

Holyoke Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes 04/28/2022 (Remote via Zoom)

Conservation Commission Members Present: Bernice Bowler (Chairperson), Jeffrey Horan (Vice Chairperson), Michael Dodge, Mary Moriarty, John Perdrizet, Rosemary Arnold

Conservation Commission Members Absent: Chelsea Gazillo

Staff Present: Yoni Glogower (Holyoke Conservation and Sustainability Director)

Members of the public present: Melissa Coady (Tighe & Bond), Jim Velleman (BVH Integrated Services), Brian Waehler (BVH Integrated Services), Gregory Williamson (Bond Brothers)

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bowler called the public meeting to order at 6:17 p.m. She explained that any applicants would be required to sign in to the chat.

2. Item No. 1 - Public Hearing (continued) – Notice of Intent WE 186-0293 (continued from 4/14/2022 Meeting)

Applicant: Holyoke Water Works

Representative: Tighe & Bond

Location: Whiting Street Reservoir (MBP 213-00-006)

Description: Dam improvements within Bordering Land Subject to Flooding, Land Under Water Bodies, Riverfront, and Inland Banks

Chairperson Bowler introduced the request, and stated that last week they had continued the meeting because Melissa had sent a late email that day with questions that they had from the site visit regarding the draw-down and where the stream was going, and Chairperson Bowler wanted to ensure there would be time to go through it and for Director Glogower to provide a draft of the order of conditions to check through them. She then asked if any Commissioners have any further questions after reviewing Melissa's email or if they had any other conditions they may want to consider adding. Commissioner Moriarty pointed out that the NHESP letter has a section called "Fisheries" with information on the draw-down and some on refilling, and asked Ms. Coady if that is how it is written in her plans. Ms. Coady answered yes, that it gives a little more leeway, and then reviewed the PDF. She said that they were proposing to achieve full refill by the beginning of October, and that the fishery's recommendation is to hold that lower elevation until mid-November. Commissioner Moriarty asked whether they would do it by October, and Ms. Coady replied that they have to comply with Natural Heritage and their fishery's recommendation, that they would maintain the draw-down until November 15. Commissioner Moriarty commented to Director Glogower that, on theirs, there may be some reference to one of the conditions being the requirement that the draw-down and refill be commensurate with what is recommended on the NEHSP letter. Chairperson Bowler pointed out that it is already in there. Commissioner Moriarty asked Ms. Coady to detail her plans for the vertebrates, particularly the reptiles. Ms. Coady did so, explaining that the implementation will be conducted by a specialty firm, that a biologist would have to be approved by Natural Heritage, and the plan would be reviewed and approved, and that any work done in the active period of the species would be done in accordance with the plans. She also detailed elements of the plans, including contractor education and the requirement to check on-site equipment. She then added that some rare plants were identified that may be flagged for extra visual protection.

Chairperson Bowler asked Director Glogower if he wanted to add anything else. Director Glogower mentioned that he and Melissa had a phone call about special condition No. 24 and suggested they discuss a modification to it before the public hearing is closed. He shared his screen to show the condition to everyone, that it permits only native, non-invasive plant species. The plan had been to use red fescue, which is non-native, and Director

Glogower asked if it would be allowable and how to possibly reword the condition to reflect that. Vice Chair Horan asked whether red fescue was planned because it does relatively well in partial shade, and Ms. Coady explained further why red fescue had been planned. Commissioner Moriarty suggested leaving the condition as it is and possibly add an exemption for the dam bank where the red fescue may be used. Director Glogower asked Ms. Coady if that was the only non-native species, and she confirmed that it was. Chairperson Bowler asked Ms. Coady if she had any other questions or comments, and Ms. Coady answered that there were none. Chairperson Bowler asked for public questions or comments, and there were none.

3. Roll Call Vote - Close the Public Meeting

Commissioner Dodge made a motion to close the public meeting regarding Notice of Intent WE 186-0293. Vice Chair Horan seconded the motion. Commissioners then voted unanimously to close the meeting.

4. Roll Call Vote - Approve Variance

Chairperson Bowler stated that the first thing they probably should do was the variance needed for the 50-foot buffer. Director Glogower confirmed that they had not yet voted on it. Commissioner Dodge made a motion to approve the variance, and Commissioner Perdrizet seconded the motion. Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the variance.

5. Roll Call Vote - Approve Notice of Intent WE 186-0293

Commissioner Dodge made a motion to approve Notice of Intent WE 186-0293. Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion. Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the Notice of Intent.

