

APPROVED

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Belmont Conservation Commission**  
**March 7, 2017 Meeting Minutes**  
**Room 2 Town Hall**  
**7:00 pm**

2017 APR 20 AM 11:00

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

**Attendees:**

Members: Jim Roth (Chairman); Jeff North (Vice Chairman); Margaret Velie; Miriam Weil; Charles Chiang, Dan Nolan (Associate)

Absent: Chris Morris; Kate Weinstein

Others: Mary Trudeau, Dr David Alper (Board of Health), Joan Teebagy, Joe Finn

**7:05 Review of Minutes of February 7, 2017 meeting**

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the February 7, 2017 meeting.

**Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the vote was unanimous to approve the minutes as amended.**

**7:10 Joan Teebagy – Land Management Grazing proposal**

Joan reviewed her 2015 Grazing Pilot Plan with the Commission. Noting that the grazing had been successful, she asked the Commission to consider a similar program in the 2017 growing season. Joan noted that she would install a temporary shelter, and use a temporary fence, with an electrical component, to contain the grazing animals. Joan noted that the sheep had done a reasonably good job with mowing grasses, but had been less effective with invasive plant species. She noted that she would include a few goats in the herd to improve the efficacy of the mowing. Joan noted that she is limited by the length of her hose (approximately 150 feet) when situating the protective shelter and fencing for the project.

The Commission discussed the possibility of hand grazing the animals to better impact the non natives, such as Black Swallowwort, or Bittersweet vines. Joan noted that this was possible, and would require a team of volunteers to graze the animals in selected areas. Joan noted that keeping visitors on the trails was a key component of protecting her animals from interference. Mary Trudeau noted that she was contemplating new signage with clear instructions detailing the leashing of dogs and the need for visitors to stay on the mowed paths.

David Alper, Chairman of the Board of Health, introduced himself to the Commission and noted that he was concerned with the lack of a comprehensive approach to the

keeping of livestock at Rock Meadow. He noted that there needs to be an established protocol in case of animal emergencies, and contact information provided to the Board of Health as well as the Conservation Commission. He reminded the Commission that John Magurnis, the animal control officer, has limited hours and many tasks.

Dr. Alper also expressed concerns with the increasing interest in bee keeping and chicken raising at Rock Meadow. He noted that the Town has regulations designed to accommodate chickens in residential areas, but does not regulate animals kept on municipal properties. He reported that approximately 35 chicken licenses are granted each year, and that there is increasing interest in apiaries throughout town. He urged the Conservation Commission to develop policies regulating the use of the Town lands for agricultural purposes, and to avoid a piecemeal approach to regulating activities.

Joe Finn weighed in on the control of non native and invasive plant species. Noting that the seed banks have variable life spans, eradication efforts must continue for undefined periods of time. Joe noted that he currently mows and pulls invasives, and does not apply herbicide in his control efforts in Rock Meadow.

**Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously to approve a second phase of the Grazing Pilot Program proposed by Joan Teebagy.**

Charles Chiang had left the meeting room during the discussion, and did not vote on the proposal.

**7:45 Bat Box Proposals by Scouts:**

The Commission discussed an inquiry from an Eagle Scout candidate concerning staging bat nesting boxes on trees in Rock Meadow. Noting that the concept is appropriate, the Commission expressed concern that the project include research to ensure the viability of the boxes. Jeff North noted that boxes had been installed at Lone Tree Hill, but was unsure as to the success of the program. The Commission agreed that with appropriate education, the concept would make a fine scout project.

**8:00 Lone Tree Hill Updates:**

Jeff North reported on a recent meeting of the Land Management Committee on March 8, 2017. Jeff discussed an upcoming pilot program to re plant approximately (40) trees within the Pine Allee. The project will include trees obtained from a variety of nurseries, and will evaluate the successful growth of trees from the various sources. Volunteers will be needed to assist with the planting.

**8:15 178 Marsh Street: Recap of Board of Survey Meeting**

Jim Roth recounted the proceedings from the most recent Board of Survey meeting, with respect to the proposed development at 178 Marsh Street. Noting that the proponent is asking for a waiver to allow the cul de sac to extend to 750 feet from the maximum allowed length of 600 feet, Jim reported that the debate was lively. He reported that the meeting room was full of concerned citizens, and that many issues were raised by the general public. Discussion included the presence of wetlands; the presence of vernal pools and the value of the property as contiguous open space with the adjacent Habitat lands. Jim noted that the Board of Survey did not make a decision on the proposed

roadway, and requested that the applicant provide a plan showing a fully compliant roadway with a length of approximately 600 feet.

Jim suggested that the Conservation Commission send a letter to the Board of Survey commenting on several facets of the proposal. Jim noted that the applicant reported that the Conservation Commission has "signed off" on the project, and he suggested that the Commission clarify the process and determinations that have occurred.

Jim also noted that the proposed drainage system requires the installation of infiltration units, and grading within jurisdictional areas, to function as required by the local storm water management bylaw. He believes that the Commission may be able to take jurisdiction over the roadway drainage system. He suggested that this information should be made available to the Board of Survey. Peg Velic noted that this parcel is the largest piece of privately owned open space in Belmont, and that this parcel had been given the highest valuation in the Environmental Land Inventory prepared for the CPA committee. She also reminded the Commission that early maps of this property show the site as the headwaters of the Atkins Brook.

Mary Trudeau agreed to draft a letter incorporating these points, and to submit it to Jim Roth for signing and submission.

**8:45 Clay Pit Pond Intergenerational Walking Path discussion:**

The Commission discussed the continuing contract negotiations between the BETA Group and the Town. The BETA contract negotiation has been prolonged due to an unwillingness to negotiate specific language by both parties, but Mary noted that a compromise had been reached, and the contract was in the process of being signed.

**Adjourn**

**Miriam Weil moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm; Jeff North seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.**