

Carlisle Conservation Commission
October 10, 2013

Pursuant to the notice filed with the Town Clerk, Chair Kelly Guarino called the meeting to order in the Clark Room at the Town Hall at 7:35 p.m. Commissioners Tom Brown, Tom Brownrigg, Peter Burn and Lee Tatistcheff and Conservation Administrator Sylvia Willard were also present. Vice Chair Luke Ascolillo was not present.

General Agenda Items & New/Pending or Old Business:

Plan Change Requests:

(DEP #125-0932) 400 Concord Street: Willard reported conducting a recent site inspection of the siltation barrier for the construction of a new garage. At that time, the property owner requested permission to remove a large oak that is leaning toward the location of the future structure and is located on a steep slope leading down to the Bordering Vegetated Wetlands. She said he had agreed to leave the lower four feet of the tree in place at Willard's recommendation rather than pulling the stump in order to maintain the soil and prevent erosion if permission to remove the tree is granted. *Tatistcheff moved to accept the requested Plan Change to allow the tree removal as described, Burn seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

(DEP #125-683) 59 Maple Street: Guarino recused herself as an abutter to the project. Burn assumed the role of Chair in Vice Chair Ascolillo's absence. Willard said this project was fairly complicated by the fact that three different plans have been submitted: the present plan, a previous plan showing a different location for the proposed well and a plan that has been submitted to the BOH. She reported conducting a recent site visit to inspect the haybale/siltation barrier prior to the installation of a new well. At that time, the property owner said they would like to preserve the large tree that is just outside of the haybale siltation barrier and asked Willard what would be required to relocate the well in order to accomplish this. Willard suggested they submit a Plan Change Request in order for the Commission to make a determination. She suggested the Commission include a requirement that double haybales be installed at the requested new location if the change is allowed. *Tatistcheff moved to accept the Plan Change Request as described, with the requirement that double haybales be installed in the near proximity to the new location of the well, Brown seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

(DEP #125-0931): 393 South Street: Willard presented the property owner's request to decommission the existing well in accordance with appropriate well decommissioning regulations. The new, replacement well will be outside of the Commission's jurisdiction. *Brown moved to accept the Plan Change Request to decommission the existing well, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

7:45 p.m. Land Use Permits

Cub Scout Pack 135, Annual Foss Farm Rocket Launch Event: Four members of Cub Scout Pack 135 were present to describe the upcoming rocket launch event at Foss Farm. The scouts did an excellent job describing the event, how it is organized, how the rockets work, the launching process, and addressing questions relative to safety measures and other practical matters including the all important post-event clean-up process in order to protect future feed for cows. Scout leaders estimate up to 30 cub scouts will attend the event.

Tatistcheff moved to issue a Land Use Permit to Cub Scout Pack 135 for a Rocket Launch Event on November 2, 2013 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (rain date November 9, 2013) Burn seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Carlisle Conservation Foundation (CCF), Annual Permit for Public Nature Walks: CCF Board Member Alan Ankers was present to request an annual Land Use Permit to allow CCF to conduct public nature walks on town Conservation Lands. Ankers had submitted a summary of the natural history walks conducted under the previous year's Land Use Permit, including bird, dragonfly, butterfly, wildflower, lichen and mushroom identification walks, among many others. He encouraged members of the Commission to consider leading future nature walks, noting that Tom Brownrigg and his wife D'Ann have lead bird walks at various times throughout the years. Ankers was open to the Commission's suggestion of incorporating an invasive plant identification walk into this year's schedule. *Burn moved to issue a Land Use Permit to the Carlisle Conservation Foundation for ongoing public nature walks, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

Tree Removal Workshop: The Commission thanked Willard for her time and effort in coordinating the recent tree removal workshop as part of the monthly Conservation Coffee meetings she hosts for residents. She had proposed the topic due to the increase in inquiries from homeowners relative to tree removal requirements. She said the workshop was fairly well attended and resulted in several follow up site visit requests and potentially several filings. Guarino suggested the Commission might consider conducting a similar workshop in the evening at some point in the future in order to make it accessible to more residents.

