

Montague Conservation Commission

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 14, 2016 – 6:30 pm

Upstairs Meeting Room, Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Alex Peterkin, Sean Werle and Justin Fermann.

Commissioners Absent: Deb Picking, Donna Francis and Addie Rose Holland

Staff: Walter Ramsey - Agent

Mark Fairbrother called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes: *Motion* made by Alex Peterkin to approve the December 10, 2015 minutes as amended. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passed unanimously.**

No Public Hearings were scheduled

NOI 2015-05 Cabot Taps – Alternate Mitigation Discussion:

Guest: Chris Wise – Montague Center

Walter Ramsey shared a letter with the Commission stating that New England Power was not able to get permissions from Army Corps of Engineers to implement Spaulding Brook Fish Passage on Sawmill River as mitigation for the Cabot Taps Project. The proposed mitigation will occur in Deerfield, according to the letter. In lieu of a local mitigation project, NEP has offered to contribute money into a fund for habitat improvement and Sawmill River restoration. The agent proposed that this \$6000 contribution could be used for the mowing of the Sawmill River Wildlife Management Area- a long standing goal of the Commission and community. It was discussed and accepted that Fish and Game will have to approve and grant permissions for any work. The Commission agreed with the terms of the letter and felt that it was within the parameters of the Order of Condition, thus the Commission agreed that it did not warrant a re- hearing. Justin F. suggested that we might want to have some projects that are “shovel ready” to proceed when an opportunity presents itself. Mark F. suggested that New England Power give some utility poles to use for placing nesting boxes in the plains. Guest Chris Wise from Montague Center was supportive of having the recreation area mowed.

Motion made by Sean Werle to have Walter Ramsey, the Agent authorize and respond to the New England Power Company letter regarding the NOI #2015-05 Cabot Taps project. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Motion made by Sean Werle to request that the Commission set up a special account called the Sawmill River Restoration Habitat Maintenance Fund with the contributions from NEP under condition stated in NOI 2015-05. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passed unanimously.**

2016 Conservation Projects: Dry Hill Cemetery walking trails.

Walter: The Town of Montague received a small grant from DCR to put in some walking trails around the Dry Hill Cemetery area with 2 trail heads (Dry Hill Road with a kiosk and the other one being East Chestnut Hill near the DCR headquarters to Wendell State Forest). There will be a volunteer day to clean

up the cemetery and install some signage. Walter has approached the Water Department to discuss potential for more trails on around Water Department owned land. Alex Peterkin has been working on mapping trails and will share what he has done to this point.

420 Turners Falls Rd Enforcement Order

Walter Ramsey wrote a letter addressing the Enforcement Order and the results of non compliance with the order; this letter was sent to James Smith and DEP. No response was received from the landowner. DEP's response is pending.

Other Topics:

MACC has set the date for the annual environmental conference to be held on March 5, 2016. Walter will email the conference information to the Commission. Commissioners were encouraged to attend.

Motion made by Sean Werle to adjourn the meeting at 7:02PM. Seconded by Alex Peterkin. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Documents:

December 10, 2015 minutes

NOI #2015-05

Dry Hill Cemetery Map

420 Turners Falls Road File