



William F. Martin  
Mayor

City known as the Town of  
**GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Town Hall • 14 Court Square • Greenfield, MA 01301  
Phone 413-772-1548 ext 3 • Fax 413-772-1309  
Conservation@greenfield-ma.gov • www.greenfield-ma.gov

**Members:**

Blasiak, John (2016)  
DeHoyos, Thomas (2016)  
Miller, Gail (2017)  
Mosher, Timothy (2018)  
Nevins, Matthias (2017)

**GREENFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Minutes of Tuesday, December 8, 2015**

**7:00 p.m. Greenfield Department of Planning and Development  
114 Main Street**

The meeting was called to order by Chair, John Blasiak at 7:00 p.m. with the following members:

**PRESENT:** John Blasiak, Chair  
Timothy Mosher  
Thomas DeHoyos  
Gail Miller  
Matthias Nevins

**ALSO PRESENT:** Lincoln Fish, Bay State Forestry Service  
Maureen Pollock, Assistant Planner & Conservation Agent

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2015.

**MOTION: Moved by Nevins to approve the Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2015.**

**The motion was not seconded.**

**MOTION: Moved by Mosher, seconded by DeHoyos, no further discussion and voted 4-1-0 (Blasiak opposed) to table the discussion and decision for the approval of the Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2015 until the end of the meeting.**

Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 24, 2015.

The Agent did not complete the Meeting Minutes from November 24, 2015. Once the minutes are complete, the Commission will vote on the minutes at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Public Meetings/Hearings: None

Other Business:

- **GTD/Griswold Conservation Forest Stewardship Plan:** The Agent requested Lincoln Fish, the forester who prepared the 2007 Forest Stewardship Plan to review the plan and find out when the next timber harvest would be appropriate. Lincoln Fish is present to discuss the plan and a potential timber harvest. Fish recently walked the property and noted that the trees have regenerated and are larger since the last timber harvest occurred in 2006. Areas with mostly



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young trees may need more sunlight, so a future timber harvest could be warranted. Fish mentioned that a cutting is good only if the Commission agrees that it is good. For example, reasons to harvest would be if the Commission wanted to favor a particular wildlife species/habitat or whether the Commission wanted to replenish the monetary fund for the property.

Fish noted that the one downside to harvest now is that the price of white pine, *Pinus strobus* is not as high as compared to the time of the last harvest. The property is mostly composed of white pine. It may be prudent to wait to see if the price of white pine improves.

Blasiak inquired whether the removal of white pine would free up the hardwoods and subsequently allow the hardwoods to fill in where the white pines were located. Fish responded yes, it would. Fish noted that the biodiversity would be increased if the white pines were harvested.

Miller inquired whether white pine needles fallen on the soil cause white pine regeneration. Fish responded that foresters have been trying to answer that question for a long time but they are still not sure if that is a direct consequence.

Miller inquired whether there is a more opportune time of the year to harvest. Fish responded, yes. For instance, it would be opportunistic to cut during a robust acorn year.

Fish mentioned that there are invasive plants present on the property, which should be addressed as part of a timber harvest. Some invasive plants on the property include: Oriental Bittersweet, *celastrus orbiculatus*; Japanese Barberry, *Berberis thunbergii*; Honeysuckles, *Lonicera spp.*, Autumn Olive, *Elaeagnus umbellata*.

DeHoyos inquired whether the timber harvest would increase the growth of invasive plants. Fish responded if there is a seed source present, then seeds could be spread by seed-dispersing animals, like birds and rodents. A native forest is a good impediment to spreading invasive plants. Properly managing the property for invasive plants will help prevent further spreading. DeHoyos inquired whether the previous timber harvests have been mainly for white pines or hardwoods. Fish responded they have been mainly white pine and Eastern Hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis* harvests but have also harvested some Red Maple, *Acer rubrum* and Black Birch, *Betula lenta*. Stated he has not harvested Red Oaks, *Quercus rubra* and Shagbark Hickory trees, *Carya ovata*.

