

# Montague Conservation Commission

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## MEETING MINUTES

Thursday January 12, 2023- 6:30pm

Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls

Upstairs Meeting Room and via Zoom

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Mark Fairbrother, Margaux Reckard, Donna Francis, Sean Werle, Justin Fermann, Anthony Reiber, Al Averill. **Absent:** Toby Carter. **Staff:** Maureen Pollock (Agent), Suzanne LoManto

**Present:** Will Stratford (Montague DPW), Jill Ingham. Leonore (via Zoom)

*Meeting was recorded*

*Motion by D. Francis to approve the minutes of November 17, 2022 with grammatical changes. Seconded by M. Reckard  
VOTE: Mark Fairbrother (AYE), Al Averill (AYE), Margaux Reckard (AYE), Donna Francis (AYE), Sean Werle (AYE), Justin Fermann (AYE), Anthony Reiber (AYE), MOTION PASSES 6:33pm.*

Conservation Commission welcome the new agent, Maureen Pollock.

6:37PM RDA #2023-01 filed by the Town of Montague Department of Public Works for vegetation removal along municipal sewer easements running parallel to Montague City Road (From 303 Avenue A to Turnpike Road) and Greenfield Road (From 34 to 90 Greenfield Road). Portions of the work will occur within riverfront and wetlands resource areas.

The Agent conducted a site visit with DPW Foreman Will Stratford and Commissioners Reckard and Avrill at 3:00pm on January 12, 2023. The location of the sewer manholes, brush-hogging, vegetation removal and mowing were identified.

The Agent describes the two work locations and the scope of the proposed maintenance work. Maps are shown to the Commission.

Will Stratford describes the purpose of the proposal and the locations. The 30" sewer main along Avenue A (that runs behind the car wash, under Walnut Street and to Turnpike Road) has not been cleared of trees and brush in about 15 years. The work is seen as preventative, to keep roots from growing in the sewer. The DPW plans to maintain this sewer line more regularly.

This work is within the 15-foot sewer easement.

The Greenfield Road location goes behind the Treatment Plant, behind private lots to Red Fire Farm to the road. The DPW will cut, mow and brush-hog. The area is within Riverfront Resource Area but it was determined that the Commission does not need to check box 3a because the proposal is a "determination of applicability."

The DPW plan was reviewed by MassDEP who are satisfied that it adheres to best management practices to minimize impacts to the Wetlands Resource Area; no stump removal, no skidding, no mechanized outside of frozen conditions, no permanent disturbance of soil, and restoration of soil that is temporarily disturbed. Will Stratford comments that in the event of any temporary soil disturbance, he will put down a conservation seed mix and straw in the spring.

Margaux Reckard comments that in the wetter area (Walnut Street and Turnpike Road) some brush will be left to minimize disturbance and they will not use machines. (Will Stratford confirms)

Donna Francis asks about the timeline.

Will Stratford responds that hand work will be done soon, and mechanized work will be completed as soon as the ground freezes.

Tony Reiber confirms that chemical controls will not be employed. (Will Stratford confirms)

*MOTION by S. Werle to issue a negative determination 5 (maintenance exemption) with conditions for RDA #2023-01 filed by the Town of Montague Department of Public Works for vegetation removal along municipal sewer easements running parallel to Montague City Road (From 303 Avenue A to Turnpike Road) and Greenfield Road (From 34 to 90 Greenfield Road). Portions of the work will occur within riverfront and wetlands resource areas. Seconded by J. Fermann. VOTE: MOTION PASSES Mark Fairbrother (AYE), Al Averill (AYE), Margaux Reckard (AYE), Donna Francis (AYE), Sean Werle (AYE), Justin Fermann (AYE), Anthony Reiber (AYE). 7:01pm*

**Update from Conservation Commission representatives on the Montague Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.**

Margaux Reckard is working to promote the concerns of the Conservation Commission in the Comprehensive Plan process. She notes that the community survey reflected a desire from the public to consider climate resiliency and open space. Community visioning workshops are scheduled on Saturday, February 4th (in person) and on March 9<sup>th</sup> (via ZOOM). Margaux Reckard encourages the Commissioners to attend. She will be responsible for drafting the chapter of the Comprehensive Plan related to climate sustainability and resiliency. Justin is sending around a link to the survey findings. For more information about the Comprehensive Plan, please visit: [www.montagueplans.org](http://www.montagueplans.org).

**Commission Conversation: Goals for 2023.**

Topics in addition to increasing the Conservation fund can be sent to Maureen Pollock for future discussion.

***Topics not anticipated within 48 hour posting requirements***

Franklin Commons, Map 23, Lot 66: Montague resident Jill Ingham attended in-person to talk about a letter submitted to the Conservation Commission, dated January 12, 2023, regarding her concerns about wetlands contamination on the property abutting 4 Franklin Commons condominium units where she resides. This property is currently posted for sale.

Jill Ingham provides the construction history of Franklin Commons. Notes that between 1999-2000, the owner, William E. Evans, Trustee, was before the Commission.

M. Fairbrother remembers oily drums and particle shavings, describing the site as a junk yard. 10-12 barrels were removed.

According to the Order of Conditions Decision (DEP #229-180) issued to William E. Evans, Trustee, the 10-12 drums containing metal turnings with elevated concentration of arsenic and chromium were removed from the site on March 28, 2000.

The work approved under the Order of Conditions Decision (DEP #229-180) was for restoration/cleanup work as it related to potential contaminated soils. It is unclear whether the applicant, William E. Evans, completed this work, as he has not returned to the Commission to Request a Certificate of Compliance.

The Agent confirms that the land is posted for sale. The Town has contacted the seller's agent to inform them that there is an Order of Conditions on the property. The Order of Condition is recorded with the Franklin County Registry of Deeds (Book 3851, Page 148).

Jill Ingham is concerned about arsenic near the wetlands.

Leonore via ZOOM (Franklin Common Resident) agrees with Jill Ingham's concerns.

Agent will look for the application folder to locate the approved Order of Conditions and approved site plan so she can share with the Commission so they can determine if any additional actions should be taken.

*MOTION by D. Francis to Adjourn. Seconded by A. Reiber. VOTE: Mark Fairbrother (AYE), Al Averill (AYE), Margaux Reckard (AYE), Donna Francis (AYE), Sean Werle (AYE), Justin Fermann (AYE), Anthony Reiber (AYE). 7:25pm*