

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

July 11, 2020

PRESENT: Bob Boynton, Chairman, David McTigue, Chairman, Matt Oliveira, Michael Bara, Karen Miller, Jack Messe, Kleta Dudley (SoRLAC Rep), Lori Rautiola, Secretary

ABSENT: Matt Oliveira

The meeting was called to order at the Town Office at 7:30 p.m

Committee Reports:

David made a motion to approve the March 11, 2020 minutes, the April 8, 2020 minutes, the May 13, 2020 minutes and the June 10, 2020 minutes. Karen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business: Bob reported an email was received from Sharon Rosenfelder with concerns regarding the Dam Site 35 Conservation area. The email noted motorized vehicles bypass the gate from the parking lot on Binney Hill Road. Mrs. Rosenfelder requested the Town put some additional barriers beside the gate to discourage access. She also requested some signage for no motorized vehicles and no campfires. Members agreed some signs would be helpful as well as adding a chain linked fence so cars cannot fit through. Bob thought \$1,000 would be sufficient to cover the cost of signage and the fencing. Karen made a motion to approve \$1,000 to be spend on the project. David seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Old Business: Members discussed the wetland violation on Poor Farm Road. The building permit process was also discussed. There was discussion on the types of permits that are required before a building permit is approved, such as the driveway permit or an intent to cut wood, these applications are not in the purview of the Building Inspector. Lori noted the Commission will be able to discuss and share their thoughts at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on July 28th. Adding this would be a good time to take part in making some necessary changes to the building permit application and driveway permit applications; as well as changing the process of the driveway permits and intents to cut to allow the Commission a chance to review these applications before the work commences in order to prevent violations before they happen.

Lori gave an update on the status of the Poor Farm Road property explaining the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer visited the site on July 8th and the applicant has had the wetlands delineated by a wetland scientist and decided to relocate the garage so it is not within the wetland buffer. The applicant has complied with all orders from the Building Inspector and was given the ok to start with the construction of the garage in the new location.

The discussion reverted back to the building permit process. Jack mentioned having a cover sheet or checklist for building and driveway permits. Lori noted there is a checklist for the building permits but it should be updated with information that is pertinent to the wetlands/streams etc. It is the Commission's job to educate the residents on wetlands and our natural resources. Karen stated it is a work in progress, residents need a standard or a policy to follow and if the town cannot provide them with one we cannot educate them. Bob stated this has been a work in progress for the last thirty years and unfortunately has not seen much progress.

Bob stated the Commission does not have the tools to keep up with the land violations that happen on what seems like a regular basis. He continued stating, the tax maps are inaccurate and do not work well with the GIS layers due to the discrepancies, adding, it is the Commission's job to protect the natural resources. CAI Technologies had recently given the town a quote of \$45,000 a year for three years for updating the tax maps, to include geo-referencing and shaping the parcels into the correct shape and size. Bob stated it is a big job and is very costly but in the end the town would have accurate tax maps.

Bob asked members for their opinion on using some of the Conservation funds to assist with the cost of updating the tax maps, possibly up to half the cost each year which would be roughly \$22,000. Karen stated it is a great idea that would start to resolve some of the impacts to the wetlands and natural resources adding, it seems like a valuable tool that would tie in with updating the permitting process. Lori mentioned Iworq (new building permit software) has a "map tab" that allows GIS layers (wetlands, streams, slopes etc.) and would be extremely helpful when the Building Inspector is reviewing permits. Bob reported he spoke with someone at Iworq about adding the layers and it would be an additional cost to what the town is now paying. Lori noted it may be worth the Commission paying for the upgrade in software. Bob stated it would benefit every department to upgrade the tax maps. Karen agreed stating it would be money well spent.

Kleta suggested to put an article in the newspaper so people are aware of the issues and residents can see the Commission's point of view. Bob stated it would be a good idea for the Board of Assessors to go before the Select board with a petition article for the next three years in order to update the tax maps. Bob noted he will contact Jeanne and Jim to gain their perspectives.

Karen mentioned CAI doing a demonstration for the Selectmen and other Boards so they could see the benefit of having the maps updated. Bob responded they have done a demo in the past, but it would be a good idea to have another one after the meeting on July 28th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rautiola