

HAMILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 14, 2018
Memorial Room, Hamilton Town Hall

Members Present: Virginia Cookson, Bob Cronin, Keith Glidden (departed at 7:56), Richard Luongo (Chairman), Tom Myers, and George Tarr.

Coordinator: Jim Hankin

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm with a quorum established.

Request for Determination of Applicability. 29.2 acre parcel off of Old Cart Road. Water well drilling access.

Tim Olson (DPW Director) presented the RDA. He stated that Dewberry Engineers would explore test drilling at a property owned by the Ford family for possible public water supply sources in the North Coastal Basin. The locations of the test wells were shown on a plan. The Commission site walked the 5-6' wide access path and the drilling sites. The path is in the buffer zone and hay bales would be used to contain pumped water at the site.

Heather Keane (81 Old Cart Road) was concerned that the neighbors were unaware of the potential use of the site. Ms. Keane said a road and pump house would drastically change the neighborhood. Jim Hankin responded that a legal notice had been published in the newspaper as the application was for a Request for Determination. Ms. Keane suggested that if any other work was conducted on the site, the neighbors should be notified. Ms. Keane understood the need to explore water sources and wondered what other sites had been considered.

Tim Olson said he had been approached by the Fords to explore the non-buildable, 29 acre property, which had been discussed for this purpose several years ago. For public water supply purposes, the property is in the North Coastal Basin as opposed to the Ipswich River Basin, which is highly stressed. Mr. Olson explained that the proposed work is temporary and preliminary as a water supply infrastructure design is not close to being created right now. The DPW seeks to evaluate the quality and quantity of water that could be produced in the area. Mr. Olson assured Heather Keane that no one was trying to hide anything and that he would be forthcoming with information if the project became a valuable source of water. Public concerns would be heard as the proposal would be presented to the Commission again. Jim Hankin noted the application would become more complex if construction were involved. The current application was exempt for test drilling but use of the access path needs Commission approval.

The site could have good water under it based on maps, according to Tim Olson. Heather Keane repeated that a well site would change the landscape of the neighborhood. Jim Hankin responded that only the testing of the site was before the Commission. Virginia Cookson noted the requirement of having 800' between a septic system and a well site would be a protection.

The representative from Dewberry Engineering said they were looking at other parcels in town as well. The development of a well site would be a three to five year processing timeframe. The Town would maintain the trail if there were a pump house in the area. Mr. Olson said well exploration was part of the DPW capital plan and that he was looking especially in the North Coastal Basin for sources.

Keith Glidden made a motion to find that the project was exempt for work to be completed, otherwise to issue a negative determination.

Seconded. Tom Myers

Discussion included the need to move fallen trees to gain access.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Discussion Item: Light Pollution By-law.

Zach Peters sent copies of the Draft By-law to the Commission office for review.

Commissioners received the draft by email from the office. Mr. Peters said the look and feel of the town was part of the Open Space Committee's purview. The topic of light pollution and night skies had been discussed by the Committee for three years. The submitted Draft, which was developed after reviewing other town bylaws, would be used as a guideline.

Mr. Peters described the two types of light pollution, up-lighting and trespass pollution. He explained that as development occurs fewer stars become visible due up-light pollution. Mr. Peters indicated that all light should go downwards. Trespass lighting is artificial lighting shined beyond property boundaries. While the Planning Board oversees lighting during Site Plan Review, the Open Space Committee seeks a broader limitation on lighting. Mr. Peters requested the Conservation Commission pass the Draft onto the Planning Board and Selectmen with or without comment.

Keith Glidden and Tom Myers agreed to push the process forward. Mr. Peters stated that the Town Manager could just say all Town projects (schools, parks, parking lots, and ball fields) would follow the guidelines minimizing the need for a By-law.

Gretel Clark recalled that Willow St. residents had to draw their curtains to create a dark night after the construction of a recent project. Ms. Clark noted 17 lights, which were on all night, every night at the high school and suggested using a motion detector for security rather than 24 hour coverage. Jackie Hodge referred to residential use and the effect when a neighbor's lights were not cast down upon the ground.

Virginia Cookson said she understood the idea, but thought it might be difficult to enforce for individual homes. Ms. Cookson noted that motion detectors often turn on for the slightest of movements. Gretel Clark said the By-law only asked to illuminate the area needed and avoid light from escaping. The By-law would apply to exterior lighting only.

Jim Hankin suggested speaking with the Chief of Police to get his support before presenting a draft to Town Meeting. The Open Space Committee hoped the Commission would write a letter asking the Planning Board and/or Selectmen to meet with the Open Space Committee to discuss the potential of the By-law. Mr. Hankin would write a letter and present it to the Commission for review and approval.

Zach Peters thought the By-law could be a part of the second phase of the Zoning By-law rewrite. It was unclear at what Town Meeting the By-law would be proposed. Mr. Peters also indicated that the Committee would be working on the Scenic Road By-law in the future.

Land Management Committee.

The Committee would oversee the 9.1 acres at Patton Ridge and the one acre Central Ave parcel, plus a small wetlands parcel on Moulton Street that the Commission has held for a number of years. George Tarr, Virginia Cookson, and Zach Peters agreed to be on the Committee. After establishing the Committee, the first charge would be to develop a charter of responsibilities and a comprehensive land management plan.

Motion made by Keith Glidden to establish the Land Management Committee.

Tom Myers seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion made by Keith Glidden to appoint Zach Peters, Virginia Cookson, and George Tarr as the three members of the Land Management Committee.

Tom Myers seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Request for an Extension of Order of Conditions and By-law Permit 292 Bridge St.

The letter provided by Solitude Lake Management explained that they were licensed to apply herbicide and conduct on site monitoring of a pond for control and removal of invasive and nuisance vegetation in the pond. The wetlands permit expiration date was approaching and a request had been received to extend it. The previous Town permit had been for three years. The request was for an extension under the State law and Town By-law to run for an additional three years, expiring on 3/31/2021.

Virginia Cookson moved to issue the Extension as requested.

Seconded. Tom Myers

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Minutes

Tom Myers made motion to accept the minutes of January 10, 2018.

Virginia Cookson seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Coordinators Report

Town Meeting would occur on April 7, 2018. The Warrant had been closed.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Bob Cronin.

Seconded by Virginia Cookson.

Vote: Unanimous to adjourn at 8:00 pm.

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

Attest

Date