



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING MINUTES
ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
February 24, 2020

1 Present: Cathy Van Lancker (Acting Chair)
2 Carl Hakansson
3 K.G. Narayana
4 Greg Wands
5 Gabriel Toledo
6

7 Absent: Gene Crouch (Chair)
8 William Moulton (Vice Chair)
9 Maeghan Dos Anjos (Agent)
10

11 **Call to order: 7:05 P.M.**
12

13 **7:06 95-849, Extension Request, Town of Ashland, River Walk trail project**
14 **Discussion, Town of Ashland, Pine Hill Road, Mill Pond Improvements**

15 Jen Ball (Assistant Town Manager) handed the Commission two draft engineering plans
16 showing the design for improvements to Mill Pond park. She explained that the draft
17 engineering plans are to be used for the construction bidding process in May of this year that
18 cover unfinished elements of the Sudbury River walk project within Mill Pond Park, as well as
19 new work for Park restoration. Under the existing extended Order of Conditions for the
20 Sudbury River Walk project, the two timber bridge approaches, boat launch, and parking lot
21 still need to be completed. New work to the park (in need of permitting) include installation of
22 landscape planting and stone dust walkways. Ms. Ball described that bidding for the 6.5 to 7-
23 million-dollar Downtown Streetscape project could include all remaining work on the Sudbury
24 River Walk project; and new Mill Pond revitalization work for the purpose of better
25 construction pricing as a single package. Ms. Ball's question to the Commission was the
26 following: Could the proposed landscape plantings and stone dust walkways at Mill Pond Park
27 be permitted within the River Walk projects Order of Conditions through an amendment; or
28 should there be a new Notice of Intent filing. The Commission agreed that an amended Order
29 of Conditions for the Sudbury River Walk Project was appropriate for permitting the additional
30 revitalization work at Mill Pond park.
31

32 Ms. Ball also made a request to the Commission. She asked for a two-year extension to the
33 pending 95-849 Amended Order of Conditions (Sudbury River project) in order to allow for
34 enough time to complete all the work at Mill Pond Park. After some discussion, it was agreed
35 that the hearing will remain open to the next meeting (March 23rd) for the purpose of reviewing
36 the proposed new work in greater detail with the Town's consultant (BSC Group).
37

38 Mr. Narayana made a motion, seconded by Mr. Toledo to continue the hearing to March 23rd.
39 Motion passed 5-0-0.
40

41 **7:25 NOI, Town Forest Committee, 0 Oak Street, trail maintenance and invasive**
42 **species**

43
44 Rob St Germain (64 Winter Street) and Mike Jones (665 Main Street) from the Ashland Town
45 Forest Committee presented an improvement project within the northwestern portion of the
46 Town Forest that consists of the following work: construction of a rain garden and trail, three
47 bog bridges, one boardwalk, a new connector trail, and bridge for a stream crossing. Work
48 within the Notice of Intent are separated into 6 locations, referred to as locations A through E.
49 Mr. St Germain spoke of the need to improve the hydrological conditions within the northern
50 Town Forest access point between the Oak Street apartment complex (Location B).

51
52 Apparently, the construction of the Oak street apartments 50+ years ago disrupted the
53 hydrology in the area, causing excessive ponding and runoff which poses a danger to public
54 safety near the forest entrance. Mr. St Germain described how construction of a 3,500 sq./ft
55 rain garden within a pre-existing swale will mitigate the poor drainage by increasing ground
56 infiltration, as well as provide a Town owned rain garden example to the public. Spoils from
57 the excavation will be used to form a dyke trail for better access from that entrance to the town
58 forest trails. Mr. Jones, a retired landscape architect, reviewed the sketches of the rain garden
59 and plantings with the Commission. Also discussed were the sources of funding for rain
60 garden construction, monies will be used form the Storm Water fund for construction and new
61 plantings and will be funded through the CPC. The Ashland DPW plans to perform the
62 construction for the rain garden this spring and volunteers from the Appalachian Mountain
63 Club and the Bay Circuit trail Alliance will build the bridges with grant money from REI Inc.
64 Mr. St Germain and Mr. Jones reviewed the sketches of the various bridges as well as materials
65 and construction methods to the satisfaction of the Commission. Mr. St Germain spoke to how
66 this new work ties into trail improvements performed from the previous year. Since portions
67 of the proposed work will occur within 25-foot-do-not-disturb zones of wetland resource areas,
68 the Commission agreed that the proposed work meets the standard of an Ashland Wetlands
69 Bylaw waiver because the project preserves and enhances wetland interests.

70
71 Mr. St Germain spoke about plans to reduce invasive plant species within the town forest, with
72 emphasis on combating Asian bittersweet, Japanese barberry and Japanese knotweed. With a
73 \$1,300 from the Sudbury Valley Trustees, the Town Forest Committee plans to hire students to
74 mechanically remove invasives through pulling and mowing, starting in June of this year. For
75 the more difficult Japanese knotweed, two years of mowing will occur, class 3 herbicides (root
76 growth inhibitors) will be applied by injection to the stem systems. Since the application of
77 herbicides are restricted for use on Town property, the Forest Committee has sought a waiver
78 from the Ashland Board of Health. Significant amounts of invasives occur within wetland
79 resource areas and herbicides will be applied by a licensed professional (LP). After discussion,
80 The Commission was satisfied with the actions and project phasing for the Notice of Intent.

