

## **MINUTES OF JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 MEETING**

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A meeting of the Longmeadow Conservation Commission was called to order by Chair John Bresnahan at 7:03 P.M. on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and was conducted in a hybrid format, consistent with the March 29, 2023 Bill extending certain provisions that were previously held during the state of emergency.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair John Bresnahan, David Dumais, Patrick Carnahan, Andrea Chasen, Kiernan Mulcahy.

**Absent:** Kimberly Barton.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Board of Health Member Michele Keane Moore, Chris Moore, Patty Gill.

**MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING:** Chair John Bresnahan made a motion, and was seconded by Mr. Dumais, to accept the minutes of April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 as presented. Roll call vote - Mr. Dumais: yes; Mr. Carnahan: yes; Mr. Bresnahan: yes; Ms. Chasen: yes; Mr. Mulcahy: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Salary \$1,262.74; Maintenance: \$700; Office Supplies \$100; Miscellaneous \$-10; Wetlands Protection Fund \$7,877.15; ConCom Trust Fund \$9,803.68.

**DISCUSSIONS – BEAVERS IN FLOODPLAINS:** After receiving reports of flooding near the meadows' farm fields and potential illegal work on beaver dams, Chair John Bresnahan and DPW Director began a collaboration, which included communications with the town's Health Director, to mitigate flooding impacts to nearby infrastructure and farm fields. Several site visits have been conducted to inspect the two large beaver dams found along Longmeadow Brook and south of the former Birnie Road landfill; on this multi-jurisdictional issue, the commission provided an Emergency Certification to manually reducing the dams' heights in specific areas and encouraged the DPW to work with the Health Director and a licensed beaver consultant to explore the feasibility of limited beaver trapping as additional action—this particular task falls under the purview of the Health Department. Chair Bresnahan indicated that the DPW acknowledged and apologized for their initial approach that unintendedly overstepped jurisdictional boundaries but is now satisfied with the multi-departmental collaboration, as beaver activity and its impact on any given environment is known to be controversial.

Mr. Christopher Moore (116 Brooks Rd) voiced his support for beavers as species that inhabit the floodplains and are part of Longmeadow's history. He pointed to several culverts that are and/or have experienced blocking in the past due to beaver activity and suggested that, instead of addressing each flooding issue as it rises, that the town departments and commissions with jurisdiction in this area work together to develop a comprehensive plan that overlooks a larger area and serves as a road map to address future issues.

The commission welcomed the suggestion and Chair Bresnahan offered to reach out to an experienced and licensed beaver consultant that has provided services to Longmeadow in the past to discuss a site visit, assessment of the current situation and any fees associated with this service.

**BOARD OF HEALTH PRESENTATION - SANITATION AND FARMING ACTIVITY IN FLOODPLAINS:** On behalf of the board of Health, Ms. Michele Keane-Moore provided a presentation to commissioners that highlighted both OSHA and MA legislation requiring minimum standards of sanitation facilities (specifically portable toilets and portable handwashing stations) for at least 11 field workers on any one day during a period of 12 months, this after noticing during her own site visits that the farmer's 13 field workers lack access to such facilities. She raised concerns over the environmental impacts of human waste and trash left behind.

After some discussion it was noted that enforcement of these regulations falls under the purview of the Health Department, though the commission offered to also review the procurement contract the farmer and Town have signed to ensure that said document contains information on this topic that can strengthen its enforcement. The commission thanked Ms. Keane-Moore for the insightful and valuable information.

**COMPLAINT – ILLEGAL ACTIVITY NEAR GASEK FARM AND SURROUNDING AREAS:** The commission was in receipt of two letters: one dated 05/25/2023 and submitted by former commissioner and Dunn Road resident Mr. Patrick Gottschlicht that details concerns over trespassers in the area and what he considers are adverse environmental impacts of farming activity and a response from Town Manager Lyn Simmons dated 05/30/2023. These letters were also sent to the Longmeadow Police Department. While the letters describe the issues of trespassing and farming in different tones and some of Mr. Gottschlicht’s claims were disputed with information of mitigation efforts implemented by the Town within the last year, the commission acknowledged both the existence of these issues and the ongoing efforts of multiple town departments to continue addressing them; it was also reiterated that communications between the Longmeadow Fire and Police Departments as well as DPW remain ongoing to finalize plans for barrier installation that will help deter illegal vehicle traffic in the area, which has been associated with increased erosion, trash dumping and trespassing. The commission thanked Mr. Gottschlicht for his time.

**DISCUSSION – COMMUNITY GARDENS ENTRANCE:** Commissioner Kiernan Mulcahy is a direct abutter to the Community Gardens and raised the issue of increased trespassing onto his property from garden visitors that walk along plots then into his backyard or from vehicular traffic that incorrectly enters through his driveway and must be redirected to the adjacent Community Gardens driveway. The commission discussed the benefits and challenges of signs as they inform the public of clear boundaries but will also likely reduce the privacy within the area. A letter will be drafted and released to community gardeners.

**DISCUSSION – CONDITIONS AT RUSSELL ROONEY BROOK:** The topic was deferred to a subsequent meeting at the request of Commissioner Kimberly Barton, who was unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances.

**OTHER BUSINESS** – The following items were discussed:

1. U.S. Fish & Wildlife has installed a portable toilet facility adjacent to the new Birnie Road parking lot.
2. The commission supports U.S. Fish & Wildlife’s request to plant a pollinator garden near the new Birnie Road parking lot.
3. The commission is in receipt of a letter dated 06/15/2023 and submitted by Mr. Michael Caronna (24 Chandler Av.), who wished to go on record with his statement supporting beavers in the floodplain and opposing any activity related to beaver removal.
4. Commissioner Patrick Carnahan who has been researching potential opportunities for land acquisition along the river bank, was able to communicate with a vacant land owner who stated that there is no intent to sell this portion of land in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bianca Damiano*