

Montague Conservation Commission

One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376

(413) 863-3200 Ext. 207

Fax: (413) 863-3222

Email: planner@montague-ma.gov

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 12, 2014 – 6:30 pm

Second Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Sean Werle, Donna Francis, Alex Peterkin and Addie Rose Holland, Justin Fermann and Deb Picking

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey

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

Approval of May 8, 2014 Minutes:

Motion made by Donna Francis to accept the April 10, 2014 minutes. Seconded by Sean Werle Holland. **Motion passed.** Justin Fermann abstaining.

Public Hearing: Notice of Intent #2014-03 filed by Franklin Conservation District and Town of Montague. Proposed work involves re-establishment of banks in the vicinity of the South Street Bridge (South Street Right-of Way).

Guests: Debbie Shriver – Franklin Conservation District and David McKay – Wesson and Sampson Engineers

Debbie Shriver noted that this design and permitting for both North and South Street projects were being funded with leftover funds from the Sawmill River 319 grant. David McKay – project engineer was hired by the Franklin Conservation District to design and permit the project(s). The funding for the construction phase would come from a future grant (319 grant) at a later date.

David McKay provided proof of abutter notifications and spoke to the proposed project: Reestablishment of the bank width of the Sawmill River under the South Street Bridge to the maximum extent practicable. The Sawmill River is classified currently as a cold water fishery. The bridge is located in the vicinity of a major change in grade where the Sawmill River transitions from a narrower, faster flowing river to a wider, slower river within a well-established floodplain. Because of this the velocity of the water drops as the river widens north of the South Street Bridge and larger cobbles are deposited at the bridge. The deposited cobbles have reduced the flow carrying capacity of the river under the bridge which has resulted in local flooding during storm events and a greater potential for damage to the bridge. In order to address the reduction in capacity at the bridge the Town of Montague has removed cobbles from the river. These temporary measures have allowed the river to carry flood flows without permanent damage to the bridge; however this has also resulted in the widening of the river south of the bridge and the exposure of the bridge abutments.

The purpose of this project is to protect the bridge abutments in accordance with MA DOT and FHWA guidelines, and reestablish the upstream bank to full width through the bridge while attempting to move the cobble deposition area further downstream of the bridge.

This project is the first phase in a multi-phase project intended to address the cobble deposition problem. The current project will mitigate the danger of the exposed bridge abutments and

attempt to relocate the cobble deposition area downstream of the bridge.

This will be accomplished by:

1. reestablishing the bank to full width in the upstream portion of the river through the bridge.

Future phases include:

1. replacing the bridge with a new bridge that is above the 100-year floodway elevation.
2. reestablish the former meander in the river upstream from South Street that was removed for agricultural purposes to collect cobbles before reaching the bridge.
3. the installation of flood relief culverts under South Street to reduce the constricting effect the bridge has on the floodway, and possibly increasing the slope of the channel downstream of the bridge to improve velocities.

Until these future phases are able to be completed it is anticipated that regular maintenance consisting of removing cobbles from under the bridge by hand will be required to maintain the flow carrying capacity of the river.

Sean Werle asked if the cobbles will be dealt with initially and the answer was yes. There is a regular maintenance plan as part of the filing. The Montague Highway Department will be responsible to abide by the maintenance plan.

Justin Fermann asked if rip rap and trap rock will be brought in yes. The rip rap and trap rock will be limited to the bridge itself. The committee feels this is a good solution for this project as it helps with erosion control.

Mark Fairbrother asked if the coffer dams and the membrane will help to eliminate or just minimize the water flow into the work area. According to the engineer, it is one of the best solutions out there and it will not totally eliminate water flow into the area but will significantly minimize the flow.

Addie Rose Holland asked what the vegetative toe will look like. It will be made up of two foot in diameter rounded boulders that will keep the vegetative toe embedded in the river to one foot. The area will be a packed space between the boulders with top soil and plants with wiggle shoots to provide vegetation.

Suzanne Kretzenger (abutter) asked if the project will include adjusting the river flow where it comes around the bend. At this point the sole focus is strictly around the bridge. Some future work might be done upstream and the possible entire replacement of the bridge.

The agent stressed that the maintenance plan is a very important part of this project with strict guidelines that the DPW has to follow such as the removal of cobbles only by hand no machinery use.

David McKay suggested that a maintenance plan can be included in the conditions or in the compliance; either way it has to be done. The maintenance plan will follow the Army Core specifications which includes projects like this being done in the months of July, August, and September. There is also an emergency team in place that is on call that can take care of issues when and if they arise.

David McKay has asked and received landowner access which is almost complete. There is still an enforcement order out to the Montague Highway Department. They will be doing work during low flow and will remove stone cobbles, vegetation and stabilize the bank during July 1 – September 15.

