

**Hamilton Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting of Oct. 19, 2011
Meeting held at Hamilton Town Hall**

Commissioners present:

Virginia Cookson (7:48 p.m.), Robert Cronin, Peter Dana, Keith Glidden, Richard Luongo (chair), George Tarr

Staff present:

Jim Hankin, Conservation Coordinator

Others present for all or a portion of the meeting included:

Sue McLaughlin, 160 Gregory Island Rd. of the Chebacco Lake Association
Dave Lash, 73 Lake Shore Ave. of the Chebacco Lake Association
Keith Symmes, 223 Centennial Grove, Essex of the Chebacco Lake Association
Christine Scypinski, consultant

The Commission is scheduled to meet at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 2, 2011 at Hamilton Town Hall. Site walk is scheduled for Sat. Oct. 29.

Richard Luongo opened the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Conservation Coordinator Jim Hankin listed the documents in the packet provided to commissioners prior to this meeting along with the agenda: his memo to the Commission about management plans, and a two-page note from Sue McLaughlin of the Chebacco Woods Association

Notice of Intent (Public Hearing continued from Sept. 14, Sept. 28, and Oct. 5, 2011)

130 Essex Street (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary/GCTS)

GCTS, applicant; Waterfield Design Group, representative

Perform electrical work, install pathways, install aerator in pond and install native wetland plantings in resource areas

Richard Luongo reopened the public hearing. The applicant's consultant Chris Scypinski noted that per the Commission's request the applicant deleted one of two solar-powered pond aerators from the proposal. She reported observing fish in the pond. She detailed species that would be included in an 8' buffer strip around the pond, to supplement existing native vegetation that has grown up since GCTS stopped mowing to the water's edge; they include blue flag iris, monkey flower, swamp milkweed, verbena, turtlehead, and cardinal flower, plus a diverse seed mix to fill in between clusters of these plants. Planting would take place this fall. The buffer strip would total about 180 square feet. She said GCTS has not decided whether to install lights near the pond, but if so, they would be "mellow."

Commissioners discussed the aerator with Ms. Scypinski. She said the small, inexpensive model proposed would clear vegetation from a section of the pond; a larger \$4,000 model would be needed to keep the entire pond clear of vegetation.

Conservation Coordinator Jim Hankin informed Ms. Scypinski about the term of permits, appeal period, and timeline for obtaining a Certificate of Compliance.

Peter Dana made a motion for the Commission to close the public hearing. Robert Cronin seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Virginia Cookson joined the meeting after this vote.

Keith Glidden made a motion for the Commission to extend the local permit to three years to run concurrent with the state permit. Mr. Dana seconded the motion. The parties briefly discussed the proposed location of the aerator, and agreed that if sunlight there proves insufficient, the aerator and solar panel could be moved. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Glidden made a motion for the Commission to approve the minutes of the meeting of Oct. 5, 2011 as presented. Mr. Cronin seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Discussion

Representatives of the Chebacco Lake Association updated commissioners about rising water levels in the lake and asked them to support the Town of Essex plan to clear Alewife Brook, the lake's main outlet. Sue McLaughlin said beaver dams and sediment build-up in the brook have increased lake levels 2.5'; she said this has more impact on Hamilton than on Essex, because it increases water levels in related ponds and wetlands as far as the Gordon College campus. She and two other CLA representatives showed commissioners maps and photos of the area. They expressed concern about the impact on septic systems, and the loss of property due to wave action caused in part by boat wakes. Conservation Coordinator Jim Hankin said that five years ago, the Essex Conservation Commission granted and later renewed a negative determination allowing the Town to hand-clear the stream, but the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) objected, and required the Town to file an Notice of Intent (NOI). The Town of Essex has hired DeRosa Environmental to draft an NOI for further stream clearing.

Commissioners and Mr. Hankin briefly discussed existing management plans. Keith Glidden recommended the Commission log such plans and create a "tickler system" to ensure that on a regular schedule, the Commission would receive reports of management activity. Mr. Hankin noted that the Department of Public Works' management plan has expired but that the DPW and Commission operate as though it were still in effect. He suggested the Commission consider pressing the DPW to refile, and to specify the number and location of drainage structures within Commission jurisdiction.

Mr. Hankin reported that the Hamilton Wenham Open Land Trust is preparing a conservation restriction proposal for Donovan Fields on Sagamore St.

Robert Cronin made a motion for the Commission to adjourn at 8:41 p.m. Mr. Glidden seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Minutes submitted Oct. 26, 2011 by Ann Sierks Smith