

Holyoke Conservation Commission Organizational Meeting Minutes 1/14/2021 (Remote via Zoom)

Conservation Commission Members Present: Michael Dodge (Chairperson), Jeffery Horan (Vice Chairperson), Mary Moriarty, Bernice Bowler, Rosemary Arnold, Price Armstrong

Conservation Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Yoni Glogower (Holyoke Conservation Director)

Members of the public present: Kelly Esch (Kimley-Horn and Associates), Alina Moldoveanu (Kimley-Horn and Associates), Lindsey Reist (Kimley-Horn and Associates), Carlos Nieto (Berkshire Design Group), Melissa Kaplan (BSC Group), Marc Smith (BSC Group), Jonathan Roberge (Eversource Energy)

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Michael Dodge called the public meeting to order at 6:18 PM. He explained that the first meeting every year protocols for remote open meetings.

The Commission reviewed the Conservation Commission bylaws for term limits. It was determined that 3 years is the maximum consecutive term.

2. Election of Conservation Commission Officers

- a. Chairperson
- b. Vice-Chairperson

Commissioner Horan moved to elect members Michael Dodge as Chair and Bernice Bowler as Vice-Chair. The Commission voted unanimously in favor.

3. Adjourn

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:29

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1. Call to Order

Chairperson Michael Dodge called the public meeting to order at 6:29 PM. He explained the protocols for remote open meetings.

2. Public Hearing (continued) – Notice of Intent (DEP 186-0286)

Applicant: Peter Martins, Salmar Realty Inc.

Representative: R Levesque Associates, Inc.

Location: 500 Easthampton Road (MBP 213-00-003)

Description: Commercial Development within the Buffer Zone of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands

Chairperson Dodge read a letter that was sent to Director Glogower earlier that day, requesting a continuance to the following public meeting, to allow for more time to work out site plan changes with the Planning Board.

The Commission voted unanimously with one absent to continue this item to the 1/28/21 public meeting.

3. Public Hearing (continued)– Notice of Intent (DEP 186-0287)

Applicant: Pyramid Management Group, LLC

Representative: Kimley-Horn and associates, Inc.

Location: 489 Whitney Ave. (MBP 176-00-014.1)

Description: Resurfacing and stormwater improvements to an existing offsite parking facility within the buffer zone of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands

Chairperson Dodge invited Kelly Esch of Kimley-Horn and Associates to discuss the project on behalf of the Applicant. She reviewed the latest version of the site plans, shared onscreen. The major changes were the addition of no snow storage signs and fencing in the buffer zone, addition of new snow storage along the road, replacement of the stormwater outlet pipe, and modifications to the landscaping plan. Commissioner Moriarty asked for clarification on the snow storage area change, Kelly Esch showed the areas again on the map.

Director Glogower explained that at the initial site visit on 12/22 with Commissioners Bowler and Moriarty, they were able to observe most of the site but that snow on the ground had made it difficult to find the outfall pipe. Commissioner Bowler asked about snow storage and trash that they had observed in the 50 foot buffer. Director Glogower said that he and Commissioner Moriarty spoke with the Amazon fleet staff at the visit on 1/13 and were assured that these would be corrected. Kelly Esch added that the fence and signage in this project would protect against further offenses.

Chairperson Dodge read aloud the written answers provided by Kimley-Horn and Associates in response to questions raised by Commissioners at the 12/22/20 site visit. Commissioner Bowler asked if there was

an updated Operations and Management manual to reflect the revisions to snow storage. Kelly Esch responded that an updated version dated 1/7/21 had been sent to the Commission with this information.

The Commission and Kelly Esch reviewed the landscaping plan, and determined that additional shrubs of upland species should be added along the 50 foot buffer zone to serve as an added deterrent to snow storage, as well as move the fence closer to the parking lot.

Commissioner Arnold asked about whether invasive species removal could be included as part of the site plan requirements. Kelly Esch answered that it was not part of the current plans to do any work within the wetland itself, but to improve the stormwater treatment and outfall conditions.

Commissioner Moriarty asked for more detail on the infiltration test results and stormwater apparatus. Kelly Esch reviewed the stormwater appurtenances, location of the proposed underground detention facility, and stages of water treatment. The Commission discussed and determined that it would be beyond their jurisdiction to require invasive species treatment in the Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW) as part of the Order of Conditions for this project.

Commissioner Moriarty asked whether the bathrooms in the original site plans were still part of the project. Kelly Esch answered that one guardhouse in the southeast would still be built, but would connect to existing water and sewer lines on Whitney Avenue, well away from the BVW. They discussed results from soil test borings, species selections in the landscaping plan, and the rationale behind removal of the existing landscape islands, reflecting the change in parking lot use.

The Commission and Director Glogower reviewed the Holyoke Wetlands Protection Ordinance for the variance requirements for work within the 50 foot buffer zone, and the letter submitted by Kimley-Horn requesting the variance for this project. With no further questions from the Commission or members of the public, the Commission moved to approve the variance for work in the 50 foot buffer.