CCHS, Rivers and Revolutions Educational Instruction, Carlisle Cranberry Bog: *Brown moved to issue a Land Use Permit to Concord Carlisle High School to allow students enrolled in the Rivers and Revolutions Educational Program to observe the Cranberry Harvest on the afternoon of October 18, 2013, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor.* Guarino suggested the group may want to incorporate a segment of the program to learn about the stream gage monitoring station installed at the bog. Willard agreed to send the teacher the link to the statewide River Instream Flow Stewards (RIFLS) program

8:05 p.m. (DEP #125-0947) Notice of Intent, Continued Hearing

Applicant: October Development, LLC

Project Location: 128 Log Hill Road

Project Description: Upgrade existing soil absorption system and associated grading and removal of an existing tennis court within the 100-foot Buffer Zone

Guarino opened the continued hearing under the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Carlisle Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Mark Piermarini of Whitman & Bingham Associates and Robert Morrison of October Development were present to discuss the recently submitted Plan that had been revised based on comments from the BOH, including the recommendation that they look at alternative systems due to the close proximity of the system to the wetland. The revised Plan now incorporates an alternative Presby system, which is smaller in size and locates the system at 77 feet from the wetlands at its closest point. Piermarini said the property owners have decided to leave the existing tennis court in place rather than removing it as submitted on the original plan. He also said they would make it clear to potential buyers that any modification to the tennis court will require approval from the Commission.

Brown moved to close the hearing for DEP #125-0947, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Brown moved to issue a Standard Order of Conditions, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Plan Change Request: (DEP #125-0943) 155 Woodridge Road: Property owner Megan Wells was present to request permission to relocate the propane tank under the open OOC's for a garage construction project. Wells said they are proposing the change in location in order to avoid the costs associated with trenching the fuel line under the existing driveway. The proposed new location of the propane tank is within a previously disturbed area within the Buffer Zone. *Tatistcheff moved to approve the Plan Change Request as described for DEP #125-0943, Brown seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

8:30 p.m. (DEP #125-0940) Notice of Intent, Continued Hearing

Applicant: Luciano Manganella

Project Location: Elliott Farms – 291 River Road

Project Description: To address the requirements of an Enforcement Order for work undertaken in the jurisdiction of the Carlisle Conservation Commission

Guarino opened the continued hearing under the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Carlisle Wetlands Protection Bylaw. The hearing was continued to October 24, 2013 at 8:15 p.m. at the applicant's request.

Plan Change Request: (DEP #125-0945) Justin Neal, 80 Captain Wilson Lane: Contractor Doug Carlson was present to discuss the Plan Change Request to allow them to shift the previously approved location of the house approximately 20 feet to the east after hitting ledge in the originally proposed location. Carlson said the retaining walls along the back of the house will shift as well, but the grading associated with the project will not change. The new location will put the house approximately 38 feet from the wetland at its closest point. Carlson confirmed that construction fencing had been installed at the edge of the Buffer Zone as discussed at the close of the public hearing. *Brown moved to accept the Plan Change Request for DEP #125-0945 as described, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

Coyote Rock Trail Update: Trails Committee member, Warren Spence, was present to continue the discussion relative to the proposed Coyote Rock Trail in the Town Forest. At the previous meeting, LSC co-chair, Debbie Geltner, had suggested that it may be beneficial for LSC to conduct a wildlife habitat study in order to better understand what the habitat is serving before making a final decision on the proposed trail. She noted that the issue was discussed at the previous LSC meeting, but the discussion was limited by the fact that they do not have a standard protocol in place for reviewing these types of proposals. She suggested that, in this case, possibly delaying the project in order to allow for observing wildlife occurrences in spring and early summer may be appropriate. Geltner acknowledged that, although they don't have the budget to fund an in-depth wildlife habitat study, she suggested they could start with NHESP to determine why the area is designated as Core Habitat and then work to recruit volunteers with appropriate expertise in habitat assessment.

