MEETING MINUTES
ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
February 22, 2021

Present:
Gene Crouch (Chair)
William Moulton (Vice Chair)
Cathy Van Lancker
K.G. Narayana
Gabriel Toledo
Greg Wands
Maeghan Dos Anjos (Agent)

Absent:
Carl Hakansson

Meeting held by Zoom

Call to order:  7:02 P.M.

7:02   Mr. Crouch reviewed the protocol for the meeting

7:04   Member Prerogative
Mr. Narayana said that 500,000 lives were lost in the United Stated during the COVID-19 and asked to observe this in a moment of silence to remember all of those who lost their lives during the pandemic. The Commission and the attendees did observe a moment of silence.

7:07   Review 2/8/2021 Meeting Minutes
The Commission reviewed the meeting minutes.

Mr. Narayana made a motion, seconded by Mr. Toledo to approve the Meeting Minutes as amended. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Roll call vote: KN, GT, GW, CVL, WM, GC).

7:09   Member Prerogative
Mr. Narayana announced that anyone over the age of 65 years old can call 2-1-1 to register and schedule an appointment for the COVID-19 Vaccine. Mr. Crouch asked what is 2-1-1. Ms. Van Lancker said that it is like 4-1-1 but for COVID-19. Ms. Van Lancker said that she was able to register online.

Mr. Mark Dassoni said that he got vaccines for his father and himself and they came to his house to administer the vaccine.

Ms. Jennifer Ball (Assistant Town Manager) said that they changed and require a minimum of 750 vaccines for five days per week.
Mr. Crouch provided a summary from the last meeting, and said that he had not had a chance
to review the NOI at that time. Mr. Crouch said that there was no effort in mitigation. Mr.
Crouch said that there are no performance standards for working in the 25’ No Disturb Zone
(NDZ), because the Commission does not expect work to take place in that area. Mr. Crouch
also commented on the Stormwater Management narrative.

Mr. Paille spoke to the stormwater on site and said that when he was out there he did not
notice any runoff, or erosion by the stream. Mr. Paille said that this is encouraging to him in
that the crown is right and the slope is right. Mr. Paille explained that if you are coming from
the trailhead, the runoff will be directed to the left, across pavement to the trail, then they will
work on the right side and cover it with rip rap and loam and seed it. Mr. Paille said that they
are leaving the trees.

Mr. Narayana asked if he would be digging deep at the entrance near Megunko Road. Mr.
Paille said that they will be adding gravel than a six-inch reveal.

Ms. Van Lancker said that the Commission had asked for mitigation and suggested that they
come back with something. Mr. Hannon said that they had discussed this internally, but found
that it was challenging to find mitigation due to the limited space. Mr. Hannon said that they
had discussed removing the rip rap with sandy material to improve habitat for turtles at the
pond. Mr. Crouch asked if Mr. Hannon was aware that the pond was dredged out by the EPA
and may have residual contaminants. Mr. Hannon said that it is not the idea to disturb the soil.
Ms. Van Lancker asked if there are any other areas to improve. Mr. Hannon said that he saw
that everything out there was functioning habitat, and did not see anything.

Ms. Van Lancker asked if they had received the BMP manual for work on railroad beds issued
by DEP. The Agent said that she forwarded it to Mr. Paille earlier in the day. Mr. Paille said
that there are four categories and he thinks that they fall under the residential/rural category.
Mr. Paille said that they are going to incorporate the BMP measures by adding conditions and
specs in the plans, and the bid documents. Mr. Paille said that the contractor will be held
responsible. Mr. Paille said that they will also have a discussion with the contractor.

Mr. Crouch agreed with Mr. Paille’s assessment on the assignment of the category. Mr.
Crouch explained that the track line cuts through the property and elevated arsenic levels were
found in other parts of the track. Mr. Crouch said that there is likely petroleum hydrocarbons.

Ms. Van Lancker said that this should be in the submission to the Commission.

Mr. Crouch said that for the mitigation to offset the work in the NDZ, he [Mr. Crouch] is not
sure where they can do that [mitigation]. Mr. Crouch asked if they can do mitigation where
the utility line runs up to the [back of the] solar array [which is on the Nyanza cap]. Mr.
Crouch asked if they can revegetate that or enhance it. Mr. Paille said that they could but is it
significant enough to offset the work in the NDZ. Mr. Paille said that the contractor is
probably going to use that as a staging area. Mr. Paille shared his screen and showed the area
that they are discussing. Mr. Crouch asked if he would plant trees and shrubs. Mr. Paille
suggested that they can create a buffer that displays a message not to go beyond that point [the
buffer]. Mr. Wands suggested possibly planting that area with wildflowers. Mr. Moulton said
that he does not know about using a wildflower mix in that area.