The Commission voted unanimously with one absent to approve a variance for work within the 50 foot buffer.

The Commission voted unanimously with one absent to continue this item to the next meeting on 1/28, and to provide in the interim a revised landscape plan reflecting the discussed changes as well as a draft Order of Conditions to review.

4. Public Hearing - Request for Determination of Applicability

Applicant: Holyoke Housing Authority

Representative: Berkshire Design Group

Location: 22 N. Summer St. (MBP 042-02-001)

Description: Light repaving/resurfacing within the 100 foot buffer of Banks

Chairperson Dodge invited Carlos Nieto of Berkshire Design Group to present the project on behalf of the applicant. He shared a site plan map on screen showing the proposed project to repave the basketball court at Holyoke Housing Authority's Toepfert Apt. Complex. He showed the extent of work in relation to the buffer zone of the Second level Canal across Canal St. and identified the erosion control measures in relation to the catch basins. The project would mill the existing materials to use as a base

layer for the new asphalt, raising the entire court to improve drainage. Tree protection measures were identified.

Commissioner Arnold clarified that no work would take place within the 50 foot buffer, and Carlos Nieto confirmed that this was the case. Director Glogower shared that this seemed similar to a previous RDA submission, where there was no explicit exemption in the WPA regulations, but that the Commission could still issue a negative determination. He asked how the gravel tracking pad would be reseeded after construction, and Carlos Nieto answered that all temporary disturbance would be reseeded afterwards with loam and sod, as soon as possible. He added that he had spoken with the City Engineer about a stormwater permit, and that this would be considered a small project that would not require a hearing provided that the proposed drainage measures would be put in place.

Director Glogower reminded Carlos Nieto that this area would be eligible for free trees through the Greening the Gateway Cities Program, they agreed to connect with the program after the hearing to schedule a site visit.

Due to technical difficulties with Commissioner Arnold's internet connection, Chairperson Dodge chose to pause this Item and continue to Item 5 prior to any formal vote by the Commission.

5. Request for Certificate of Compliance – DEP 186-0281 Applicant: NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy Representative: BSC Group Inc.
Location: 1447/1428 Line OPGW Installation
Description: Work within the 200 ft. Riverfront

Chairperson Dodge invited Melissa Kaplan and Mark Smith of BSC Group to present this project on behalf of the Applicant. Melissa Kaplan shared photos and as-built site plans showing the completion of the overhead OPGW Line installation and return of temporarily disturbed areas to pre-construction conditions with removal of matting and seeded grass.

Commissioner Bowler rejoined the meeting during this presentation. Director Glogower noted that the Order of Conditions for this project only had two continuing conditions, and that neither were related to the site work itself

The Commission voted unanimously with one absence to issue a full Certificate of Compliance for this project.

4. Public Hearing - Request for Determination of Applicability
Applicant: Holyoke Housing Authority
Representative: Berkshire Design Group
Location: 22 N. Summer St. (MBP 042-02-001)
Description: Light repaving/resurfacing within the 100 foot buffer of Banks

With Commissioner Bowler returned to the meeting, Chairperson Dodge resumed this item for discussion.

The Commission voted unanimously with one absent to issue a Negative 3 determination for this item.

6. Enforcement Order/Administrative Hearing - Issued 12/26/2020

Location: Mountain Road (MBP 190-00-011)

Description: Electric box pole installation within the 100 foot buffer zone without a permit

Chairperson Dodge invited Director Glogower to provide an update on this item. Director Glogower described a scheduled site visit in early December with Commissioner Arnold where the violation was discovered. When brought to the Commission at the 12/10 meeting, they directed him to issue an enforcement order with instructions to come to the next meeting to discuss options for restoration. The offending party contacted him to explain that they could not attend this meeting due to a medical appointment. He recommended that the Commission ratify the Enforcement Order that he had issued, but then continue this item to the next meeting so that she could be present to discuss.

The Commission voted unanimously with one absent to approve the Enforcement Order for this item that was issued on 12/26/2020

The Commission voted unanimously with one absent to continue this item to the 1/28/21 meeting.

7. Mail/other items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Director Glogower gave an update on the Scott Tower LWCF application and community survey.

Commissioner Moriarty discussed her goals to recommend a landscaping ordinance for Holyoke. Director Glogower shared that this is one of the topics that would be explored by PVPC as part of their MVP Regulatory Review.

The Commission discussed the nomination of Dr. Jon Perdrizet to the Commission.

Commissioner Bowler recommended review and approval of the 2021 meeting calendar with some modifications to add meetings in July and August. Director Glogower agreed to make the changes on the City website.

Commissioner Horan provided an update on the Whiting Street Reservoir Committee. The Committee had decided to meet every other week and was still determining the scope of their research. Commissioner Arnold recommended that the 1990 Mt. Tom Study be central to their investigations, and that an appraisal and conservation restriction from DCR be considered to keep in in permanent protection. The Commission discussed the role of the Committee and what it was charged by the Council to accomplish.

8. Adjourn

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:50 PM