

Brookline Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 7:00 PM
WebEx Virtual Conference

Commissioners Present: Marcus Quigley (Chair), Roberta Schnoor (Vice Chair), Pamela Harvey, Werner Lohe, Benjamin Wish, Werner Lohe, Pallavi Kalia Mande

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Tom Brady (Conservation Administrator), Katie Weatherseed (Conservation Assistant)

Guests: John Rockwood, Joseph Porter, Shengqi Li, Mark Cooperman, John Haven

AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES

The Commission reviewed the set of minutes from February 25th, 2020. P. Harvey abstained from the vote as she was not in attendance.

R. Schnoor made a motion to approve the minutes from February 25, 2020. B. Wish seconded. All in favor.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE NOTICE OF INTENT FOR LARZ ANDERSON PARK

T. Brady stated that the applicant received their DEP file number recently. S. Landgren stated that he believes the Commission has everything they might need to proceed.

R. Schnoor made a motion to close the hearing. P. Harvey seconded. All in favor.

T. Brady stated that they received the draft Order of Conditions from K. Weatherseed early this afternoon. They outline requirements for additional information to be filed for the Commission's review. B. Wish suggested minor revisions.

T. Brady stated that he will finalize the conditions and get the Order to the Commissioners for their signatures.

W. Lohe made a motion to issue the Order of Conditions with modifications. P. K. Mande seconded. P. Harvey abstained. All others in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE NOTICE OF INTENT FOR 100 COTTAGE STREET

T. Brady stated that his office received the certified mail green receipts for 100 Cottage Street. Dr. John Rockwood, Chief Environmental Scientist with Ecotec, introduced himself, and noted that Joseph Porter and the applicant, Shengqi Li, were also present. J. Rockwood described the site, including a small perennial stream and the associated area of bordering vegetation and buffer zone. The proposed work includes the demolition of the existing house, carport, shed, driveway, patios and retaining walls. 6 trees are to be removed. The applicant is also proposing to

construct a new house and rear patio and do landscaping. The project includes proposed stormwater infiltration systems to the west and south of the house as the project will increase the impervious area on site. There is no system for stormwater under existing conditions. In regards to mitigation, some of the site will be restored, enhanced or preserved. Overgrown areas will be replanted with native species to protect down-gradient resources. Most of the site is currently maintained as lawn. J. Rockwood also described a forested area at the rear of the lot which the applicant is willing to preserve and put a deed restriction on.

The floor was opened for questions. M. Quigley discussed the proposed increase of impervious surface with J. Rockwood. J. Rockwood confirmed that the proposed stormwater systems had been developed to the Town of Brookline's standards. M. Quigley inquired if there were any impervious areas that do not discharge to the proposed infiltration facilities and overflow outlets. J. Rockwood stated that to the side of the house there are 3-4 splash blocks which are not directed to these systems and are intended to help maintain the existing hydrology on site. M. Quigley also asked about future maintenance of the grounds on site. J. Rockwood responded that they will convert 5,780 square feet of lawn to an enhanced area planted with native saplings and shrubs, which will then be blocked off to allow the area to naturalize. The shed and driveway will be removed, in addition to existing invasive overgrowth near these structures. The beech grove to the rear of the property will be preserved.

W. Lohe mentioned that since the site abuts land belonging to the Brookline Conservation Land Trust, he believes that boundaries demarcating this property line would be a positive thing. He stated that he believes the overall proposed design is sympathetic of the neighborhood and efforts to preserve the areas that are near the stream or down by the beech tree grove are appreciated.

M. Quigley and T. Brady discussed the condition of the stream and how it has been adversely impacted by significant rain events in the past. T. Brady stated that he believes the impacted area was located on a differing property, and the stream bank that abuts this property, to the best of his knowledge, is in fair condition. M. Quigley asked if there is any work proposed relative to the bank, and J. Rockwood responded that they will not be going into the resource area. M. Quigley mentioned the possibility of the applicant doing additional restoration work nearer to the resource area.