Brownrigg said he had attended the recent LSC meeting and recalled the motion was to request that they be allowed to study the area for a year, and if they find anything of significance that could be impacted by the trail, they could consider rerouting the trail. He noted that the area in question is one of the few parts of the Town Forest that is not a pine monoculture with a nice variety of hardwood species.

Tatistcheff asked if the Trails Committee had a policy in place for reviewing new trail proposals. Trails Committee member, Louise Hara, said the committee typically flags an area proposed for a new trail for up to two years in advance and walk it seasonally to ensure it will not infringe on wetlands or damage habitat. She said it is not uncommon for them to re-route a trail several times before the final layout is determined.

Burn, who is a biologist, said that one of the things you think about when you study habitat is edge effects, in that certain species don't occur because they don't like any disturbance. He said he did not see any rush in making a decision on the proposal and concurred with the suggestion that it be deferred until late summer to allow for a habitat assessment. He agreed to serve as the Commission's contact person for the habitat evaluation in conjunction with LSC and the Trails Committee

Tatistcheff moved to confirm that the Commission supports the proposal for the Coyote Rock Trail, and after receiving feedback from LSC and the Trails Committee, they recommend that the Trails Committee follow their standard procedures for trail construction while LSC conducts a habitat evaluation, reporting their findings by August 15, 2014. Burn seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

8:45 p.m. (DEP #125-0948) Notice of Intent

Applicant: Louise Hara

Project Location: 739 Concord Street

Project Description: Tree removal, invasive plant removal, and culvert cleaning with work within the 100-foot Buffer Zone and the outer 100-foot Riverfront Area

Guarino opened the continued hearing under the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Carlisle Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Property owner Louise Hara presented a plot plan and photographs illustrating the proposed work. She said is requesting permission to remove the approximately 30 trees that present a safety risk to her house and barn. The proposal was done in consultation with a certified arborist, with many of the trees proposed for removal being 60 ft ashes that are diseased or dead and are located within 20-30 feet of the structures. The larger trees proposed for removal are to be cut with the use of a crane staged in the driveway, with the removal of limbs and debris to be managed in the driveway and with most stumps left cut at ground level. Where possible, trees will be pruned and monitored to determine if complete removal will ultimately be required.

Guarino noted that some of the components of the Plan are exempt from filing as they are considered maintenance. *Brown moved to close the hearing for DEP #125-0948, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Brown moved to issue a Standard Order of Conditions as described in the Plan for tree removal and limb pruning, and with the Continuing Condition allowing the manual removal of invasive plants within jurisdictional areas.*

9:05 p.m. Interview with Annmarie Tenn - Applicant for the open Position on the Conservation

Commission: Attorney Annmarie Tenn was present to discuss her interest in filling the open seat on the Commission. She said she and her husband had relocated to Carlisle from downtown Boston a few months ago following the birth of their son. They were attracted to Carlisle for "the many intangibles" it offers, including its strong sense of community, pride in its historic roots, and its commitment to preserving and celebrating its natural resources and environment. She said she and her husband are both very community minded and wanted to make a contribution to the community to the extent possible.

On a professional level, Tenn said she believed her legal experience handling a wide range of matters, including legal claims involving municipalities and local regulatory agencies will enable her to make a strong contribution to the Commission.

After a brief question and answer session, the Commission unanimously welcomed Tenn as their newest member. *Tatistcheff moved to recommend that the Board of Selectmen appoint Annmarie Tenn to the Conservation Commission, Brown seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

Agricultural Field Edge Clearing: Guarino opened the discussing by stating that one of the Commission's initiatives this year has been to get a better handle on managing field edges. Toward that goal, they had requested and were allowed additional funding in their FY14 Maintenance budget line.