Miller inquired whether a barrier could be placed between the seed source and hardwoods as a way to limit the spread of invasive plants during the harvest. Fish responded if there is a good distance between the seed source and where you have disturbed then yes, a barrier could be created. However, the problem with this property is that the agricultural fields are well distributed on both ends of the property which does not provide a good enough distance from the



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seed source and the disturbed areas. Blasiak mentioned there are some things that should be considered, such as Oriental Bittersweet is spread by birds and Japanese Barberry is spread by rodents. The reason why you find the invasive plants along the walking trail and edge of the fields is because they are disturbed areas. The mineral soils are exposed and contribute to disturbance. Pine litter sends nutrients down and does not allow herbaceous vegetation to grow. Also, pine litter is very open so the seeds can fall down and easily regenerate. Unlike maple leaves and aspen leaves, which can pack down and are very difficult to get down to the mineral soil or come back up. Also, deer are problematic for regeneration as they tend to browse on small hardwoods trees.

Blasiak mentioned slash could serve as a good barrier from deer, as they tend to not jump over them. Pollock mentioned she visited Noanet Woodlands in Dover, MA recently which has a section fenced off with a ~8-foot plastic fence as a way to detract deer from entering. Pollock mentioned there is a plaque along the fence which explains that the fencing is part of an experiment for the property. Suggests perhaps something similar could be installed. Nevins suggested some creative, educational work could be incorporated at the property. Fish mentioned Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) provides financial assistance to municipal landowners of protected lands to support active habitat management. Control of invasive plants and fencing for habitat protection could potentially be funded through MassWildlife.

Fish suggested that control of invasive plants could be conducted before and after the next timber harvest. It is about a 6-month process to get a Forest Cutting Plan approved. The Commission should submit all the needed documents for the harvest in April/May, and the harvest would start in Fall/Winter.

Miller inquired whether tree saplings on the property could be moved around to help regenerate specific tree species. Fish responded that is something could be part of the harvest project. Blasiak agrees that is something that could be done. However, you would not want to introduce new species from outside of the property.

Pollock will look into potential funding sources for invasive plant control, transplanting of existing trees on the property, and deer enclosures. The Commission will review this information during the December 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting and will determine whether to conduct a timber harvest during the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Fish noted that he noticed a lot of horse traffic on the trails and suggested that coarse gravel be laid down in areas that are becoming impassable for foot traffic. Blasiak suggested that an alternative path be created for foot traffic in the problematic areas.

- **Clover Nook Farm, 614 Colrain Road: Request for a local match to conserve property under an APR:** Pollock briefed the Commission on Franklin Land Trust's (FLT) request for the



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Commission to consider contributing to the local match requirement for Clovernook Farm to be permanently conserved under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) which will be held by the MA Department of Agricultural Resources. The value of the APR is \$255,000. FLT is asking the Commission to contribute towards the 5% local match requirement. Specifically, FLT is asking for \$8,000.

The following is a little background information regarding the property: The Muka family owns 72 acres in Greenfield. This land was farmed by the Mather family as early as 1850 and is part of the Greenfield Meadows town Heritage District. 20 acres of fields are leased to the Bostrom Farm, local farmers and landowners in Greenfield, who produce potatoes and squash on 15 acres and hay on 5 acres. Joyce Muka's father purchased the land in 1960 and lived there until his death in 2010. Joyce and her husband Jim (who live in Leyden, MA) now own and manage the land. Approximately, 26 acres of the land have prime farm soils and farm soils of state significance. 40 acres of the property are located on the northeast slope of Greenfield Mountain, and the land is in close proximity (~600 feet) to Allen Brook, and is 1,600 feet from areas along the Green River which are listed in Biomap2 as containing Critical Natural Landscape Aquatic Core and Upland Buffer of Aquatic Core; and listed by the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program as containing Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife and Priority Habitats of Rare Species. The farm is picturesque and contributes to the rural and scenic character of Greenfield.

Mosher mentioned the Commission has contributed toward land protection deals in the past, and has also turned down some projects down too.

Nevins mentioned the State is contributing toward the \$255,000. The State is not paying for the whole project. Nevins expressed his support for advocating for putting the property under APR as protecting farmland in Greenfield is critical. The Commission should consider pitching in a portion of the requested amount. The property owner could also sell the property for less, and donate the rest towards the APR.

