

AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
May 11, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Henry Kozloski
Jill Ward
Keven Brown
Page Fallon
Frank Meagher

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sheryl Becker
Magda Galiatsos

ALSO PRESENT:

Taryn Egerton
Stefanie Kesecker

Mr. Kozloski called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

1. 6:00PM REQUEST FOR DETERMINATION-955 River Road-Goggin

Nicholas Goggin from St.Pierre pools stated his clients would like to install an inground pool with a concrete deck. Mr. Goggin stated it was 17ft. to the property line. Mr. Brown asked if there was any tree work occurring. Mr. Goggin stated no. Mr. Kozloski stated the properties in the floodplain and that is the reason for the RDA.

Motion was made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Meagher to issue a Negative Determination of Applicability-955 River Road.

VOTE 5-0-0

2. DISCUSSION-Hydrilla along the Connecticut River-Connecticut River Conservancy

Kelsey Wentling with the Connecticut River Conservancy, a non-profit that maintains the water quality of the Connecticut River, was present for this agenda item. Her presentation was on Hydrilla an invasive species, native to Europe and parts of India. She stated this is a super weed and grows 15' to 20'ft, is harmful to fish, propagates through fragmentation, and readily spreads. Ms. Wentling stated the furthest northern population on the Connecticut River Hydrilla is found in Agawam, outside of Six Flags. She stated they are working with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to do outreach. She went on to say that Hydrilla was first found in 2016 in Connecticut River and now covers about 800 acres. Ms. Wentling said they will be performing surveys this summer and next to work on the management of this invasive species,

but full control is not realistic. The Connecticut River Conservancy is working with Army Corps and the State to inform and educate boaters to prevent the spread. Boats cannot travel through areas of this and it cannot be fished in, thus reducing home values along the River. Ms. Ward asked if Hydrilla could be hand pulled. Ms. Wentling responded that it may be possible in Agawam where there is a small infestation, but it has small tubers on the roots that stay in the ground. Mr. Brown asked if there was a way to weigh it down. Mr. Wentling stated they had used weighted heavy plastic at the beginning of the growing season and left it down for 4 to 6 weeks, the negative side to this is that it kills anything under it. Ms. Ward asked if there was going to be anyone at the boat docks that were entering and existing to educate them. Ms. Wentling stated that is the most effective way to prevent the spread and DCR has a program where occasionally people are out at ramps informing, and they are working with the State to increase this presence. Signage would also help inform boaters according to Ms. Wentling. Mr. Kozloski asked if there was any State or federal funding. Ms. Wentling stated the federal government has provided some funding, but it is mostly research at this time and State is doing some of the surveying themselves, but there is a State bill this year to provide funding for invasive management across the State. Mr. Kozloski stated it would be good to be proactive now. Mr. Meagher asked if there was anything available to kill it without causing environmental harm. Ms. Wentling stated there is a herbicide called Diquat, but there is a lot of caution around using this product in such a large and dynamic water system. Mr. Fallon asked how much Hydrilla is in the area north of Connecticut line. Ms. Wentling responded less than an acre presently. Mr. Fallon asked if the only way it can migrate upstream is through human activity. Ms. Wentling stated yes, but occasionally it can get stuck on water fowl who can carry it. Mr. Kozloski asked if Six Flags had been made aware. Ms. Wentling stated it would be valuable to reach out to Six Flags. Mr. Kozloski asked Ms. Wentling for some written information so the Commission can advertise this as well as to inform the Town.

3. DISCUSSION-St. Jacques Ave

Mr. Kozloski asked the Commission if they had viewed the photos and he stated it doesn't appear they have come into the Commission's jurisdiction. Mr. Kozloski also stated the Building Inspector had been contacted and he had no problems with this site. Mr. Kozloski stated the Commission should keep an eye on this project. Ms. Ward suggested sending a letter advising them they are getting near the 100 ft. buffer and they would have to stay away, and would need to do a Notice of Intent or Request for Determination to enter the area.

4. PUBLIC HEARING CONT.-NOTICE OF INTENT-North Westfield Street over May Hollow Brook-Town of Agawam DPW

The Commission received a request to continue this agenda item until the June 8, 2023 meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Meagher to continue the –NOTICE OF INTENT-North Westfield Street over May Hollow-Town of Agawam DPW to the June 8, 2023 meeting, as requested.