Willard noted that a portion of this year's extra Maintenance budget has been used to fund the wetlands delineation done on Towle Field in preparation for the Notice of Intent being prepared to address invasive plant management. She noted that the Commission had also encumbered funds from the FY13 budget for the purpose of field edge clearing on some of the agricultural fields under their care and custody. Agricultural field mower, Jack O'Connor, had assisted the Commission in lining up Cook Company of Upton, a company that specialized in land clearing/reclamation, to do some field edge clearing at Foss Farm last year. She said she is now in the process of looking at some of the other agricultural fields in town in order to prioritize those that will benefit most from edge clearing work this year. Willard said she had conducted a recent review of the fields that are under agricultural agreements with local farmers and is now recommending the Commission consider Greenough, Fox Hill and the Bisbee Fields based on her observations.

Fox Hill Agricultural Agreement holder Dick Shohet, who was present for the discussion, said the DPW has done a good job maintaining the Stearns Street side of Fox Hill, but he said the western portion of East Field is overgrown with invasives. Willard concurred with Shohet, noting that she had observed that invasives are densely intermixed along the edges of the field from 5' to 20' or more in depth. O'Connor noted that the area would need to be maintained following the mechanical field edge clearing, including plowing up the roots after they have broken down and then reseeding, a process he estimated would likely take 4 to 5 years.

Guarino said the Commission knows they will need to have a better plan for what to do once the field edges have been reclaimed in order to maintain them. Tatistcheff noted the Commission has discussed in the past making field edge maintenance a more explicit part of their Agricultural Agreements. Guarino said at some point in the process it would be helpful to identify someone who has some expertise in replanting. Shohet suggested the Commission might consult with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and/or the UMASS Extension Service.

Based on the recommendations contained in Willard's report on the current state of agricultural field edges, the Commission determined they will address pursuing field edge work at Greenough, the western portion of the East Field at Fox Hill and the back side of the Bisbee fields. They requested that Willard contact Cook Company in order to determine whether other equipment may be appropriate for certain locations and to obtain cost estimates for the clearing work.

MACC Fall Conference: A signup sheet was circulated for the annual MACC Fall Conference to be held on Saturday, November 16, 2013 at Clark University, Worcester, MA.

338 Bedford Road – Goff Property Update: Guarino reported having represented the Commission at a recent meeting convened by the Housing Authority to discuss preliminary plans for the property. Guarino said the “charette” planning exercise was attended by representatives from various town boards and committees including the Housing Trust, the Planning Board, RecCom, and the Council on Aging. The group conducted a site walk prior to meeting for discussions. Guarino said her primary concerns were to look at potential activity proposed within the Buffer Zone and to advocate for trail connections.

Benfield Conservation Land Septic Area Clearing:

Guarino raised the ongoing issue of maintaining the back field on the Benfield Conservation Land. The Commission has been under the impression since the permitting process for the Benfield Farms Affordable Housing project that NOAH would be returning the area to its previous condition once the septic system had been installed. The Commission recalled there had also been an agreement at that time that NOAH’s site contractor, Dellbrook, would clear the area of invasives back to the stone wall. To the contrary, in recent conversations with NOAH and other Benfield Housing representatives, it appears that there had been no allocation of funds set aside to cover the cost of the clearing work. Guarino said the issue is complicated somewhat by the fact that there is a complicated lineup of parties involved in the housing project in terms of different entities responsible for different parts of the field.

Willard recalled that when the septic testing was done on Benfield, large stones were dug up during the process that prohibited mowing of the area. Since that time the area has grown up with invasives, saplings and brush. It was assumed that at that when the septic field was installed, they would also clear the invasives back to the stone wall. Then the area could be smoothed over and planted.

There is also the issue of ongoing future maintenance of the field, which Brown had made numerous attempts to address with the Housing Authority but was not able to get a response. Willard also raised the issue relative to the fact that the type of septic system that was installed differed from what had been originally proposed due to a requirement from the DEP. Because the Commission was not notified, they were unaware of the extent of the change until recently and of the additional likely restrictions on potential uses of the field due to the shallow depth of the system components.

Guarino agreed to discuss these issues with the BOS and with Town Counsel and will report her findings at the next meeting.

10:20 p.m. *Burn moved to adjourn, Tatistcheff seconded the motion and all voted in favor.*

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Hopkins
Administrative Assistant