T. Brady inquired about how a restriction would be set up over the three lots that make up the site. J. Rockwood stated that he would draft a deed restriction or a declaration of restriction that limits the uses of the area and include a plan that shows the area subject to protections. T. Brady inquired about the possibility of going through a formal Conservation Restriction process. J. Rockwood stated he could talk with the applicant and see how they would feel about a Conservation Restriction. It will, however, take a longer time to finalize. W. Lohe commented that a formal Conservation Restriction would make more sense as it is easier to monitor and track.

T. Brady inquired about the proposed demarcations for the enhancement area. He asked if there will be a visual demarcation in the field of where the area stops and starts, and whether it will be temporary or permanent. J. Rockwood replied that a fence or dense plantings could be considered.

W. Lohe inquired as to the missing topography of the southeast boundary of the property, which borders the Brookline Conservation Land Trust. J. Porter stated that they didn't do topography in that area as they weren't planning on doing any work by the property line. W. Lohe said it might make sense to have the preservation area surveyed for topography if the applicant plans on staking out the boundary line. T. Brady asked if there were stakes in the field. J. Porter replied no. J. Rockwood stated that an erosion control barrier will be erected well away from that property line to prevent work from spilling over into that area. W. Lohe said it would be advantageous to have the line delineated to ensure there is no confusion in the future. It was suggested that the property line be marked in 3 locations with plantings along the stream. J. Rockwood stated he would discuss this with the owner. Shengqi Li stated that his intention is to minimize impact on the resource area.

P. Harvey made a motion to continue the hearing to April 28th at 7:05. B. Wish seconded. All in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE NOTICE OF INTENT FOR 280 WARREN STREET

T. Brady stated that his office received the certified mail green receipts. Mark Cooperman, of EcoTerra Design and Consulting, introduced himself. He stated that the intent of the project is to redesign the existing landscape. He described the resource areas on site: two bordering vegetated wetlands - a manmade pond and a stream that runs along the border of property. Most of the property is located within (a) buffer zone(s). M. Cooperman described the impervious surfaces to be removed or placed and the proposed areas for landscaping. He described an area currently maintained as lawn, which is to be converted to a native fern bed. He described a number of proposed improvements to the existing drainage systems, which are currently failing. He stated that the radial wall of the upper terrace will be removed and the stone wall extended. However, he clarified that the applicant will be removing more wall than is being created. He noted that two trees that will be removed as part of the project, and John Haven stated that four hornbeams will be planted. Several existing plants will be transplanted. The applicant also seeks to supplement the existing plantings around the pond, which was approved as part of a previous filing. He opened the floor to questions.

W. Lohe asked where the proposed fern bed will be in relation to the pond. J. Haven replied that the fern area will be to the west of the residence. He added that the applicant is proposing additional plantings near the pond. M. Quigley inquired as to how the site is functioning hydrologically, particularly in regards to the work

completed as part of the previous filing. M. Cooperman replied that the vegetation is doing extremely well - the marshes and biological zones are thriving. He described the inputs to the pond and reviewed its general hydrology. He stated that he feels the pond health has been successful, and noted that the pond has attracted a lot of wildlife. M. Quigley asked about the infiltration structures installed several years ago under the driveway. M. Cooperman stated that no drainage issues have been observed.

T. Brady stated that he thinks the change from lawn surface to ferns will be an improvement for diversity and water quality.

P. Harvey asked if there is any work proposed on areas that aren't currently lawn. M. Cooperman replied there is only work proposed in areas previously maintained as lawn or landscaped areas. M. Cooperman described the proposed erosion controls, including a 12-inch filter mitt. Along the steeper portions of the rear slope where grading will take place, a wire reinforced fence will be installed as a supplementary erosion control measure.

T. Brady stated that since the project does not have a DEP file number yet, the public hearing should be continued.

P. Harvey made a motion to continue the hearing to April 28th at 7:20 PM. W. Lohe seconded. All in favor.

ADJOURN

The Commission discussed current legislation under review that would extend regulatory deadlines to 45 days beyond whenever the state of emergency ends. T. Brady mentioned that a Certificate of Compliance request would soon come in front of the Commission for Woodland Road and may necessitate a site visit.

B. Wish made a motion to adjourn. R. Schnoor seconded. All in favor.

Minutes prepared by K. Weatherseed