

TOWN OF NEEDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 24, 2023

Under Governor Baker's Act "Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency", extending the "Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20," issued June 16, 2021, and in effect until April 1, 2022, meeting of public bodies may be conducted virtually provided that adequate access is provided to the public.

LOCATION: Zoom Virtual Platform – the meeting was held virtually per Governor Baker's Emergency Order.

ATTENDING: Dave Herer (Chair), Peter Oehlkers (Vice Chair), Sue Barber, Fred Moder, Reade Everett, Deb Anderson (Director of Conservation), Clay Hutchinson (Conservation Specialist)

D. Herer opened the public meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS –

1. Minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 10, 2023, by F. Moder, seconded by S. Barber, approved 5-0-0.

2. Enforcement & Violation Updates

C. Hutchinson stated that, regarding 311 Dedham Avenue, the applicant is still working on how best to move forward with the Building Department. D. Herer noted that the soils have been uncovered for more than 30 days.

HEARINGS/APPOINTMENT

49 GREEN STREET (DEP FILE #234-911) – *continued* NOTICE OF INTENT

Motion to continue the hearing for 49 Green Street (DEP FILE #234-911) to September 14, 2023, at 7:30pm by S. Barber, seconded by F. Moder, approved 5-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

381 SOUTH STREET (DEP FILE #234-866) – REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Frederico Grossi, owner, explained that the original proposal was to build a pool and a 24'x33' pavilion. This required the removal of seven trees and the replacement of 18 trees. The pool was installed but the pavilion project was abandoned. The already installed recharge chambers were hooked up to downspouts from the roof, in order not to waste them. The 18 trees have been

planted on the site. These trees will continue to be monitored. A partial Certificate of Compliance is being requested.

C. Hutchinson stated that the plantings were installed. Several of the trees may not survive the planting and storm seasons and may need to be replaced in the future. The applicant is seeking relief from the survivability percent of 18, and instead suggesting it be 14. However, the Commission needs to discuss if this will be contingent on replacement of some of the trees.

P. Oehlkers encouraged the applicant to replant the white cedars, but he is accepting of the relief request from survivability.

There was discussion regarding the fact that, even if the four trees that were removed during a recent storm are not replanted, the property will still meet the survivability percentage. C. Hutchinson stated that the applicant may want to make a good faith effort to replace these trees, just in case other trees on the property do not survive. F. Grossi agreed that his landscaper is keeping an eye on the trees and trying to keep them alive. He will make a good faith effort to replant some of the removed trees.

Motion to issue a partial Certificate of Completion for 381 South Street (DEP FILE #234-866) by F. Moder, seconded by S. Barber, approved 5-0-0.

TREE REMOVAL GUIDELINES – DISCUSSION

D. Herer asked Commissioners to provide comments on these draft guidelines, in order to revise them for review at a future meeting.

There was discussion regarding when applicants can use shrubs instead of trees for replacement material.

CONSERVATION PROGRAMMING – DISCUSSION

C. Hutchinson asked the Commission to consider any programming it would like to be part of or lead. The Department will have a table at Harvest Fair on October 1st and Commissioners are welcome to attend.

D. Herer stated that he would like to hold walks with the public on different topics.

The Commission agreed to discuss this further at its next meeting.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY – DISCUSSION

D. Herer explained that this policy is one that the Select Board is suggesting for certain Town boards/commissions.

R. Everett stated that he will continue to work on drafting a document for the Commission to review at its next meeting.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REMOTE PUBLIC MEETINGS - DISCUSSION

D. Anderson stated that, based on the discussion at the previous meeting, the majority of Commissioners feel they would like to continue participating remotely at this time.

RIDGE HILL RESERVATION MEADOW - DISCUSSION

C. Hutchinson stated that staff has been in communication with the Permanent Public Building Committee (PBBC). The Ridge Hill structure has been taken down and a meadow has been established in the footprint. This is satisfactorily vegetated and blends to a nearby meadow area. The Commission can decide if it would like to see additional pollinators established in this footprint. This could also be an educational opportunity to add signage regarding the importance of pollinators.

D. Anderson noted that the end use for this area is yet unknown.

R. Everett asked if there are some other areas around the site that could be used for pollinator plants. C. Hutchinson stated that he believes those areas may need to be left for access.

P. Oehlkers agreed that, as there is an opportunity for education, it would be worthwhile to request pollinator material.

D. Anderson noted that the Commission needs to recommend another member to be appointed to the Climate Action Plan Committee.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by F. Moder, seconded by S. Barber, approved 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:

September 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. location to be determined.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*