

Conservation Commission Meeting – July 17, 2018

Time: 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Location: Police Station, 2nd Floor

Members Present: Tom Ruskin, Chair; Toni Bandrowicz, Vice Chair; Monica Lagerquist; Jonathan Grabowski; Colleen Hitchcock; and Jennifer Simon

Members Absent: Monica Tamborini; Randall Hughes (alternate); and Laura Spathanas (Selectmen Liaison)

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

1. Approval of June 28, 2018 Minutes

The Commission approved the June 28, 2018 minutes by unanimous vote.

2. Nelson Kessler Memorial

The Commission discussed and decided that having a memorial “brick” at the Clifton Improvement Association park at Preston Beach would be appropriate memorial. T. Bandrowicz said she would follow-up with Sheryl Levenson of the CIA.

3. Ewing Woods Encroachment by 96 Kensington Lane

Ms. Bandrowicz reviewed the history of this matter, noting again that she and Max Kasper, the Building Inspector, had met with David Ratner of 96 Kensington Lane, owner of the property in question, on June 21st. After that meeting, she had requested the Town’s new assistant DPW director, Jay Jarosz, who is qualified surveyor, to stake the property so that the exact extent of the encroachment can be documented. Mr. Jarosz has reviewed the survey done by Faia and will be staking the property.

As a next step following staking of the property, the Commission ask the Town’s attorney, since the last correspondence was from the attorney and not the Commission, to send a second letter informing Mr. Ratner that, while he does not have to take action to remove the pea stone or grass that is currently on town-owned property, he must cease and desist using the town-owned property for his own use. The letter would be similar to the letter that the Commission sent to the Unitarian Universalist Church, which had provided that the Church avoid further encroachment and, when it re-mulched the play area, that it only mulch that part of the play area on Church property and avoid placing any mulch on property determined by the survey to be town-owned land, thereby allowing the natural vegetation of Ewing Woods eventually to take back over the town-owned land. In addition to the fact that the Commission has an obligation to protect conservation land in the town, it was noted that the property owners of all the other properties encroaching Ewing Woods had taken action to abate the encroachment, and so it would be unfair to let Mr. Ratner to continue encroaching.

T. Ruskin, while agreeing that Mr. Ranter needs to abate the encroachment, raised the concern that we ensure nothing be requested that would affect flooding on his property. T. Bandrowicz said she would discuss this with the DPW and Building Inspector, but

noted that the Commission would not be requiring the removal of anything from the property, such as pea stone or storm pipes.

4. Sea Wall Repairs/Replacement

T. Ruskin gave the history of the Commission's procedures for dealing with sea wall repairs, and T. Bandrowicz provided a summary of her research into sea wall emergency repair, including the use of the "WPA Emergency Certificate Form." Resolved that, going forward, Commission will work closely with DPW and Building Inspector in confirming that emergency repairs are necessary and issuing such emergency certificates in appropriate cases.

T. Ruskin also expressed concern that, with Drew Levin and Pete Kane leaving the Town, that the Commission will not have the full administrative assistance it needs to fulfill its obligations under the WPA. As the Commissioners are volunteers, need someone that can be contacted during normal town hours to answer questions, accept filings, and perform other important tasks. Resolved that the Commission needs to follow-up with appropriate town representatives to ensure that appropriate personnel will be hired to assist the Commission.

5. Discussion of Invasive Species Removal Estimates

Commission discussed the recommended actions and estimates provided by Land Stewardship Inc. for removal of phragmites at Palmer Pond, burning bush at Ewing Woods, and knotweed at Harold King. Debated whether necessary to take action with the Phragmites, and whether knotweed could be dealt with in-town help (Boy or Girl Scouts?). Noted that the main reason for getting an estimate was to use it for applying for grants. Resolved to follow up with trying to find and apply for grants

6. 133 Puritan Rd Pre-Construction Site Visit

It was briefly mentioned that M. Lagerquist and T. Bandrowicz had earlier in the day done a pre-construction site visit at 133 Puritan Road project.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.