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Town of Dighton Conservation Commission Minutes

Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 16, 2025
Old Town Hall
Upper-Level Meeting Room
Dighton, MA 02715

Public Meeting Opens at 6:00 PM at the Old Town Hall, 1111 Somerset Ave. This meeting is video, and audio recorded for Cable Broadcast and Internet posting on "www.dighton-ma.gov", and YouTube.

Present- Chairman Jim Digits, Jack Crawford, David Phillips, Paul Reynolds, Agent Lisa Caledonia
Absent- Abel Mariano

Meeting starts with the Pledge of Allegiance

HEARINGS & POSSIBLE DELIBERATIONS

Review/Discuss/Act: Continued Hearing – Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) application from David E. Butler seeking confirmation of wetland resources at 833 Williams Street (Map 8, Lot 20). DEP File# SE017-0499. A continuance request was received by Prime Engineering, Inc. on 12/11/24 to the 1/16/24 meeting. *Application withdrawn on 1/6/2025.*

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

None

ENFORCEMENT

Review/Discuss/Act: 2371 County Street (Map 20, Lot 65) Proposed Mitigation Plan by Northcounty Group Inc. revised 8/6/24. *Consultant assured us at our 12/19/24 meeting we'd have the revised plan the following Monday, 12/23/24.* Engineer John DeSousa confirms revised plan was sent via email January, 15 2025. Client began cleaning up material on the embankment, cut in a temporary access way to get down but ended up getting injured in the process. Client stopped working, is currently ill and out of the country. Engineer John DeSousa is looking to hire someone in the next two-three weeks who can handle the job and has small machine. The temporary access way is a way to clear the lot, the road is made up of processed gravel ¾ to an inch and half stone. Engineer has full authority to make decisions for client. Agent and Engineer will go over notes together at 10 A.M. on Thursday January 23, 2025.

2470 Pleasant Street (Map 20, Lot 55) – Previous filling made to wetland on property. *Follow-up letter sent out on 12/30/24.* No response. Commission is giving more time to respond, as they were pleased with their conversation of intent over the summer.

710 Center Street (Map 9, Lot 154) – Violation (cutting & clearing) on the Conservation Restriction land observed. *Follow-up letter sent out on 12/30/24.* No response. Agent will follow up at the home the following Tuesday 1/21/25.

Review/Discuss/Act: 880 Hart Street (Map 19, Lot 2) – Multiple violations - Existing Conditions & Mitigation Plan by Northcounty Group Inc. dated 10/16/24, revised 12/16/24. *Site visit on 1/8/2025.* Engineer John Sousa flagged property for the previous plans brought to the commission and noted roof drain that came out by one of the flags. Engineer and owner will be working together to create underground leach area to drain into to stop overflow and they will incorporate this into RDA along with the cow pen. The plan is to move the cow pen up while they are working on the RDA, in the spring posts along the backside will be removed. Sheds to be moved ahead of time while ground is frozen. There will be an underground recharger for the roof run off to go into and the back side will have a small pipe up high and rip wrap apron for the overflow. The area will also need seeds. Posts and placards will be added onto plans.

1070 Smith Street (Map 10, Lot 15-2) – Wetland violation (cutting & clearing) *Follow-up letter sent out on 12/30/24, Zenith Consulting contacted me that they are working on a filing coming to us soon.*

OTHER BUSINESS

Review/Discuss/Act: Meeting Minutes – None at this time.

Review/Discuss/Act: Minute Taker Clerk position – Position will be filled by Kendra Earley on Marion Ave once she is appointed on Wednesday January 22, 2025. After being appointed Kendra will go to selectmen's office to be ceremonially sworn in and fill out form that says she was hired by the commission to complete minutes. Motion to approve Kendra Earley to be hired for Conservation Clerk position put forth by Paul Reynolds, seconded by David Phillips – all present members in favor.

Bills Payable: Review Bills Payable since last meeting – Motion to accept payroll and vendor bill expenses incurred since the last meeting put forth by Paul Reynolds, seconded by Jack Crawford – all present member in favor.

