



# MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ONE AVENUE A · TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376 ·  
PHONE: 413-863-3200 EXT 207 · FAX: 413-863-3222

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday May 10, 2012

6:30 PM

Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

**Commissioners Present:** Mark Fairbrother–Chair, Sean Werle, Donna Francis, Addie Holland  
Justin Fermann and Deb Picking

**Staff Present:** Walter Ramsey- Agent, Anne Stuart- Clerk

Meeting called to order by Mark Fairbrother at 6:34 PM

***Motion** was made by Deb Picking to accept the April 12, 2012 minutes with minor grammatical edits. Seconded by, Justin Fermann. Motion passed unanimously.*

1. **NOI #2012-01, by The Franklin Conservation District** to implement a suite of restoration techniques to an approximately 1,700 linear foot reach of the Sawmill River west of the Federal Street (Route 63) bridge crossing in Montague, Massachusetts. Lot is identified as Assessors parcel 192-0-103 and work area includes work in municipal rights-of-way for North Leveret Road and Main Street.

**Guests:** Matthew Varrell – Engineer, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB)  
Deborah Shriver – Franklin Conservation District (FCD)  
Carolyn Shores Ness – Franklin Conservation District

Carolyn Shores Ness: This targeted restoration project is designed to protect North Main Street from erosion while improving the habitat and quality of the Sawmill River. Both the Sawmill River Restoration Plan of 2006 and this implementation project have been funded by a section 319 grant. VHB was the consultant for the 2006 plan, and this firm was secured by FCD to engineer this project.

Matt Varrell pointed out that this stretch of the river has been channelized. This causes the river to pick up velocity and contribute to downriver erosion. The restoration plan will use bioengineering to reduce the velocity, stabilize some banks, and allow the river to access its floodplain in high water events. The land is owned by Mass Department of Fish and Game and the permission for the project has been granted under a license. The time frame of project is approximately from August 15, 2012 – September 30, 2012.

Sean Werle suggested that baseline data on fish and macroinvertebrate populations be collected (prior to construction). Such a study would provide a means to measure project impact and would give more weight to future grant proposals of this nature.

There is a robust re-planting plan using native vegetation seeds and saplings for the impacted areas. Deb Picking suggested that any invasive species be removed according to best management practices. FCD will clarify the plans for proper disposal of the knotweed and affiliated contaminated soils.

There was a discussion about how this is a new type of project for Massachusetts, but the techniques have a proven success record in Vermont where there is an expedited permit process for projects like this.

Walter Ramsey reported that DEP issued a file number and comments. The commission is still waiting on a statement from National Heritage that there is no adverse impact to rare or endangered species. The protected species are believed to be the long nose sucker and the brook snake dragonfly.

Follow-up items:

- Walter will write comments to MEPA on behalf of Conservation Commission in support of the project
- Walter will refine draft conditions
- FCD will determine if as-built plans can be provided to the Conservation Commission

***Motion** made by Sean Werle to continue the hearing for NOI #2012-01 to June 14, 2012 at 6:30PM. Seconded by, Donna Francis. Motion passed 6-0*

**Update: WMECO Line 354 Reconstruction project DEP 299-0277**

Matt Varrell of VHB reported that construction is complete. 12,000 logs comprising the swamp mats have been removed. There were no spill incidents during the project and in the opinion of observers on the site the beaver population is increasing. The resource area is on the rebound already. Monitoring of the resource area is on-going.

***Motion** made by Justin Fermann to adjourn at 7:52 PM. Seconded by, Addie Holland.*

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_