

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

6:00 P.M. VIA Zoom

Zoom Meeting Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87094935058?pwd=YjdRWjF5SkRRS2Z1TUM0M1Jlb1Yzd09>

Meeting ID: 870 9493 5058

Passcode: 189183

Members Present: Kimberly Roth, Rebecca Longvall, Ryan Ordnung, David Cowell & Don Brown

Absent: None

Kimberly Roth opened the meeting at 6:00 P.M.

AGENDA

6:00 Rauscher Farm Sub-Committee

General Note: A number of email attachments relate to two ongoing time-sensitive projects: Establishing a pollination system on Rauscher Farm; and the proposed Loosestrife containment approach using biological containment methods in the form of beetles.

I. Rauscher Farm Pollination System

The proposed layout for the Commission's review is based on two work sessions with Professor Robert Gegear via phone and Zoom during which he made specific plant suggestions; and his detailed bloom/nectar plant research at his UMASS Dartmouth Lab. Members of the RFMSC (Dean Briggs, Jim Webster; Gloria Parkinson) then generated a rough layout draft that was submitted to Professor Robert Gegear for his review and revisions. The layout for the Commission to review at its January meeting incorporates all the Gegear revisions. The selection and proposed positioning of the individual plant species are based on several criteria:

- a) Plant Selection: The proposed plants/shrubs are those recommended by RG for a wet/dry location. The proposed species cover the blooming and nectar seasons from April to October/November. They've been selected to support especially at-risk native bumble bees. All this info comes from the RG list on his lab's web site.
- b.) Plant Positioning: Taller shrubs (willow, etc.) have been positioned at the edges to take into account the sun pattern of the pollination system location on RF so as to avoid taller plants/shrubs shading smaller plants/shrubs, eg. Carolina rose.

- c.) The size of individual plots and the number of plants in each plot are based on research on how much space a species needs.
- d.) The cost of the plants comes from a supplier approved by RG.

II. Loosestrife Containment Update

Georgeann Keer, of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, spoke with Jim Webster and Gloria Parkinson on December 17, 2021. Ms Keer was an invaluable resource at that time and subsequently by supplying more links to resources in a follow-up email. (See attachment “Research Conversation with Georgeann Keer of FWE on December 17, 2021”). There now appears to be a single beetle vendor, Integrated Weed Control that *lists 105 beetles for \$150*. Gloria has left VMs but not yet heard back.

III. Adaptive Land Management Matters—Woodland Sustainability

The RFMSC continues to research tree species that may tolerate climate change better than other species. As of now red maple and oak are possibilities—both of which are desirable for woodland diversity reasons. It seems white pine, which springs up like a weed on Rauscher Farm, isn’t likely to weather climate change well.

The RFMSC also discussed Ryan Ordnung’s observation about the location of the beaver dam/pond in relation to the increased wetness of the lower end of the grassland field. RFMSC members who are also long-term neighbors to RF noted the beaver activity in that area predates the field’s wetland increase by several years.

Gloria mentioned a grant application for \$500 has been submitted to the Love for Liberty Foundation by the Clinton Greenway Conservation Trust. The application covers site prep costs--hire of a sod cutter and tiller for a day each; and wire fencing and support posts for protection from wildlife. The total budget for the Rauscher Farm Pollination System will be about \$2, 000. This includes site prep costs, plant costs, miscellaneous equipment such as water barrels, hosing, mulch materials.

No questions from the board at this time regarding the grant application for Pollination system.

Kimberly Roth asked about getting State or Federal approval regarding transferring the beetles across state line.

Jim Wheeler gave update on the four cameras and the current cellular system. Two of the cameras are out in the field and two of them are being held back until the spring time. They are working through the glitches and learning to use the cellular system.

**6:15 Notice of Intent – DCR Division of Water Supply Protection
Grove Street – Wachusett Dam
(Continuation from December 15, 2021)**

In the December Conservation Commission meeting, the Commission members stated that they would like to see “native vegetation” planted upon removal of the garage on Grove St. Given the amount of foot traffic in this area, and the fact that there is already grass in the immediate vicinity of the garage structure, the DCR proposed using a “conservation mix” for grass seed in this area. The following seed mixture proposal is as follows:

- 39.2% Epic Red Fescue
- 34.3% Hard Fescue
- 9.8% Kentucky Bluegrass
- 9.8% Perennial Ryegrass
- 4.9% White Clover
- 0.03% Other Crop Seed
- 1.93% Inert Matter
- 0.04% Weed Seed

The board approved using this seed mixture for planting upon removal of garage.

Rebecca Longvall made a motion to close the public hearing on the Notice of Intent for the DCR Division of Water Supply Protection on Grove Street, Ryan Ordnung made a motion to second, all in favor with a vote of 4-0 (Don was not present at this time)

Rebecca Longvall made a motion to approve the Notice of Intent for the DCR Division of Water Supply Protection on Grove Street based on the following conditions: erosion and sediment controls shall be inspected by the commission and or it’s agent prior to the start of construction, the applicant shall notify the commission in writing 7 days prior to the start of construction, Kimberly Roth made a motion to second the approval, all in favor with a 4-0 vote.

David Cowell had to leave the meeting for another commitment, Don Brown joined the meeting.

**6:30 Enforcement Order
37 Fairmount Street**

From Goddard’s inspection, the previously mowed field has been substantively restored back to its pre-existing conditions prior to the mowing by the owner. The required signage and rock have been installed to demarcate the limits of the wetland area and the Buffer Zone. Based off the site visit on December 4, 2021 the board has agreed to lift the enforcement order on 37 Fairmount Street.

Kimberly Roth made a motion to lift the Enforcement Order on 37 Fairmount Street, Rebecca Longvall made a motion to second, all in favor with a 4-0 vote.

Kimberly Roth made a motion to close the meeting, Rebecca Longvall made a motion to second, all in favor with a 4-0 vote.

The board approved the minutes from the December 15, 2021 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45

Old Business, approval of minutes, mail, correspondence, invoices, ongoing projects and compliance issues

Next Scheduled Meeting – Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Meeting Minutes taken by Ryan Rouillard