

Whately Conservation Commission
Wednesday, July 15, 2020
Via Zoom

Commissioners present: Andrew Ostrowski, Ann Barker, Montserrat Archbald, Scott Jackson (chair), and George Owens

Others present: Johanna Stacy (Northampton DPW), Ashley Marcinkowski, and Casey Hensel

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

1. Request for a Determination of Applicability submitted by the City of Northampton for control of invasive and nuisance plants as part of non-harvest forest management on watershed land in West Whately. Johanna Stacy, from the Northampton Department of Public Works, described the proposed work. This was followed by a brief Q&A and discussion. The Commission then voted unanimously (5-0) on a finding that the work proposed was an exempt agricultural activity, and to issue a negative Determination of Applicability.
2. Wetlands Questions at 33 Egypt Road. Commission Chair Jackson summarized a site visit and the substance of email correspondence regarding the status of wetlands at 33 Egypt Road. At the request of the landowners, Jackson visited the site to determine if wetlands had been altered on the site, and to discuss with them whether the situation might affect the owners' ability to sell the property. A portion of the property is depicted as altered wetland on MassDEP's wetlands change maps. This was Jackson assessment of the situation.

"I investigated the human altered wetlands issues at 33 Egypt Road. Based on what I learned during my site visit, as well as from the landowners and former Chair of the Conservation Commission, I am not inclined to treat this as a violation. Although I did not do a thorough investigation of the site, the evidence I did see supports a conclusion that wetlands did not (and do not) extend into the yard, and the forested area to the west of the yard may not be wetlands either.

I did not do a thorough investigation of the potential wetlands in the forested area west of the house and yard. Based on my quick assessment of vegetation and soils, the area closest to the road and yard, did not appear to be wetlands. This was not a formal determination; any determination of wetland boundaries would have to be voted on by the full Commission after review of a Request for a Determination of Applicability."

After Jackson's report and a brief discussion, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) not to pursue the matter further.

3. Dewatering Plan for the Williamsburg Road Bridge Replacement Project. Chairperson Jackson indicated that the contractor for the Williamsburg Road bridge replacement project had submitted a revised dewatering plan that addressed comments made by the Commission and the City of Northampton. Jackson stated that Commission members should send him any comments they have and indicated that he would compile a response for the town's consultant. A pre-construction meeting was in the process of being scheduled for the first week in August. It was determined that Scott Jackson and George Owens would represent the Commission at that meeting.
4. The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to accept the minutes from the May 20th meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Jackson