

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 16, 2022
6:00 P.M. VIA Zoom
Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88374481965?pwd=TjIhV3Vvc01Ra21FNlEzTE5jbVFKQT09>

Meeting ID: 883 7448 1965
Passcode: 627650

Members Present: Kimberly Roth, Rebecca Longvall, Donald Brown & David Cowell

Absent: Ryan Ordnung

Kimberly Roth opened the meeting at 6:02 PM

AGENDA

6:00 Cunningham Equities (Jack's Mill) – ANRAD Application

James Cunningham was representing Cunningham Equities (Jack's Mill) and opened by explaining the ANRAD application they submitted to the board. James explained they are seeking confirmation of delineation of Bank and application of the Historic Mill Complex exemption.

Kimberly Roth noted they can open the hearing at this time but will not be able to close as MassDEP File Number has not been issued by the Department.

Andrea Kendall, Professional Wetland Scientist, working with Cunningham Equities, focused on Coachlace Pond and the complexity of the flow path. The pond travels through the mill building and flows consistently throughout the year. Andrea said based off her site visit, there is no bordering vegetated wetlands.

James Cunningham is questioning the Historic Mill Complex exemption from Riverfront Area on 474 Main St for historic mill buildings.

Kimberly Roth spoke about the exemption and how it doesn't exempt the entire parcel that houses an historic mills complex but applies to only the footprint of the area that is or was occupied by interrelated buildings as defined in the Regulations. The Commission is willing to consider the historic mill buildings footprints and other areas that do meet the definition for the exemption but some areas around the building are still in question as to what the area was used for. She also discussed that the Applicant should review the Riverfront Area Redevelopment

standards as they may also be applied to much of the area in question. The Applicant's question is focused primarily whether cleared areas are eligible for the exemption.

Kimberly Roth thinks the Applicant is applying the exemption more broadly than it is defined in the Wetlands Protection Act definitions.

Rebecca Longvall is in agreement with Kimberly. Rebecca recommends he provides more information on what the area was used for previously. She mentioned reaching out to historical places to find documentation to support his initial proposal. There is no proof in the current documentation provided to the Commission. The clearings are just speculations right now.

David Cowell shares same opinion. Needs to see more proof.

James said they reached out to the Mass Historic Commission and the MACRIS map is what is was provided. He said he would do so some more research.

The Commission is planning to do a public site visit to get a better understanding of property.

David Cowell requests a continuation of the ANRAD Application for Cunningham Equities, Rebecca Longvall made a motion to second, all I favor with a (4-0) vote.

6:15 Rauscher Farm Management Subcommittee

Gloria Parkinson gave the following updates on funding of RF Pollination System and the proposed Loosestrife containment approach using biological containment methods in the form of beetles. Proposed approach to spending FY22 appropriated funding before June 30, 2022. Other business.

Rauscher Farm Pollination System

A successful grant application submitted by the Clinton Greenway Conservation Trust on behalf of the project to the Love for Liberty Arnold-Simon DIPG Foundation has resulted in a grant award of \$500. In the notification email sent to Gloria Parkinson (GP), the Foundation mentioned it would be open to an application for further funding for the pollination system project. GP has requested information on when and how much a further application might request. GP/ RFMSC is awaiting a response to this inquiry. In the award notification email the Foundation asked if the pollination system might be named in memory of Liberty Arnold. After discussion at its February 9 meeting, the RFMSC wishes to discuss this possibility with the Commission. Currently, the Foundation's grant award of \$500 represents 25% of the total \$2,000 project budget.

Loosestrife Containment Update

Beetle purchase progress! GP spoke with Cindy Crayton of Integrated Weed Control (IWC) located at 4027 Bridger Canyon Road Bozeman MT 59717-8433 on February 9, 2022. IWC appears to be the sole supplier of Loosestrife-eating beetles in the US. Since the Commission has

approved the use of beetles for biocontrol of fast-spreading Loosestrife on Rauscher Farm, GP put Rauscher Farm on IWC's order list. GP told IWC she would confirm how many cartons the town would purchase after the Commission's approval on February 16, 2022. Note: Placing an order doesn't commit to ultimately purchasing beetles but given IWC cannot guarantee how many beetles IWC will be able to breed this year, and given demand outpaces supply, placing an order for Rauscher Farm on IWC's list at this time is a prudent holding pattern.

