

**Town of Freetown  
Conservation Commission**

Minutes of the Monday, February 26, 2024 Meeting  
Held hybrid, at the Multi-Purpose Senior Center, and over Zoom

**Present in Person:** Margaret French and Steven Tripp

**Present over Zoom:** Charles Sullivan

**Absent:** Christopher Mather

**Call to Order:** Charles Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

*Note: As this meeting was conducted virtually and members participated remotely, all votes taken were by roll call.*

**Request for Determination of Applicability – 25 Bullock Road, Freetown Fire Station #3**

Robert Phillips from Langan was present and explained the project. Tony Ma from GCG Associates was present via Zoom. The Civil engineers are Langan and are working closely with Stark Architects and the Town. The site consists of a one-story operational center and apparatus bays. The area was delineated last year and a walk-thru was performed with Conservation Commission. The stormwater collects on the roof and by two catch basins in front of the apparatus bays. Other stormwater sheets over the asphalt and makes its way to the wetlands. The wetlands are close to the edge of the pavement. The addition would have new bays and additional areas for the fire department. The improvements include grading and resurfacing within the asphalt parking lot. There would be no new impervious area proposed and the addition would be entirely encompassed within the asphalt lot. There would be dedicated roof drainage conveyed into a new stormwater outfall. The drainage would improve the existing conditions. Siltation controls were proposed and inlet protection for catch basins during the construction. Any storage of material that would be stored on site would have perimeter controls and would be covered. The addition would be a slab. There would be no stock pile stored for long term.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to issue a negative determination #3 and positive determination #2a. The motion carried unanimously.

**Request for Determination of Applicability – 209 Middleboro Road, Boat Ramp**

Victoria Alfaro explained the project. The project is to reclaim the parking lot. It would not extend the footprint of the parking lot. It is close to the property line and the Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW). The proposal was to fix some stones that are near the water and to fix the curbing of the boat ramp. The work would be done when the water levels are low and only done by hand tools, no machinery. The project is to redo what is existing and to make for better conditions. The shed would be removed and the concrete pad would be for a handicap accessible toilet.

A motion was made by Steven Tripp, seconded by Margaret French, to issue a negative determination #3. The motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion and Vote on Porter Pasture Land Use Request by Taunton River Watershed Alliance**

Gloria Bancroft, coordinator of Taunton River Watershed Alliance (TRWA), was present via Zoom. TRWA is a non-profit environmental advocacy with a mission for health protection of the Taunton River and watershed. They offer a variety of educational programs to bring awareness to different natural resources. They have started to offer guided walks and would love to offer one at Porter Pasture. The walks run about an hour and have a maximum of fifteen people. This particular walk would be on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. A volunteer, Ellenor Simmons, would be the tour guide and would talk about vegetation, wildlife, unique facts, and history about the site. TRWA provided liability insurance.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to approve the land use request. The motion carried unanimously.

**Notice of Intent – 61 Cliff Drive**

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to open the public hearing and waive the reading of the public hearing notice. The motion carried unanimously.

Rick Charon of Charon Associates, Inc, was present and explained the project. The proposal is to remove the existing retaining wall and replace with redi rock precast concrete blocks. There would be siltation control. The new wall would be in the same location and there would be a set of stairs added to gain access to the beach area. Redi rock are made to not have to dig as deep to install footings and it would allow to stay above the water table. The private dock was previously permitted and would not be affected. The retaining wall is above the mean high-water line.

A motion was made by Steven Tripp, seconded by Margaret French, to close the public hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Steven Tripp, seconded by Margaret French, to approve the plans as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Discussion and Take Action on Warrant Article Request for Land Transfer – 0 Weetamoe Heights**

David Rosa submitted the request and was present. His Uncle bought the property and shortly after another property was taken by the Town. There was a paper road and it was taken with another lot. The property changed hands to the uncle and unbeknownst the paper road was attached. His mission was to back away from that business that mistakenly took the property. Plans were referenced. The piece of land was turned over to the Conservation Commission and the paper road was too. Mr. Rosa wants to put this on the warrant for the town meeting or he could complete a citizen's petition. He would be requesting that the Town reverse any claim of land identified or described on map 210, described as a strip of land 40 feet in width, running along the southerly and westerly sides of lot 78 on map 210. Mr. Rosa is looking for support in the matter. The lot referenced was on Matawa Drive and a lot of the lots are wooded areas. There was a paper road that was taken by the Town and Mr. Rosa's hope was to get the property back from the Town. The deadline to get an article on the warrant was April 4<sup>th</sup>. Ms. French suggested that this be brought to the attention of an attorney and research what happened, prior to the Conservation making a decision. Mr. Sullivan suggested that Mr. Rosa prepare an article while the Commission researches the matter. The Commission agreed to stay in contact with Mr. Rosa before the April deadline.