81
82 A motion was made by Mr. Narayana to close the hearing and seconded by Mr. Toledo.
83 Motion carried 5-0-0.

84
85 **7:30 95-878, Kelly Engineering Group, Request for Extension, Cirrus Road, and**
86 **Detention**
87 Dave Mackwell, representing Kelly Engineering Group, came before the Commission seeking
88 a one-year extension to the 95-878 Order of Conditions at the Cirrus apartments on Cirrus
89 Road, near the Ashland MBTA station. Mr. Hakansson opened the discussion by summarizing

90 the failures of the drainage system on that site during apartment construction in 2017. Mr.
91 Mackwell agreed that the summary was accurate and then continued with a description of the
92 corrective work that has occurred since. The large detention pond has been stabilized by
93 bringing the structure up to grade with sand and stone, as well as cleaning out the bottom of
94 excessive silt. Mr. Mackwell stated that the removal of the silt makes the pond drain much
95 better and now functions as it is supposed to, fully draining stormwater within a three-day
96 period. A one-year extension was granted last year; however, Mr. Mackwell feels that current
97 extension will not allow for enough time for further stabilization with vegetative regrowth.
98 Another extension to the Order of Conditions should allow enough time for the new vegetation
99 to establish. Mr. Mackwell confirmed to Mr. Hakansson that Ms. Dos Anjos has been out to
100 the site to inspect the new work.

101
102 Mr. Narayana made a motion to close the hearing, seconded by Mr. Wands. Motion carried 5-
103 0-0. Mr. Toledo made a motion to grant an additional one-year extension to the Order of
104 Conditions, seconded by Mr. Narayana. Motion carried 5-0-0.

105
106 **Other Business:**

107 Review meeting minutes from 2/24/2020

108
109 Mr. Narayana made a motion to table the 2/24/2020 meeting minutes and review them at the
110 next meeting on 3/23/2020. Motion was seconded by Mr. Toledo. Motion carried 5-0-0.

111
112 Review Template Standard Conditions for an Order of Conditions
113 To be reviewed when Conservation Agent is present

114
115 Review Template Checklist for Stormwater Management Permit Application
116 To be reviewed when Conservation Agent is present

117
118 **Member Prerogative:**

119 Mr. Hakansson brought out the topic of re-occurring dog issues in Warren Woods. He
120 recounted a recent incident where he witnessed a large barking dog chasing multiple deer out
121 of Rocky's field into the Eliot St field. The off-leash dog was around 200 yards away from the
122 owner and completely out of control. There was discussion among the Commission about the
123 frequent problems with irresponsible dog waste management as well as the poor compliance
124 and attitudes towards the "all dogs must be leashed" rule in Warren Woods. Also discussed
125 was the fact that the Warren Woods Conservation Restriction (CR) is held by Mass Audubon
126 and managing the property as a wildlife refuge is a CR priority. With the coming of spring,
127 Mr. Hakansson proposed protecting Warren Woods wildlife by banning dogs for the birthing
128 season of animals. The measure would consist of closing the parking lot gate with a chain and
129 posting signage explaining why dogs are temporarily not allowed, starting April first.

130
131 Mr. Hakansson made a motion to give the Land Stewardship Committee the authority to
132 restrict dogs when needed for the birthing season of animals in Warren Woods. Mr. Toledo
133 seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0-0.

134
135
136

137 **Citizens Participation**

138 Mr. St Germain returned to the meeting to speak regarding the region wide problem with
139 invasive plant species. He feels as though there are bureaucratic blocks that prevent effective
140 invasive species management on Town lands and other conservation properties especially
141 when invasives occur in wetlands. He seeks to find “middle-ground” or “lowering the barrier”
142 for allowing, with limits, activities in reducing invasives. Mr. St Germain spoke to his
143 involvement with the Sudbury Valley Trustee’s Collaborative Invasive Species Management
144 Association (CISMA) and how he was authorized by the Town Forest Committee to sign a
145 non-binding Memorandum of Understanding to address the problems of invasives in a greater
146 regional context. Mr. St Germain mentioned that all larger land trusts are signatory to this
147 memorandum and gauged the Commissions interest in involvement with CISMA as well.
148 Mr. St Germain also presented an initiative of holding a public forum with speakers, and
149 creating a pamphlet, with the goal of developing invasive species management policies for
150 Town land and other conservation properties. The Commission was supportive of these ideas
151 and agreed that further investigation was warranted.

152

153 **8:37 Adjournment**

154 Mr. Narayana made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Toledo. Motion passed
155 5-0-0.

156

157 **Documents Reviewed by the Conservation Commission on 3/9/ 2020**

- 158 • Plan entitled *Ashland Downtown Streetscape Improvements: Landscape Plan*, sheet 1
- 159 of 7
- 160 • Plan entitled *Ashland Downtown Streetscape Improvements: Construction Plan*, sheet 1
- 161 of 7
- 162 • Current drainage map of Cirrus Apartments for 95-878 OOC extension request

163