Blasiak questioned whether the APR is needed as the property is likely not developable. Questioned whether someone from the State has visited the property.

Nevins responded the MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is very serious on how they spend their money. MDAR have done their due diligence for supporting this project and have conducted site visits of the property. They are investing in the property and will monitor it on a yearly basis.

Mosher expressed his support for the protection of this property and possible contribution.

DeHoyos inquired when was the last time the Commission contributed toward the protection of a property. Pollock responded she was not sure but could find out for the Commission.



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- DeHoyos expressed that he would like to hear more information about the project and how much the Commission has contributed to other properties in the past. Pollock will request representatives from FLT to attend the January 12, 2016 Commission meeting for further discussion.
- **398 Federal Street:** Mosher updated the Commission about this property. The property owner has placed several piles of soil behind the existing building. He would like to level the piles out to expand the existing parking lot and work area. According to MassGIS, there is a wetland located at the rear of the property. Miller, Mosher, and Pollock conducted a site visit of the property on December 1, 2015 where the wetland, the soil piles, a fenced in area, and equipment being stored by Barlow Paving & Excavating were observed. It appeared that the small wetland would be considered an isolated wetland as there was no inlet or outlet. Pollock noted that if the wetland is isolated, it is not protected under the MA Wetlands Protection Act, but is protected under the Greenfield Wetlands Protection Ordinance. Therefore, the 100-ft buffer zone would not be applicable, but the 25-ft No Disturb Zone would. Mosher expressed that he does not believe the proposed work is within the jurisdiction of the Commission as it is located outside of the 25-ft No Disturb Zone. Miller pointed out that the existing telephone poles located at the back edge of the parking lot is the approximate 25-ft No Disturb Zone line. Therefore, it is a good line to use as the limit of work for all future activities at this property. The Commission concluded that no action would need to be taken for this proposed work. However, a reminder should be sent to the property owner stating that there is an isolated wetland located at the rear of the property and that no activities shall take place in the wetland or its 25-ft Zone Disturb Zone without prior Commission approval. The existing telephone poles shall serve as the limit of work for all for future activities.
  - **Property located at an existing utility right-of-way between Adams Road and the Connecticut River, Cabot Taps Separation Project (DEP#168-0309):** Pollock informed the Commission that the Applicant would like to request to amend the approved OOC. The Commission expressed that they did not have enough time to review the Applicant's request so they would like to table the discussion under the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Project Monitoring:

Enforcement Updates/Possible Violations:

- **Country Club Road:** Mosher reported observing an excavator by the rail road tracks and a wetland. Pollock will look into the matter.
- **398 Deerfield Street:** Pollock informed the Commission she is still trying to contact the property owner.



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Correspondence:

- **38 East Wayland Drive:** Pollock informed the Commission about the property owner's desire to clear part of his property to make space for a lawn. The area to be cleared is located within 100-ft of a bordering vegetated wetland. Pollock will find out if there are any valid permits related to the property. If there are no valid permits, Pollock will request the owner to have a wetland delineator re-fresh the wetland flags, stake out the limit of work, and then file an application with the Commission.
- **Misc.:** Miller informed the Commission that someone who has come before the Commission contacted her. Inquired whether it is okay to speak to that person or should she have directed the telephone call to the Agent. Blasiak responded the Commission members may speak to the public about Commission matters but advised that members should only express their personal opinion and not speak on the Commission's half. Also, members can direct calls to the Agent.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2015, Option 1.

**MOTION: Moved by Mosher, seconded by Nevins, no further discussion and voted 4-0-0 (Blasiak did not vote) to accept the Option 1 minutes from November 10, 2015, as amended.**

Site Visit Scheduling:

Next Meeting:

7:00 PM on Tuesday, December 22, 2015, at the Greenfield Department of Planning and Development; 114 Main Street

\*Mosher and DeHoyos will not be able to attend the December 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Adjournment:

**MOTION: Moved by Nevins, seconded by Mosher, no further discussion and voted 5-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Maureen Pollock  
Assistant Planner & Conservation Agent

John Blasiak  
Chair