Shao Jiang (abutter) –asked why other parts of the river are not being address but this section is?
Debbie Shriver replied that it is due to the bridge and road conditions. It will be done piece by piece due to the funding issues and what becomes available and the timing.

The Conservation District asked that the hearing be continued for further input from Natural Heritage.

The Chair, Mark Fairbrother continued the meeting to July 17, 2014 at 6:30 PM.

Public Hearing: Notice of Intent #2014-04 filed by Franklin Conservation District and Town of Montague. Proposed work involves the removal of concrete debris from the Sawmill River in the vicinity of the pedestrian bridge at the Sawmill River Recreation Area (Map 192 Lot 117.1).

Guests: Debbie Shriver – Franklin Conservation District and David McKay – Wesson and Sampson

The proposed project consists of the removal of concrete debris lying in the middle of the Sawmill River directly below the wooden bridge that carries a cart path from the end of North Street to State protected open space land. The concrete debris is the remains of a former abutment that used to stand on the bank of the Sawmill River. This debris is redirecting the flow of the river, potentially contributes to upstream flooding, and degrades the natural qualities of the stream. The use of an excavator and work by hand will be the methods used to remove the debris and keep the impact to the river to a minimum. There also will not be any refueling of machinery on site or storage of fuel. This is a limited project.

Temporary impacts to remove the concrete debris includes approximately 255 square feet of land under water to install a temporary barrier to direct flow around the work area to prevent unconfined work in the stream. The project will remove approximately 5 cubic yards of concrete debris from the stream. The banks of the stream were delineated by a wetland scientist from New England Environmental, Inc.

The disturbances noted above are all temporary disturbances required to remove the concrete debris from the river while preventing unconfined work in a flowing water body. The natural stream bottom will be stabilized prior to removing the temporary barriers to prevent erosion and downstream sedimentation.

The Conservation District asked that the hearing be continued for further input from Natural Heritage.

The Chair, Mark Fairbrother declared the meeting continued to July 17, 2014 at 6:45 PM.

Request for Determination of Applicability #2014-02 59 Highland Avenue filed by James Dickey. Proposed work involves the demolition of an existing house and construction of new single family house within the buffer zone of a bordering vegetated wetland. (Assessors map 52 Lot 50).

Guest: Selene Webber – Landscape Architect

The plan is to demolish the existing house at 59 Highland Avenue, leaving the garage intact. Existing basement to be filled. New house to be constructed on slab.

Work will be done in two phases:

- Phase 1: Build 24 x 32 house roughly on site of existing building. Erosion control methods will remain in place throughout the construction and then removed.
- Phase 2: Build an addition to house just north of existing house on what is currently open lawn. When the addition is constructed the erosion control measures will be e-install the protective measures when construction begins. A tree would be removed and a retaining wall to be constructed.

BVW located to the east of the house have been flagged by Cold Spring Environmental in May 2014. The site was visited by the Agent and Sean Werle on 6/12/14.

All the construction work is being done more than fifty feet from BVW. The new house will require some grading changes outside the buffer zone. Most of the run off sheds to the west of the property. The protective measures to be used are hay bales, silt fencing which are within the 50 foot buffer due to needing access to the existing gravel driveway.

Selene asked about tree limbs over the existing driveway that will need to be trimmed to fit the equipment through. The Conservation Commission would allow this as regular tree maintenance.

Agent asked about erosion control for stored soil. Selene responded that the open field is on a down slope and can be used for storage and they will place hay bales on the downside to prevent the runoff.

Motion made by Donna Francis for a Negative determination Box 3. Seconded by Addie Rose Holland. **Motion passed.**

Items not anticipated in the 48 hours:

Cabot Taps ENF

A MEPA Expanded Environmental Notification Form and Waiver request was received for the Cabot Taps Separation project. There will be some well testing and they will later be filing a NOI with the Conservation Commission. The work is generally line relocation and there will be an informational meeting at GCC in a few weeks if anyone would like to attend.

Wills Hill stream relocation on Plains

Walter did a site visit in the Montague Plains with Donna and Sean to visit an ongoing project done by Fish and Wildlife and met with Tim Simmons of Mass Wildlife to discuss the project. There is a brook in that location which runs down Plains Road and drains into a pond. The reason for this situation is due to the large population of farms during the 1940's through the 1960's in Montague. This population warranted building a drainage culvert ditch to attract water there from the farms. Fish and Wildlife is now proposing to take the river out of this ditch and to bring it back into its natural channels to run braided along the sand plains. Fish and Wildlife will be proposing a NOI to the Conservation Commission in the future.

Motion made by Addie Rose Holland to adjourn the meeting Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:10 PM

Approved by: _____ Date: _____