientist**, has completed his work for ConsCom, but we need to renew his contract in December 2023. Sarah showed us the new IT devices.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.