#### **Discussion and Vote on South Main Street Bridge Replacement Options Study**

Deborah Pettey had requested that the Conservation Commission make a recommendation. Mrs. Alfaro explained that the Planning Board had looked at the sub options of option three. Mr. Sullivan suggested to give a recommendation on the best option in relation to wetlands. Ms. French suggested that the Commission give an opinion on the environmental impacts and the effects on wetlands. The Commission agreed to take final action at the next meeting.

#### **Discussion and Vote on Utilizing eDEP**

The Commission had discussed this prior. The account had been created and was ready to be utilized. Funding is not required. Utilizing eDEP would be efficient in the office and would cut down on the cost of certified mail.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to start utilizing eDEP on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Discussion and Take Action Relative to the Wetland By-Law and Rules and Regulations**

##### **Discussion on the Proposed Revisions to the MA Wetlands Protection Act Regulations**

The Commission had discussed these in prior meetings. Mr. Sullivan had suggested that a few things be changed in the rules and regulations. He wanted to revisit this in six months. Mrs. Alfaro had put together a draft for the enforcement section and would like some input from the Commission to be able to draft the changes. The Commission agreed to table this to a later time.

#### **Discussion on Potential Land Acquisition – Off County Road**

Michael McCue, the open space consultant, explained that the Commission had bought land from Peggy last year. She had moved out of town and would be selling the remainder of her property. There are miscellaneous small parcels that she is interested in giving to Conservation. The parcels consist of paper streets that enable people to access lots in the back. He explained the back history of the parcels. The lots have been sold and now are larger parcels. Mr. Sullivan shared that there was a lawsuit that involved some of these properties and more research would need to be performed. Mr. McCue explained that the lawsuit specifically regarded Highland Street and is not part of the lots that she wants to give away. Highland Street is to access her house and wanted to make sure that she had a right to access it before selling it. The lawsuit was resolved in her favor. There are other small lots that had been offered to some relatives and some abutters. The Commission suggested that she converse with abutters and see if they would want to take them. The Commission agreed that there was not a lot of use for these lots to be Conservation land. Mr. McCue would reach out to Peggy and update the Commission.

#### **Discussion and Take Action Relative to a Conservation Agent/Consultant**

Funds had been set aside for a Conservation agent and this would be the time to seriously consider hiring an agent. The agent would perform the technical aspects of inspecting the projects. There had been ads posted from local towns with job descriptions and pay that ranged from \$35 to \$40 an hour. The Commission agreed to start an agent at per diem, roughly ten hours weekly and not set hours.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to advertise for a Conservation Agent at \$40 an hour. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Discussion and Take Action Relative to the FY25 Budget**

The budget had been discussed and reviewed in a prior meeting.

A motion was made by Steven Tripp, seconded by Margaret French, to recommend the budget. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Discussion and Take Action Relative to Rescheduling March 25<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Mrs. Alfaro proposed to reschedule the two Monday meeting dates to Tuesdays, due to trainings that she would be attending. The Commission agreed to move those meetings from the Monday nights to Tuesday nights.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to reschedule the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting to March 26<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting to April 9<sup>th</sup>. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Any other business properly to come before the Conservation Commission**

Ms. French brought attention to online permitting and funds are needed for it. In fiscal year 2024, \$25,000 was budgeted for a Conservation Agent and suggested that those funds be reallocated to use for online permitting. The yearly fees were not budgeted for the fiscal year 2025. The annual maintenance fees are closer to \$5,000 now. Mrs. Alfaro would research more information about the fees and if it comes from individual department budgets or not. This would be formerly put onto an upcoming meeting to discuss and vote on.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

This is a True Record by me

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nicole DeMoranville, Senior Clerk

