

# Conservation Commission

## Meeting

June 27, 2023

**Attendance:** David Miller, chair, Reed Pugh, Zeke Nims, Steve Cohn, Ann Storer, Martha Hoyt, Elaine Vreeland, Administrator.

**Minutes:** The minutes of June 13, 2023, were read and approved with changes.

**Post Office Fence:** A photograph was submitted showing a turtle nest behind the chain link fence at the post office. Discussion followed as to whether the Commission should request that the post office cut the bottom of the fence to allow for wildlife passage, but it was noted that the fence is located on federal land. It was also noted that it was more likely that the turtle had been able to dig beneath the fence.

**Kiosks:** Adam Lubomirski will soon complete his Eagle Scout project by building a kiosk at Sucker Brook. It was also said that other kiosks have been vandalized. David said that he will visit the neighbors to tell them of the proposed construction.

**Wright Locke Farm:** Archie McIntyre has left as Executive Director, and Erica Gorgenyi has replaced him. Ann said that Erica is interested in working with the Commission, and David said that he will make an appointment to speak with her.

### **Miyawaki Forest:**

The Bio4Climate grant application was discussed, and Elaine reported that the federal grant money favors Environmental Justice communities, so Winchester has been dropped as a recipient for materials but may receive labor and other services from Bio4Climate. Using left over landscaping from Davidson Park and the MWRA project at Forest Street were also discussed. It was noted that the Mystic Valley Watershed Association has applied for federal tree grant money, and if awarded, some would be used in Winchester.

**Wedge Pond Landscaping:** Public Hearing, Notice of Intent. *It is proposed to remove invasive plant species and plant native species along the shoreline of Wedge Pond near 666 Main Street.*

- **Representative:** Gina D'Allesandro
- **Information Submitted:** Notice of Intent and associated documents.

Gina said that she had met with Parterre Ecological who prepared a proposal to trim back overgrown vegetation and to remove or treat invasive species or treat them with herbicides.

Once completed, the opportunity to plant new native species will be discussed. The Department of Public Works will be available to remove the brush. Reed noted that the project will require ongoing commitment.

Public Comments: Ellie Hildebrand noted that Tree of Heaven is growing around the pond, and that she believes that they will attract Spotted Lanternfly. Reed said that the only way to get rid of Tree of Heaven trees is to treat the stripped bark with herbicide. Another neighbor asked if the chain link fence could be repaired, but David noted that the scope of the Order is determined by the size of the donation. There was a short conversation as to whether the fence should be repaired or removed to promote access. Neighbor Maureen Mansfield wanted to know if the work could be extended further than proposed, and Reed noted that the area she refers to now has native species.

It moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to close the hearing and to issue an Order of Conditions, following the scope of work in the Parterre proposal.

**Griffin Museum Art Installation at Judkins Pond:** Public Hearing, Notice of Intent. *It is proposed to install two temporary art pieces in Judkins Pond.*

- Representatives: Crista Dix, Griffin Museum, Ville Kansanen, Artist
- Information Submitted: Notice of Intent with associated documents

Reed began by noting that he has been speaking with town garden clubs, which are interested in supporting the Aberjona Initiative around Judkins Pond and that they may donate money. Ville explained the projects, consisting of two floating installations anchored to the bottom with wires, each anchored by a heavy block. There will be ramps leading to the floats. Once the work has been removed, there will be a restoration of the shoreline using a Parterre Proposal, typically to remove non-native species and replace them with natives, from the lot line with Judkins Green 200' upriver towards Skillings Road. This work is expected to take two years, will provide a view of the pond from the museum, and open the view to the museum. Steve raised questions regarding the weight of the balls on one of the floats, but the matter was resolved when it was noted that they would be comprised mostly of lightweight pumice. In the event of a storm, the installations may be removed easily and drawn to shore by a wire cable. A Chapter 91 license will be required. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote (Reed Pugh recusing) to close the hearing and to issue an Order of Conditions with a condition to follow the Parterre proposal for shoreline restoration, and a condition that all work be completed with two years of commencement.

**Lynch School:** Con't. Public Hearing, Notice of Intent. *It is proposed to demolish the existing Lynch school and to construct a new school with a supporting site and utilities.*

- **Representatives:** Michelle Callahan, Nitsch Engineering, Meg White, Town of Winchester, Ty Johnson, Warner Larson
- **Information Submitted:** 6/22/23 Plan Revisions

**Riverfront:** David noted that Reed and Steve had conducted side meetings regarding landscaping and riverfront calculations. Steve noted that the revised table followed the Conservation template and could be used as a guide for future projects. He noted that area 23 on the table could qualify for mitigation at a 2.5 to 1.0 ratio giving credit for removal of invasive vines, and noting that as lawn, this area is not degraded and so does not qualify for restoration and that it contains 3 tiers of vegetation. Ongoing maintenance was suggested as a condition in the Order of Conditions, in addition to a condition that the area could never be used for other purposes.

**Landscaping:** Reed noted that a revised landscaping plan would be submitted, and will include more native species and expanded irrigation beyond the 200' Riverfront Area. This plan should also include "no mow" areas. Educational outreach was also recommended.

**Demolition:** David stated that the information submitted was too generic, and given the project's proximity to the river, should be more specific. Michelle stated that all abatements of hazardous materials would occur inside the building, and that the parking lot next to Horn Pond Brook would be removed. It was suggested that a condition be added to the Order that the contractor return to the Commission a provide a detailed plan for removal of the asphalt, with enhanced erosion control along the brook.

**Pedestrian Bridge:** David requested additional information about how the abutments would be installed, and more specificity regarding the process. Michelle said that they would prepare a memorandum detailing the holes to be dug, the drilling method, and the foundations.

**Stormwater:** It was noted that the stormwater aspects are still under review with the Engineering Department. Michelle replied that a structural engineer could be available for the next meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to continue the public hearing to July 11, 2023.

**18 Sunset Road:** Con't. Public Hearing, Notice of Intent. *It is proposed to construct an addition on piers within a floodway.* It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to continue the hearing to July 11, 2023.

**Requests for Certificates of Compliance:**

- **16 Niles Lane:** Elaine noted that the applicant had submitted an As-Built Plan, and photographs of the stormwater installation. She had taken a site visit and all landscaping has been installed according to the landscaping plan. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to issue a Certificate of Compliance.
- **15 Churchill Road:** This request was to issue a Certificate of Compliance for a property upon which an Order of Conditions had wrongfully been recorded. Attorneys for the buyer and seller had both agreed to the remedy. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to issue a Certificate of Compliance.

**Winter Pond:** Ann said that she would be seeking more information regarding water quality units and other improvements on the roadway next to the pond. She said that the embankment on Big Winter Pond is collapsing, and that the Notice of Intent never discussed its repair. She also said that more gravel is being added to the parking area, and she is concerned as to what will happen when the railroad ties holding it back, are removed.

**New Members:** David said that he has been speaking with two people who have an interest in joining.

**Zoom Bombing:** Ways to prevent it were discussed, with the suggestion that speakers be required to give their names and addresses, or that everyone be required to pre-register.

**Budget:** Reed suggested that we prepare an annual budget for future projects, such as trail work, kiosks, and Town Day.

Submitted by: Elaine Vreeland