

SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 7, 2008
Approved at 1/28/08 meeting.

PRESENT: Jack Fleming, Chair; Dennis Swartwout, Vice Chair; Brad Allen; Jim Canning, Secretary, and Art Jackson. Janice Stone, Conservation Administrator.

1. 6:30 PM DISCUSSION with Doug Hutchinson, Amherst Conservation Land Manager, about development of a trail through South Hadley near *Bare Mountain*. Doug called today and told Janice his wife had a baby last week, and he will not be able to attend tonight. Rescheduled for March 10, 2008 at 7:15 PM.

2 6:35 PM OLD & NEW BUSINESS. Janice told the Commission she and Linda were looking into the payments to the Commission of the lease money from the farmer on the *Bachelor Brook property*. They found it for one year (2006) but not last year. Jack said he thought it was discussed/agreed upon at Town Meeting at the time of the vote on the property. Janice and Linda will follow up on this more. It was approximately \$1100 a year to go into the land fund. Janice gave updates on the requests for last minute Certificates of Compliance from the *Cotes* (Lyman Terrace) and *Garstka* (Ashton Lane). The subject of the *landfill's* swap of conservation land and compost area land is being researched by NE Waste Management as part of their interest in expanding the landfill. Jack made an announcement of the Commission's *Volunteer of the Year 2007*, Lin Pickle for all the support work he does for the Commission. He was presented with a special T-shirt and many thanks.

3. 7:00 PM OPEN FORUM Opportunity for the public to come in and ask questions, discuss wetland concerns with the Conservation Commission. No one present to speak with Commission tonight.

4 7:05 PM OLD & NEW BUSINESS. Janice mentioned the special 5% donation day at Whole Foods on January 15th, proceeds from which go the *South Hadley High School* composting program. Request for Certificate of Compliance #288-350, *Cumberland Farms* on Newton Street. Statement from engineer that built according to plans. Dennis made a motion, seconded by Art, to issue the Certificate of Compliance. All voted in favor. Art agreed to serve as the Conservation Commission representative on the *Comprehensive Plan Committee*. Dennis made the motion to appoint Art to serve in this function, seconded by Jim, all voted affirmative. The Commission reviewed, discussed and approved the draft Order of Conditions for *Riverside Park*. Janice will send out tomorrow.

5. 7:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING on a Notice of Intent (288-390) filed by Baystate Gas Company for two geotechnical borings in the Connecticut River in the *Ferry Street* area of South Hadley. Several people were present for the applicant. Jeff O'Donnell from Coler & Colantonio presented the project to the Commission. He explained that Baystate Gas wants to connect their gas distribution service in Springfield with the one in Northampton, and they need to cross the Connecticut River to do so. This Notice of Intent is for geotechnical borings to determine the type of conditions they will encounter with the horizontal directional drilling later. There will be two drillings on land (near Brunelle's marina and on the Bachelor Brook conservation land), and two in the river on the South Hadley. There are six more in the area in Holyoke. Jeff explained

that they have written permission from the property owners (Brunelle and South Hadley Selectboard), an approval letter from NHESP under MESA and wetlands, permission from HG&E for work in the power pool (river), and have been in communication with Connecticut River Watershed Council and DEP. They have filed with Holyoke Conservation and have a hearing this week. The Commission asked when they plan to do this work, and how long would it take. Jeff said that it was weather dependent, and that the whole work in this area should take up to 28 working days. The barge will remain in the water but anchor on shore overnight. The land vehicles will probably be trucks mounted with rubber tires. He said they would restore all damaged areas to their previous condition. There is not really any debris, since the drillings are small and encased in a casing. They may drill down to 70 feet below the surface. They will be in touch with HG&E about water levels and any possible flood conditions. Brad made a motion to close the hearing and issue an Order of Conditions approving the project with standard and special conditions. Dennis seconded, and all voted in favor.

6 7:50 PM OLD & NEW BUSINESS, continued. Dennis made a motion, seconded by Brad, to accept the *minutes* of October 22 and November 5 2007, with minor corrections. The Commission discussed installing signs and/or a chain across the entrance to the *Bachelor Brook property* next to Town Farm. Plan on doing something in the Spring. Right now the snow is plowed up to the gate.

7. 8:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING on a Request for an Amendment to the Order of Conditions (288-362), filed by Edmund Umbrasas of Whispering Pines at Root Road LLC, for rotation of two residential duplexes at *Stony Brook Active Adult Community* off Newton Street. Rob Levesque from R. Levesque Associates and Regina Hardy were there to represent the applicant. Rob described the rotation of the two duplexes to improve the view. It will result in less impervious surface, and does not extend beyond the approved footprint. Duplex numbers 126/128 and 130/132 are the affected units. Brad made a motion to close the hearing and approve the Amendment to the Order of Conditions with standard and special conditions. Art seconded it, and all voted in favor. Rob then asked if the applicant might be able to do some “vista pruning” in the wooded area next to the entrance, to improve viewing the street when exiting the development. They would like to thin out the area at eye level in a car. It is probably in the buffer zone (not in wetland). Brad told him to submit a plan showing what trees and the area of trimming, height etc with photos showing the viewing problem. Sylvia Pipiros then asked the Commission whether they might be able to remove a large tree that has blown over in this same area. It is broken and leaning, and they would like to clean it up to make the area more attractive at the entrance. The Commission said the applicant could make the request, but they were not inclined to agree, since it is probably in the wetland, and serving as wildlife habitat. The applicant can include this tree in the request with the other trimming and the Commission will look at it.

8. 8:10 PM ADJOURNMENT. A motion was made to adjourn, which was seconded, and voted unanimously in favor. Next regular Conservation Commission meeting January 28, 2008 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Stone,
Conservation Administrator