

Holyoke Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes 5/9/2024 (Remote via Zoom)

Conservation Commission Members Present: Bernice Bowler (Chairperson), Jeffrey Horan (Vice Chairperson), Rosemary Arnold, Patricia Normand, John Perdrizet

Conservation Commission Members Absent: Michael Dodge

Staff Present: Yoni Glogower (Holyoke Conservation and Sustainability Director), Davin Pasek, Zoning Official

Members of the public present: Nilsa Laboy (475 Northampton Street), Maria Noguera (Agency Landscape & Planning/Holyoke Comprehensive Plan)

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bowler called the meeting to order, explained the protocols of remote meetings, and requested that visitors sign in via the chat.

2. Request for Determination of Applicability - Filed 4/25/24

Applicant: Ernest Mathieu

Location: 453 Mountain Road (MBP 190-00-015)

Description: Septic system repair within the Buffer Zone of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands

Chairperson Bowler announced that the legal notice did not run as the Applicant failed to pay for the advertisement.

Director Glogower announced that he inquired as to when the Applicant would be available for the Commission to perform a site visit. Following a brief discussion, a site visit was planned for May 20, 2024.

Commissioner Moriarty made a motion to continue to May 23, 2024. Commissioner Normand seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve said continuance.

3. Public Hearing - Notice of Intent WE 186-0306 (Continued from 4/25/24)

Applicant: Salmar Realty, Inc.

Representative: R. Levesque Associates

Location: 500 Easthampton Road (MBP 213-00-003, 212-00-001)

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

Chairperson Bowler announced that a request for continuance to May 23, 2024, was received from the Applicant, indicating that they are still in discussion with Natural Heritage.

Commissioner Moriarty made a motion to continue to May 23, 2024. Vice Chairperson Horan seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve said continuance.

4. Administrative Hearing - 475 Northampton Street, MBP (223-00-012) (Continued from 4/25/24)

Description: Construction within the Buffer Zone of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands without permit

Ms. Laboy indicated that GZA was unable to attend the meeting.

Director Glogower reminded the Commission that this matter was continued at the last meeting pending an appeal decision from the Zoning Board, which has since been denied. He shared his screen to show the planting plan that was proposed for a 1:2 mitigation, which Ms. Laboy indicated both she and GZA are ready to move forward with.

Davin Pasek, Zoning Officer, was invited by Director Glogower to better explain the enforcement process. Mr. Pasek explained that the following is likely to occur now that the variance request and appeal have both been denied: 1) Order to Comply will be sent, requiring that the property be brought into compliance within a certain number of days; 2) After the specified days have elapsed, if the property is still not in compliance, a ticket and new compliance deadline will be sent; 3) If the ticket is not paid and the property is not brought into compliance within the specified timeframe, a Notice of Demand will be sent; 4) If the property remains out of compliance, a lien is then placed and will remain on the property.

Commissioner Moriarty questioned if plantings could potentially be destroyed should there be construction to remove/move the garage structure in order to bring the property into compliance. Following a brief discussion, the Commission agreed to move forward and address the planting plan rather than wait for resolution of the structure issue.

Vice Chairperson Horan made a motion to approve the proposed 1:2 planting plan, requiring the planting be completed by June 30, 2024. Commissioner Normand seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve said motion.

5. Emergency Certification Form - Issued 4/16/24 (Continued from 4/25/24)

Applicant: Jeffery Horan

Location: 100 Southampton Road (MBP 208-00-016)

Vice Chairperson Horan agreed to recuse himself from this matter as he is the Applicant.

Director Glogower explained that the Applicant, in order to address a flooding issue on the property, requested permission to manage two existing flow devices, dismantle recently constructed dams, and perform beaver trapping. Director Glogower temporarily issued the Emergency Certification, which could not be addressed at the last meeting due to a lack of quorum.

Mr. Horan explained how beavers have built many dams, downed trees and even caused flooding as deep as 14 inches on the property. He has since trapped three of the four beavers, as permitted. Following a brief discussion, the Commission agreed to perform an educational site visit on May 30, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Commissioner Arnold made a motion to approve the Emergency Certification. Commissioner Normand seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve said Certification, noting that Vice Chairperson Horan agreed to recuse himself.

6. Presentation - Holyoke Comprehensive Plan Update

Director Glogower announced that an update to Holyoke's comprehensive master plan is currently underway -- something that has not been done since 1999.

Maria Noguera, an urban planner with Agency Landscape & Planning, introduced herself and shared her screen to show a presentation outlining the year-long comprehensive plan process. She explained that the process began at the end of April and various forms of engagement will begin shortly. Ms. Noguera indicated that the Commission may be contacted regarding topic specific focus groups and she encouraged commissioners to help spread the word.

Commissioner Arnold questioned the use of CPA funds for this project, and Ms. Noguera indicated she would look into it.

Vice Chairperson Horan expressed his desire to have the recommendations of the Whiting Reservoir Committee considered throughout the comprehensive planning process.

Ms. Noguera explained that after meeting with various city representatives, there seems to be an agreement that a lot of the city's current policies and zoning is not beneficial to the city.

Commissioner Arnold requested that Ms. Noguera look into the approximately 46-acre Edna Williams property currently owned by the city, which Fish and Wildlife is interested in purchasing. Ms. Noguera agreed to do so.

#### 7. Formal Vote - Minutes from 4/25/24 Meeting

Vice Chairperson Horan made a motion to approve the Minutes of April 25, 2024. Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve said Minutes.

#### 8. Discussion - Holyoke Open Space and Recreation Plan Update: Letter of Support

Director Glogower indicated that the current Open Space and Recreation Plan is in place through 2025, so it is time to start planning for the update. He explained that CJ Lammers, Projects Manager at Conway School, plans to apply for the EEA Planning Assistance Grant, due May 26, 2024, in order to obtain funding to assist with the update.

Vice Chairperson Horan made a motion to approve of Director Glogower drafting a letter of support for Conway School to obtain the EEA Planning Assistance Grant and assist with the Holyoke Open Space and Recreation Plan update. Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve said motion.

#### 9. Discussion - Upcoming Items for 5/23/24 Meeting

Director Glogower announced that there are no new items, but there will be three items that were continued to the May 23, 2024 meeting.

#### 10. Mail/other items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Director Glogower announced that the Mayor is including funding in the 2025 budget for a part-time clerk position.

Commissioner Moriarty inquired as to any updates concerning the disturbance/mitigation on Route 141, which Director Glogower indicated DPW is responsible for managing. Director Glogower agreed to follow-up for any updates.

## 11. Adjourn

Vice Chairperson Horan made a motion to adjourn at 7:26 p.m., and the meeting adjourned.