Mr. Wands asked if this area is cleaned [of contaminants from the Nyanza 21E site]. Ms. Ball
said that they [the Town] will need to check with the EPA and DEP, and that they [the Town]
can do that when the EPA and DEP do their annual review of the site.

Mr. Crouch asked about mitigation. Mr. Crouch said that they cannot cut down mature trees as
mitigation within the corridor as that would not make any sense. Mr. Crouch said that
plantings can be placed along the side of the trails and in places at large drop offs, which can
be used as barriers. Mr. Crouch said that his company uses shrubs instead of railing with DCR.
Mr. Hannon said that they can use educational signage related to habitat function. Mr. Crouch
said that he is favor of that, and that they could include historical information about the trail.
Mr. Crouch said and emphasized that he does not want signs posted at vernal pools. Ms. Van
Lancker said to use signs about wetlands.

Mr. Wands asked about invasive species clearing. Mr. Crouch said that he only noticed
buckthorn out there. Mr. Wands said that it is there, and that the Friends of the Upper
Charles Trail had cleared bittersweet out there. Mr. Crouch asked Mr. Hannon what invasive
species he has noticed. Mr. Hannon said that by the pond there is *phragmites*. Mr. Hannon
said that herbicide needs to be used if you are going to start dealing with invasive plants.

The Commission concluded that mitigation to offset work within the NDZ should consist of
the following:

- Planting along the path
- Restoration at the access road used from the trail to construct the solar array
- Augmentation plantings to replace fence.
- Educational signage
- Invasive species control

Mr. Joel Arbeitman (Chair of the Upper Charles Trail Committee) asked what the next steps
are. Mr. Crouch said that he would like to see the mitigation items on a plan and in the
narrative. Mr. Moulton said that an invasive species management plan should be developed
and include an explanation of how you would control those. Mr. Crouch said that if they can
get those to us, the Commission can review those documents. Mr. Narayan asked if they
should keep maintaining it. Mr. Crouch said that if the mitigation work is part of doing work
in the NDZ then the maintenance is part of the mitigation requirements. Mr. Wands said that
they had indicated that there will be a group of people going out there to maintain the trail.

Mr. Robert Scherer wanted to thank everyone. Mr. Scherer asked if there is any particular part
of this proposal that they can take a look at, or is it pretty much that this is the plan.
Mr. Mark Dassoni (49 Hawthorne Road) asked about testing. Ms. Ball said that they did have conversations with DEP and EPA. Mr. Crouch said that if the design criteria are followed, there should not be any comments from DEP.

Mr. Narayana made a motion, seconded by Mr. Toledo to continue the hearing to March 8, 2021. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Roll call vote: KN, GT, GW, CVL, WM, GC).

Ms. Ball asked Mr. Crouch if he would include the BMP manual in the bid documents. Mr. Crouch said that his company doesn’t.

8:21 Amended OOC 95-931, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Route 126 (Pond Street), drainage, traffic, and safety improvements
The applicant withdrew the application. The Commission accepted the withdrawal of the amended OOC for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. No vote was made.

8:22 NOI, 58 Exchange Ashland, LLC. 16 Union Street, Lot 2, four-unit residential building (continued from 1/11/2021)
The applicant requested a continuance.

Mr. Narayana made a motion, seconded by Ms. Van Lancker to continue the hearing to March 22, 2021. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Roll call vote: KN, GT, GW, CVL, WM, GC).

8:23 NOI/SMP, Magunko Realty Trust, 9 Pennock Road, single family home (continued from 1/11/2021)
The applicant requested a continuance.

Mr. Narayana made a motion, seconded by Ms. Van Lancker to continue the hearing to March 8, 2021. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Roll call vote: KN, GT, GW, CVL, WM, GC).

8:24 Agent’s Announcements
The Agent announced that a Chapter 40B filing was submitted to the ZBA for Arbella and the hearing is tonight. Mr. Crouch said that it is right now.

8:24 Meeting Adjournment
A motion was made by Mr. Narayana, and seconded Ms. Van Lancker to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Roll call vote: KN, GT, GW, CVL, WM, GC).

Documents Reviewed by the Conservation Commission on 2/22/2021
- Document entitled, Agenda dated 2/6/2021
- Document entitled, Meeting Minutes Ashland Conservation Commission dated 2/8/2021
- Plans entitled, Ashland Trolley Brook Trail 100% Design, and dated 2/17/2021