



Arlington Conservation Commission

Date: January 2, 2020

Time: 7:30pm

Location: Second floor conference room, Town Hall Annex
730 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA

Minutes

Attendance: Commission Members Susan Chapnick (Chair), Pam Heidell, Dave Kaplan, Nathaniel Stevens, Chuck Tirone (Vice Chair), and David White; Associate Commissioners Cathy Garnett and Mike Gildesgame; and Conservation Agent Emily Sullivan. Commissioner Mike Nonni was not present.

Project Updates

E. Sullivan summarized the status of the following projects: Spy Pond Erosion Control and Slope Stabilization, the Arlington Reservoir Master Plan Phase 1, Wellington Park, and Downing Square (19R Park Ave).

The Spy Pond project is still under construction and will be completed once the proposed overlook is built.

The Arlington Reservoir project is still under construction.

The Wellington Park project is complete.

The Arlington Housing Authority's Downing Square project is beginning construction this winter. The Conservation Agent performed a site visit on 01/02/2020. The project team has begun installing erosion controls and cutting back vegetation. The approved construction entrance needs to be changed due to slope issues. Once erosion controls are completely installed and a pre-construction meeting is conducted, the project will begin excavation of contaminated soil. C. Tirone was concerned with the potential indoor vapor exposure even though the proponent will install an intra-slab vapor mitigation system and vapor barrier. C. Tirone was also concerned with PCBs left on the site after cleanup becoming mobilized in the ground water column.

Water Bodies Working Group

D. White updated the Commission on the Water Bodies Working Group meeting that occurred on 01/02/2020. During the meeting, the Working Group discussed: the

Working Group's annual report, the warrant article for FY2021 funding, and FY2021 funding allocation for various projects and treatments.

Goal Setting

The Commission reviewed Commissioners' responses to the following questions about 2020 goals:

- a) List up to three goals for improving ACC procedures
- b) List up to three goals for improving ACC permitting
- c) List up to three goals for improving education and training for the Commissioners and/or ACC public outreach
- d) List up to three general goals
- e) List up to three ACC project ideas

Ideas generated for improving ACC procedures included:

- Add administrative project/general project process to regulations
- Add a consent agenda to meetings
- Facilitate meetings so everyone in attendance can hear
- Create a master permit tracking list
- Schedule site visits for substantive projects prior to first hearing

Ideas generated for improving ACC permitting included:

- Revise the Arlington Regulations for Wetlands Protection
- Have Commissioners submit questions/comments prior to first hearing
- Encourage the Conservation Agent to provide recommendations on applications during hearing
- Invite other town committees (Park & Recreation, DPW, etc.) to meetings to discuss areas of overlap and to improve permit coordination
- Add a general permit to the regulations
- Have Commission review/approve special conditions and OOCs for permits prior to permit issuance
- Create a list of all properties that fall under Commission jurisdiction and proactively send mailings about permitting procedures
- Develop FAQs
- Develop performance standards
- Schedule site visits

Ideas generated for goals for improving education and training for the Commissioners and/or ACC public outreach included:

- Leverage Town social media
- Create a permitting guide with ZBA, Inspectional Services, ARB, etc.
- Attend MACC and AMWS workshops
- Create a floodplain guidance document
- Include open forum for general questions on meeting agendas
- Devote 1-2 hours of a meeting to a wetland topic training and invite an expert to give the training
- Write educational articles for the Advocate and online

- Add tips and FAQ to webpage
- Target trainings to frequent issues in Town

Ideas generated for general goals included:

- Encourage each Commission member to lead at least one special project during the year or act as liaison to an existing project/effort
- Allow agenda time during a meeting at least once per quarter to discuss how processes are going, recommendations for improvements/changes, needs for education, and to evaluate how the Commission is progressing on 2020 goals
- Be a resource to residents
- Promote natural resource benefits
- Identify maintenance needs/gaps for ACC-managed properties and secure town resources for implementation

Ideas generated for project ideas included:

- Cooke's Hollow
- Vegetative buffers (C. Garnett's project)
- Floating wetlands pilot project
- Coordinate regional management of Upper/Lower Mystic Lakes
- Promote low-impact landscaping, connect with groups like Garden Club and Sustainable Arlington
- Invasive removal
- Certify vernal pools
- Open space clean-ups
- Tree planting
- Coordinate with schools for project ideas and class curriculums

Through review of these ideas and discussion of what the Commission's priorities should be, the Commission created the following goals for 2020 which will be included in the Annual Report to Town Meeting:

1. Strengthen and update regulations for performance standards, permitting efficiency, and process clarity
2. Host additional collaborative community clean-up and educational events
3. Improve the stewardship of conservation lands and other town open spaces
4. Improve communication and educational outreach to residents in resource areas

Annual Reports to Town Meeting

The Commission reviewed the draft annual report and discussed edits. N. Stevens motioned to submit the annual report with revisions and annual goals for the Commission as discussed, D. Kaplan seconded, all were in favor, motion approved.

Regulatory Update Discussion

The Commission agreed that the Arlington Regulations for Wetlands Protection should be updated in 2020 during its 11/21/2019 meeting and consistent with Commission's

goals. Further discussion of regulation updates will occur during the Commission's 1/16/2020 meeting. Possible areas for revision include:

Alternatives analysis [P. Heidell to draft]: buffer zones, AURA

Plan requirements [N. Stevens to draft]: standardize colors for resource areas (e.g. Plympton), detailed topographic maps (BLSF)

Stormwater calculations: consider updating to the NOAA Atlas 14 numbers from 2015 to replace the Cornell Method numbers from 2008

Tree / vegetation replacement: consider 2:1 replacement minimum and require minimum 3" DBH for survival. Current tree replacement table allows for 1:1. However, there are certain situations when there cannot be a 2:1 replacement. Consider alternatives for difficult situations

General permit [N. Stevens and C. Tirone to draft]: Falmouth and Reading examples, minor projects WPA list, notice sent to commission, right to request attendance at meeting

Administrative Review projects [N. Stevens and C. Tirone to draft]: consider projects that would not require even a general permit, such as projects that will improve the resource area (e.g., remove impervious surface or reduce flood storage encroachments) or have no impact (e.g., replace roof on an existing structure within the resource area / buffer). These projects could only require Conservation Agent review to ensure they have documentation of the project and any required calculations or project components

Cooling off period: [would require a bylaw change] consider that Applicants cannot resubmit an application if denied for certain period of time

Climate change adaptation section: using the new MACC buffer zone guidance

Section 2.B.1&2 [C. Tirone to draft]: clarify jurisdiction

Floodplain [N. Stevens and C. Tirone to draft]: clarify compensatory flood storage

Meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.