VOTE 5-0-0

5. RATIFY EMERGENCY ORDER-Suffield Street-Worthington Brook Stream Crossing

Mr. Fallon stated he was onsite today and it appears the beaver activity is on the downstream side and the beavers are not obstructing the culvert. He stated the upstream side is 2ft. higher than the downstream side, because the culvert is blocked due to the granite curbing that has fallen due to erosion from the road surface. Mr. Fallon said the culvert is 75-80% above water, but on the upstream side the culvert appears like a box and the water is 8 to 10 inches below that. Mr. Kozloski asked if any work was being done. Mr. Fallon stated no one was onsite when he was present. Mr. Fallon stated the culvert needs cleaned out. Mr. Kozloski stated the Emergency Order is only for the downstream side and the Commission would set up an onsite visit to look at both the upstream and downstream sides. Mr. Brown asked if the Town was responsible for the culvert. Mr. Kozloski stated yes.

Motion was made by Ms. Ward and seconded by Mr. Brown to RATIFY THE EMERGENCY ORDER-Suffield Street-Worthington Brook Stream Crossing.

VOTE 5-0-0

6. Request for Certificate of Compliance-Nicole Terrace Subdivision-Lot 7

Mr. Fallon went onsite and stated the grass is growing well.

Motion was made by Mr. Fallon and seconded by Mr. Brown to issue the Certificate of Compliance-Nicole Terrace Subdivision-Lot 7, with the ongoing condition that the homeowner's association will be responsible for maintaining the swale.

VOTE 5-0-0

7. Discussion-Outdoor Classroom-Junior High/Granger Elementary

Laura Fallon presented this agenda item. She stated they had R. Levesque Associates survey the land and design a path. Mr. Kozloski stated the Chief of Staff, Jennifer Gannett had spoken to him about Hadley that has trails through the wetland that are wood and Mr. Kozloski advised her that may be something that could be looked into to see how this was done using wood. Mr. Kozloski stated DEP was concerned with the elevation, so that light can get to the plants. Ms. Fallon stated R. Levesque had informed them if they went 30" above ground there would be 742 sq. ft. of disturbance to the wetlands, and if they go higher, a railing will need to be installed. Ms. Fallon stated the square boxes coming off the trails are seating areas and railing will be added in these locations. Mr. Brown asked if the classroom area would be on wood or stone dust. The one in front will be an outdoor classroom, in the back may be a stone semi-circle. Ms. Fallon stated they plan to cross the intermittent stream with a bridge, and put in trees and pollinator plants. She went on to say this will be used by the Junior High and Granger Elementary students. There will be a pergola and orchard with a path, as well as a kiosk for birds, bee boxes. Ms. Ward offered to assist with bees and aviary. Ms. Fallon went on to say

there will be a pathway, approximately one mile long and it will be open to the public as well. There will be flower garden and a math garden that will be shaped in geometrical shapes, the kids can measure and do distance. Ms. Fallon stated they want to restore the area and clean up the debris. Mr. Kozloski asked if there was an agreement with the Town to help remove the debris. Ms. Fallon stated if they get the debris out of the area they have an agreement and that the Town would pick it up. Mr. Meagher asked about the kiosk for the birds and were they feeders, as his concern was for wild animals. Ms. Fallon said no just like signs, similar to the ones at School Street Park. Principal Norm Robbins said there would be QR codes for the signs that the kids could scan and learn the history of the different species of plant life as well as animals. Mr. Robbins stated he felt this was a valuable activity and also would increase safety and another place for the children to go if needed to exit the building. Nicole Rodericks, 7th Grade Science teacher stated this will be a great opportunity for ecology and to reconnect or connect the children with nature. AN RDA will be submitted for this project.

8. Correspondence and Complaints

Ms. Egerton informed the Commission Tennessee Gas has submitted a corrective action plan for restoration area 2 at Tuckahoe Turn Farm. Plant species that did not survive will be replaced with new species as outlined in the corrective action plan: 75% survivorship is required after 5 years.

Motion was made by Ms. Ward and seconded by Mr. Brown to allow for the change of species as outlined in the corrective action plan, for Tennessee Gas-mitigation area 2 at Tuckahoe.

VOTE 5-0-0

Ms. Egerton stated that there is flooding in a drainage easement between 87 and 95 Parkedge Drive. The Engineering Department has been informed and will let the Commission know if any action needs to be taken on the property.

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES-April 27, 2023

Motion was by Ms. Ward and seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the minutes of April 27, 2023.

VOTE 4-0-1 (Meagher)

10. PUBLIC HEARING CONT.-NOTICE OF INTENT-1014 North St Ext-VIP Homes & Associates LLC (Continued to May 25, 2023)

This agenda item was previously continued.

11. PUBLIC HEARING CONT.-NOTICE OF INTENT-Main Street-Westfield River Interceptor Sewer Relocation Project-Agawam (Continued to June 22, 2023).

This agenda item was previously continued

Agawam Conservation Commission
May 11, 2023

Motion was made by Ms. Ward and seconded by Mr. Brown to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.