

Town of Carlisle
Conservation Restriction Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting of May 18, 2021

In attendance: Members Nancy Cowan (Chair), Madeleine Blake, Tom Brownrigg, Ken Harte, Marc Lamere, and Rick Ochse. Sylvia Willard, Conservation Commission Administrator, also attended. The meeting was held via Zoom teleconference due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with all participants at home. Chair Nancy Cowan called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Old Business:

1. Minutes of February 23 meeting

The Committee reviewed the minutes of March 23, 2021. On a motion by Marc, seconded by Nancy, the minutes were approved as amended.

2. CR#27, Hartwell Rd.

Marc has not put in stakes to mark the trail easement. He will contact Ken (who has the stakes) after he returns from vacation on June 9.

2. CR#29 - Mill Pond Lane

The monitoring report was approved with amendments. No violations were observed during the inspection. Tom will send the report to the property owners.

New Business:

1. CR#4 (Cranberry Hill) and CR#13 (Fisk Meadow) - Review monitoring reports

It rained April 25 and most members thought that two scheduled site visits (CR#4 and CR#13) should be postponed. However, Nancy decided to conduct the CR#4 inspection alone, and Tom joined Nancy earlier for the CR#13 inspection. Nancy wrote the monitoring reports for both CRs.

After discussion, the CR#4 report was accepted with no amendments and the CR#13 report was accepted with corrections to the inspection map. No violations were noted on either CR, and Nancy will send reports to the property owners.

2. Greenough Dam repair - Community Preservation Act funding request

The Conservation Commission has requested \$750,000 from Community Preservation Act funds to repair and upgrade a failing spillway at Greenough Dam. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) voted to bring the request to Town Meeting for vote on June 6.

Sylvia asked CRAC to consider supporting the Greenough Dam repair. She said that Greenough Pond is partially on CR#30, held by the Town as Grantee. She noted that the dam preserves the habitat for two state-listed rare species, a plant and a turtle. It also supports habitat for 25-30 wood duck nest boxes, monitored by Mass Wildlife personnel. She said that the dam also prevents pollutants present in the Concord River from flowing upstream into Pages Brook.

Madeleine said that there are compelling environmental reasons to remove dams and restore aquatic ecosystems, including reducing water temperature, increasing oxygen content in the water, reducing fragmentation of the ecosystem, distributing sediment throughout the ecosystem, where it provides nutrients to aquatic life and forms estuaries at the end of the river, and builds resiliency to the effects of climate change. She is in favor of investigating and researching whether these benefits would apply if the Greenough Dam were removed and the original ecosystem restored, before a decision is made to fund repair.

Madeleine asked how much money it would cost to remove the dam. Sylvia did not know the exact amount, but thought it would be very expensive. A neighboring town has a dam in need of removal, and the cost estimate is approximately \$1,000,000; this cost estimate includes obtaining permits, testing for pollutants, and evaluation of potential damage downstream.

Nancy asked whether Mass DER (Department of Environmental Restoration) had been consulted on dam removal. Sylvia said the state usually focuses dams that cause downstream damage. A Streamways [probably the name prior to DER] representative visited the dam and did not recommend its removal. Nancy did not think Greenough dam repair was relevant to CRAC.

Rick noted that CR#30 extends into part of Greenough Pond, and said that CRAC should read the CR to determine the values it is intended to protect. Ken read from CR#30, and later Nancy showed the text via Zoom as follows.

"II. Purposes:

The Parcel, comprised of approximately 21 acres of land, containing unusual, unique, and outstanding qualities which if protected in their predominantly natural or open condition will benefit the public permanently. These qualities include providing a buffer to other conservation land owned by the Town of Carlisle, preserving scenic vistas from Town Conservation land and the Greenough Pond, protection of flood plains, and preservation of prime agricultural lands.

The foregoing restriction is intended to conform to M.G.L. Ch 184, as 31-33 and is intended to retain said parcel predominantly in its natural, scenic and open condition, in agricultural, farming or forest use in order to protect the natural and watershed resources of said Town. However, the restriction stated above shall not prohibit or restrict the normal maintenance or improvement of the land for agricultural purposes. The restriction shall be administered by the Conservation Commission of the Town of Carlisle."

Madeleine was not in favor of dam repair, for reasons given above, and was also concerned about its high cost. She thought that the project should not be funded until a cost estimate for removal was obtained. She also questioned whether CR#30 should be invoked as a reason to support the project since the CR is on private property. Marc said that although the CR is on private property, the Town as grantee has the responsibility to uphold the purposes stated in the CR. Ken and Tom thought the dam protects unusual and important wildlife habitat that could be lost if the dam were removed or failed.

Tom made the following motion: "I move that CRAC support ConsCom's request for \$750,000 from CPA funds to repair the Greenough Dam." CRAC members voted as follows: Blake (No), Brownrigg (Yes), Cowan (Abstain), Harte (Yes), Lamere (Yes), Oches (Yes). The motion passed by majority vote.

3. Scheduling of next site visit(s)

The committee decided to conduct site visit at CR#22 (Cutter's Ridge) and CR#53 (Malcolm Preserve). Madeleine will contact property owners for CR#22 and Rick will contact the owners (Carlisle Conservation Foundation and The Trustees) for CR#53. The date for both visits is June 19.

Next Meeting: June 22, 2021 @ 7:30 PM

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Documents reviewed:

- CR#4 Monitoring Form (draft), inspection conducted April 25, 2021
- CR#13 Monitoring Form (draft), inspection conducted April 25, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Brownrigg

Secretary

Minutes approved: 6/22/21