Review/Discuss/Act: FY 26 Budget – BOS has notified all departments to cut their budgets by a minimum of 2.5 %. FY 23 are actual expenditures; FY 24 are expenditures and FY 25 budget. Conservation Agent salary is level funded because BOS decided that non-contracted appointed officials that do not have a contract that determines a raise are scheduled to not receive one. Paul Reynolds suggests to propose a motion to propose a letter to BOS to reconsider and grant the conservation agent a raise inline with what other officials with contracts are receiving. Jim Digits suggests that if commission has a surplus, it should be given to the agent or use it towards an increase of pay and still shows the commission being conservative with their monies while rewarding the agent. Paul Reynolds states this will require transferring money to the departmental expense line to the departmental personnel line in turn needing authorization from town accountant. Line 5115 clerical worker was the line that was allocated for former office assistant, in fiscal 25 the budget was \$9,220.61. The request is because at the meeting where BOS authorized

the commission to hire a minute taker, they stated that they only wanted to fund that position with the departmental budget through the end of this fiscal year. After the fiscal year Michael Pacheco said he would support the Conservation Commission with establishing revolving fund at the next annual town meeting so the commission can divert fee income into fund to pay for other department expenses such as, stipend for minute taker. The request will be to have BOS fund it instead because Conservation Committee needs the position to be filled and they cannot be sure that the town will support revolving fund. Revolving fund wouldn't be able to be established until it had received approval from the Attorney General's office, which can take up to four months. Paul suggests proposing the BOS fund that with \$2,250 the estimated budget to cover \$1,800 for the year at \$150 per meeting. If revolving is established and has sufficient balance can pay minute taker. Reasoning is it is better to have it and not need it if Commission gets revolving fund and if they don't obtain revolving fund commission is still able to pay minute taker through BOS. The line still represents a significant cut going from \$9,220.61 to \$2,250, saving \$7,000 on budget. Town accountant advised to keep lines the same as last year for educational stipend of \$800 for full time employees with Bachelor's Degree and keep boot allowance to \$300 and to purchase field supplies such as bug spray etc. (non-office supplies) that are professional and technical to the Conservation Commission. The committee will be able to acquire field apparel, sun screen, bug spray and or sun hat etc. for Lisa. Agent's salary is 2.5 % reduction if it were to take place would be under \$3,000 along with \$7,000 reduction put commission right under \$4,000 more than needed to make the 2.5% cut. For Professional and Technical Paul proposed a \$250 reduction which represents a 10% decrease based on FY 25, he averaged out the three-year spend over three-year period which averages to spending \$980 out of that line item, reduction of \$250 is a significant percentage in the budget but at the same time won't hurt the commission. Dues and Subscriptions was previously \$1,000 budget, currently have a low average spend at \$500-\$600 per year. Reduce this line from \$1,000 to \$800 without impact on Conservation Commission. Other supplies was left at level-funded, FY 24 \$600, FY 23 \$559 and FY 25 \$230 to date this year. Suggestion to keep budget at \$600. Based on these cuts this would bring the total departmental budget to \$62,071 from \$69,491.61, a cut of \$7,420.61 giving a 10.67% budget cut. This will be brought to the finance committee. Motion to send a letter on behalf of the commission detailing the quality and professionalism of Lisa's work to consider level funding her salary and reconsider 2.5% raise put forth by Paul Reynolds, seconded by Jack Crawford— all present members in favor. Letter to be sent to BOS and Finance Committee. If accepted Agent's salary will be \$56,447.78. Motion to propose and accept the departmental budget to be submitted to the BOS as presented in the document put forth by Paul Reynolds, seconded by Jack Crawford— all present members in favor.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

CORRESPONDENCE

Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper declared Level 1 - Mild Drought in the Western and Southeast Regions, down from a Level 3 - Critical Drought last month. Precipitation is forecasted to increase in the next couple months. Average precipitation level is 42 inches and is expected to be around average amount this year.

UPDATE

Storm water pollution prevention plan— SWPPP reports that the committee is getting for the

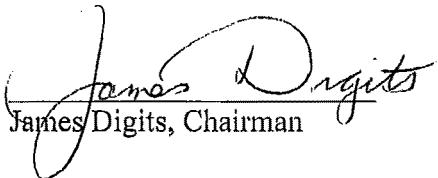
inspection reports for general permits for Emond Plumbing site is being monitor by MBL Land Development with weekly inspections. North side had erosion issues— has been corrected, agent asked them to add more erosion controls on the plans, shows up like a blanket on the slope and then they had to repair. A cover may be needed for the driveway to decrease ice from flow running water.

SWPPP report for Hunter's Hill has gone from contractor who was paid and installed the catch basins and drainage basins to Long Built Homes. Lee Castignetti is now doing the reports and supplying photos with detailed captions.

The Planning Board was contacted about Spring Street and a developer who is showing interest in redeveloping Spring St. The Developer and Architect Dan OrWick attended a PACT meeting for an informal discussion about their ideas. At the PACT meeting, the architect provided an initial analysis of redevelopment and would require rezoning. The plan is use it for a mix use of 300 residents, 55 plus and/or assisted living, manufacturing, retail, park setting and office space. Large parking lot would require storm water upgrades. Area has five hazard zones. Town would need to approve lot to be rezoned. Developers discussed using renewable energy.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,



James Digits, Chairman