

Town of Lenox
Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 2, 2020

In attendance: Neal Carpenter (NC), Vincent Ammendola (VA), David Lane (DL), Rose Fitzgerald Casey (RFC), Joseph Strauch (JS)

Also: Robert Akroyd (RA), Emily Stockman (ES), Matt Puntin (MP)

Staff: Gwen Miller (GM)

1. 7:30 p.m. EPRI, 115 New Lenox Road, Notice of Intent

A site visit was conducted on June 23 with Matt Puntin, Mark Messana (EPRI), Vince Ammendola, Rose Fitzgerald Casey, David Lane & Neal Carpenter

Matt Puntin from SK Design introduced himself and described the project at EPRI. He noted the new building would be placed where there is existing development, and the new building in the Flood Plain would have flood vents. He explained how the flood vents work. Matt said that Mark Stinson from DEP had comments regarding how the flood vents function. Matt noted the second reason for an NOI filing is for the River Front Area. They are proposing a mitigation area, but was corrected by Mark Stinson who said it would be an "improvement area". Currently EPRI mows it a few times a year; EPRI plans to stop mowing it. The comment from Mark Stinson is to monitor for invasive species.

There were no questions from the Conservation Commission members.

Neal asked if it was subject to the Stormwater standards. Matt said no, since they were not creating any non-point discharge outlets.

DL made a motion; VA seconded. All voted in favor.

2. 7:45 p.m., Miraval, 55 Lee Road (West Side)

A site visit was conducted on June 22 with Rob Akroyd, Vic Cappadona (Miraval), Mark Smith, Rose Fitzgerald Casey, David Lane and Neal Carpenter

Rob Akroyd explained that Miraval hopes to accomplish a number of "housekeeping" items on the West side parcel. He referred to the plan. The plan referred to a plan revised from the submitted Request for Determination of Applicability.

He noted that Miraval has horses; the plan shows a horse paddock that infringes slightly into the buffer.

The area where refuse from the horse barn and paddock is to the east of the cart barn and is outside of the buffer zone. Rob further explained that there will be walking paths with wood

chips. Another slated program element is 1 to 1 ¼ miles of hiking trails on the west parcel. They are certain there will be a Notice of Intent filed for the hiking trails.

DL asked where the road is that will transport manure. RA explained where the road would start, pointing out the location of the gate.

NC confirmed that RA was looking for a negative (-) three (3) determination. He noted the special condition they would include on the RDA.

NC noted another condition: there would be no trails within the wetland w/o a filing of a Notice of Intent.

DF made a motion to grant a negative three determination; RFC seconded. All in favor.

3. 8:00 p.m., Berkshire Natural Resource Council, West Mountain Road, Notice of Intent (WPA) and Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) for Scenic Mountain Act (SMA)

Emily Stockman and Mackenzie Greer were present to share the Notice of Intent filing for the Wetlands Protection Act, and the RDA for the Scenic Mountain Act. Emily Stockman stated the project was a smaller part of the larger High Road project. She described the route and provided a video tour of the trail route. She gave a slideshow of the more sensitive areas over the ~2 mile-long trail.

The video tour began at the southern end. ES described the upland forest ecosystem, pointing out the hemlocks and a mountain birch.

The first landmark is Lenox Mountain and the tower site.

ES noted the majority of the trail work is going to be repair and maintenance, which is typically exempt from the Act. But there are areas where they will have to cross sensitive areas.

She described the isolated wetland area. It's not subject to protection under the Mass WPA. It's a G series isolated wetlands. A bog bridge is proposed to go over that.

She moved on to wetland series E. There will be a westerly re-route. In that area, the existing footpath will no longer be used. As part of normal maintenance and re-routes, there will be minor clearing, including pruning. There will be no placement of gravel. ES noted that BNRC has been working w/ Peter Jensen for a sustainable trail system w/ minimal impact on the land.

Points out how the grade will keep the trail far from the wetlands.

After the reroute, the existing trail is used until it hits Yokun Seat.

ES noted this portion of the trail is not being heavily used at all. Trail has not sustained maintenance over time. This will create connectivity from Bosquet to Reservoir Road ultimately.

Much of the trail goes through upland ecosystem. To the north of that is the major re-route. The first resource area is associated w/ a vernal pool. During high water levels there are two outlet channels. The only evidence seen in the field are drainage patterns in the leaves. They are micro-topographic features classified as intermittent streams. A stable trail is very important. The best way to stabilize the ephemeral channels is to line the hiking treadway w/ stone. There will be a 2 ft wide path going through lined w/ stone.

One concern w/ the SMA is erosion. The impact is minor of 4 ft. She highlighted another ephemeral outlet.

She described the next resource area (AB Wetland), and the swales associated w/ it. She said there will be a few stones placed for footing. The canopy is very dense and so there isn't much understory diversity. She noted observing golden thread.

She then described the last wetland crossing. They will harvest stepping stones so people can avoid walking through the swamp. She described a grove of winterberry that would be avoided. The impact to resources—the two ephemeral stream crossings of about 8 linear feet; a handful of stones will be placed; and the larger Z series wetland where there will be a dozen stones placed.

She said they hoped to get going as soon as the appeal period ended.

ES said there weren't a lot of conditions placed on the NOI. ES said there were only hand tools and travel only by foot.

There were no questions from the Commission.

The RDA for the SMA was granted w/ a negative four (-4) determination.

VA made a motion, DL seconded. All approved.

Pleasant Valley Underground Utilities

The Commission had received a proposed amendment to an earlier NOI submitted by Mass Audubon. NC said it was exempt.

4. Approval of Minutes

MS moves to approve the minutes. VA seconded. All in favor.

RFC made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 p.m. VA seconded. All in favor.