The proposed RF purchase is 15 cartons of beetles (105 beetles per carton). IWC said the USDA Service no longer requires interstate permits to ship these insects. GP will, however, double check with MA that there are no additional permits required to receive the beetle shipment. After the Commission's budgetary approval tonight, GP will confirm Rauscher Farm's provisional purchase list with IWC. This is the good news.

The less than perfect news is that IWC will be unable to confirm it can fulfill the RF beetle order until around mid-May based on the procreation rate of the beetles IWC will be breeding. In anticipation of being able to purchase some, if not all, of the RF order, the RFMSC requests that the town set up an anticipatory account now with IWC. RFMSC believes this account set-up should be handled by Dinorah Caraballo for this current financial year of FY 2022.

David Cowell asked how extensive the beetle's project was. He mentioned a project similar in Cambridge MA, where the beetles ended up in Lexington. Site fidelity is a concern. He still sees the merit in pursuing it but looking at all angles before making a final commitment.

Proposed RF FY 2022 Budget

There remain knowns and unknowns, meaning RF's expenditure request is fluid at this time. A known beetle delivery cost of \$2,500 is key to deciding on the rest of RF's FY 2022 expenditure.

A recent and unexpected puzzle to solve is the cost of the RF port-a-potty. RF's ADA port-a-potty was ordered for RF via Parks and Rec with the invoice to be forwarded to the Commission for its approval and payment out of the Commission's FY 2022 appropriated budget. However, for the four months--July, August, September, October 2021--no invoice has arrived. GP has checked with the town accountant and with Parks & Rec that is currently in transition to appoint a new director. The interim manager has no knowledge of payment for the Parks & Rec porta-a-potties, including the one for RF. She is currently looking into the matter. It's possible the town facilities department paid the invoice for Parks & Rec, which would include the port-a-potty for RF. TBD.

Should payment responsibility for the RF port-a-potty revert to the Commission's FY 22 budget, this would be a cost of around \$1,050 for 7 months: July, August, September, October for calendar year 2021; and April, May, June for calendar year 2022.

On the RFMSC wish list for FY 22, is a previously discussed ADA accessible picnic table—around \$1,400. Price to be rechecked based on current rising costs of equipment.

There should also be a budget for annual electricity on RF— \$300?

Nature cam installations

RFMSC is working to solve the considerable puzzle of file management for the camera images in such a manner there may be several camera managers vs. a single manager. There's yet another file consultation session tomorrow out of which will come a documented file management procedure manual.

Late 2022 Annual Mowing Possibility?

Last week a subset of RFMSC volunteers met at the barn for delivery of maintenance equipment ordered last May. (This equipment was paid for by the CGCT-Rauscher Farm Fund and is on loan to Rauscher Farm.) It so happened that the gentleman who delivered the equipment and provided a training session on its maintenance is experienced in annual mows on conservation land. As well as experienced, he is fully insured (bonded), and has even served on his town's Conservation Commission. He understands the need for an annual late-season mow. He currently charges \$110 per acre and estimates his cost based on 1 acre per hour. A very preliminary estimate of 15 acres for RF=\$1,650, with the cost to be funded from the appropriated FY 23 budget. Follow-up research needed at this time.

Programs 2022

May Spring walk; mid-summer community plant swop hosted by RF

Gloria Parkinson will continue to keep the commission updated on the current progress and on goings with Rauscher Farms.

Rebecca Longvall made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 19, 2022, David Cowell made a motion to second, all in favor with a (4-0) vote.

The commission planned a site visit for Cunningham Equities (474 Main Street) on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 time suggested 4:15 pm.

Rebecca Longvall made a motion to close the meeting at 7:48 pm, David Cowell made a motion to second, all in favor with a (4-0) vote.

Meeting Minutes taken by Ryan Rouillard