

DATE: April 1, 2021
TIME: 8:40 AM

**MEETING MINUTES
Belmont Conservation Commission
December 1, 2020 Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Meeting
7:00 pm**

Attendees:

Members: Jim Roth (Chair); Jeff North (Vice Chair); Miriam Weil; Christopher Morris; Peg Velie; Dan Nolan; Charles Chang; Mark Smith (Associate)

Others: Carolyn Bishop; Judy Singler; Alexander Wong; Judy Otto; Angelo Firenze; Russ Khederian; Richard Kirby; Nicholas Colavito; Felix Firenze; John Alcock; John Dieckerman; (781 760 3623); and Bill French, Sr.,

Call to Order:

The Meeting was Called to Order at 7:05 pm by Jim Roth.

September 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

After a short discussion and after a a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission

VOTED to approve the September 15, 2020 meeting minutes, as amended.

October 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes:

After a short discussion, and after a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission

VOTED to approve the October 27, 2020 meeting minutes, as amended.

Discussion: Signage along Western Greenway

John Dieckerman reported that he has obtained a grant for signage along the Western Greenway path system. He noted that work could include a kiosk, and that maps of the trail system could be posted. The Commission noted that a trail map for Rock Meadow was done through a grant several years ago, and that it could be used by the Western Greenway mappers. Dan Nolan and Jeff North agreed to coordinate with John, to mark the trails and entrances to Rock Meadow.

Public Hearing: Notice of Intent for 59 Vernon Street

Rich Kirby, representing Nicholas Colavito, presented the plans for an addition and deck to the rear of the 59 Vernon Street house. The proposal consists of an addition, to be set within the existing footprint of a deck, and the subsequent construction of a new deck. The application

proposes to leave, in place, a large oak tree to the north of the addition. The Commission noted that if the tree should prove problematic, they would be willing to entertain cutting and subsequent replanting of a smaller tree. This conversation reflected the size and proximity of the tree to the existing home and proposed addition. The Commission noted that the addition is too small to trigger a storm water mitigation plan. They also noted a small pile of leaf litter, along the wetland edge, and requested that it be pulled out of the wetland area. The Commission noted that backfill materials should be protected by sedimentation barriers, prior to use in backfilling the new foundation.

Based on a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission

VOTED to issue an Order of Conditions approving the work as proposed, and to authorize the Chairman of the Commission to provide a single signature to the document, rather than require individual signatures from the various members of the Commission.

Discussion: Recent Alterations at Clay Pit Pond

The Commission invited Bill French, Sr., to the meeting to discuss his recent, alleged tree removal from jurisdictional areas at Clay Pit Pond. Mr. French noted that the new Veteran's memorial has been a popular destination for visitors to Clay Pit Pond, and that the sponsors of the memorial have worked at the landscaping of the memorial area. Mr French noted that the recent work discussed this evening was his efforts, not the efforts of the veteran's group. He noted that he had begun clearing brush, bitter sweet vines, and small saplings from the bank of the pond to create scenic vistas. He noted that he found trash, bottles, and other unsavory items within the vegetation along the pond, and took it upon himself to clean up these materials. He noted that he began his work at the Memorial area, and continued westerly along the pond. Mr. French noted that the Belmont DPW agreed to help with his work, and removed much of the slash and cuttings from the park for disposal. Mr French noted that stumps remain intact, and that the DPW has agreed to have them cut flush with the ground.

The Conservation Commission discussed the work with Mr. French, noting that any and all work within one hundred feet of the Pond is within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission , and requires a permit. They noted that the work done by Mr. French was unauthorized. The Commission discussed this violation with Mr. French, noting that a CPA project designed to control the invasive and non native plants along the Pond was ongoing but was limited to services provided by Land Stewardship, the firm awarded the contract for the removal of specific plants from within jurisdictional areas. Mr. French noted that work appeared to have stopped over the past year, and the Commission noted delays due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The Commission agreed that the schedule originally proposed by the contractor had been altered by the virus and limitations on safe work and travel.

Christopher Morris expressed outrage that this work, on public land, was done without the review of the Conservation Commission. He noted that he expected the work would require bank stabilization, and would change the scope of the CPA grant invasive plant species control work. Margaret Velie noted that the scope of work included in the CPA grant had been carefully conceived, and approved by Town Meeting. She expressed concern that the illicit cutting would adversely impact the ability of the contractor to complete the contracted work.

Several attendees, including Caroline Bishop, Nancy Davis and Judy Singler commented on the work, and expressed concerns with bank instability and sediment control. An anonymous phone

caller expressed pleasure with the work, noting it was a remarkable transformation of a neglected area.

Mary Trudeau noted that at her last visit to the Pond, she had not observed sediment movement into the Pond. This was contradicted by Caroline Bishop and Judy Singler. She noted that it seemed likely that replanting would be required in some portions of the altered areas, and asked Mr. French to consider this future obligation. She noted that a decision on planting, and planting, would necessarily be delayed until spring, due to the current wintery conditions. Ms Trudeau asked Mr. French to keep in touch with the Commission concerning the stabilization and restoration of the altered areas.

Introduction of Phillip Thomas:

Jeff North introduced Mr. Phillip Thomas to the Commission. Jeff noted that Mr. Thomas is a local beekeeper and environmental activist who has expressed an interest in the Belmont Conservation Commission.

Lone Tree Hill

Jeff North gave a brief update on the Lone Tree Hill site.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission

VOTED to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:00 pm