6. Roll Call Vote - Approve Order of Conditions

Chairperson Bowler asked if the Commissioners all had a chance to read the draft order prepared by Director Glogower, and then pointed out that Commissioner Arnold has been away and did not have the opportunity. Chairperson Bowler requested that Director Glogower go over the special conditions. Director Glogower shared a list with everyone, skimming through all the conditions and briefly mentioning each one. Commissioner Moriarty asked Director Glogower if a change needed to be made to 43, and Director Glogower stated it was a good question he had not thought of, and he supposed that the condition was fine. After reviewing the list, Director Glogower asked if there were questions about the conditions, and there were none.

Vice Chair Horan made a motion to approve the order of conditions. Commissioner Dodge seconded the motion. Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the order of conditions.

7. Item No. 2 - Public Hearing – Notice of intent WE 186-0294 (Continued from 4/14/2022 Meeting)

Applicant: Delorean Power

Representative: BL Companies

Location: 361 Whitney Avenue (MBP 176-00-036)

Description: Construction of a battery energy storage system within the buffer zone of bordering vegetated wetlands.

Chairperson Bowler mentioned, for the sake of several first-time attendees, that attendance is kept in Zoom chat and that attendees must indicate their name and either their affiliation to an organization or their address.

Chairperson Bowler introduced NOI 186-0294. She read a letter from Patrick Donahoe, project developer for Delorean Power, asking for a continuance of the NOI until May 12<sup>th</sup> of 2022.

8. Roll Call Vote - Approve Continuance until 5/12/22

Chairperson Bowler requested a motion to approve continuance of NOI 186-0294 until 5/12/22, and Commissioner Moriarty moved. Commissioner Dodge seconded the motion. Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the continuance.

9. Item No. 3 - Request for Determination of Applicability – Filed 4/15/2022

Applicant: Holyoke Community College

Representative: BVH Integrated Services

Location: 303 Homestead Avenue (MBP 155-00-004)

Description: Water main and stormwater improvements within the buffer zone of bordering vegetated wetlands

Chairperson Bowler first informed that this request was submitted past the normal deadline and that it was requested to be put on the agenda for this meeting because they are not sure whether the RDA will be approved or if they will have to file an NOI, which would further delay the matter. Chairperson Bowler asked how they would feel about accepting and voting on the RDA in the current meeting, and there were no objections.

The first person to speak on the RDA was Mr. Velleman from BVH Integrated Services, the project manager for the engineering side of the project. He walked the Commission through the project in detail, sharing his screen over Zoom to provide a visual of his descriptions, showing a map of the campus that indicated the location of wetlands, buffer zones and impervious disturbance areas. He explained that the nature of the project is to replace all the current storm water structures around the ring road with new HDPE piping, due to the current structures being in disrepair. There would be new pre-cast catch basins and manholes. The project would also replace the water main, the route of which was described by Mr. Velleman, and also add a new section in the southeast area to run a new water line through the middle of the campus. The water line would be in a different location so that the campus could maintain water service for the duration of the project. Some roadway would be disturbed, so the project would repave when necessary or otherwise mill and overlay affected pavement. Mr. Velleman also pointed out that the current storm drainage system lacks any water quality units, and that the project would provide an enhancement by introducing new manhole-type water quality units using hydrodynamic swirl technology to remove solids and bulk debris. Chairperson Bowler inquired about the square footage of the blue squares shown on the diagram, and Mr. Velleman had to take a bit of time to verify and provide a correct answer. Mr. Williamson from Bond Brothers, the construction manager, spoke up to explain that most of the structures would have their depth advanced when installing the enhanced 4-foot sumps. Mr. Velleman then replied to the question stating that the blue squares were shown at approximately 9' by 15', shown conservatively. He then described the hardscape and softscape wetland disturbance, the square footage and its relation to the buffer zones. He explained using the diagram how new and old pipes would be connected, as well as the locations of old and new hydrants. He stressed how they would seek to minimize the amount of work performed to what is necessary to undergo the project while keeping water service active. Vice Chair Horan asked if a certain line drains into the wetland, and Mr. Velleman tried to explain the drainage process and that it likely would head into a particular basin. Vice Chair Horan also asked what the color coding was for orange, and Mr. Velleman replied that it represents softscape disturbance grass outside of the 50-foot buffer zone but within the 100-foot zone, whereas blue represents such distance within the 50-foot zone. He explained how a sloped granite curb and its guardrail would be removed and replaced throughout the basin installation process. He continued to explain further about locations of the water lines and hydrants using the diagram. He pointed out a water line that had been replaced in the last 10 years that will not be worked on. Chairperson Bowler asked whether the disturbance in the 50-foot was for the water main now that there is no hydrant. Mr. Velleman confirmed, and continued to explain. Mr. Williamson reassured that they are trying to minimize the amount of disturbance. Mr. Velleman then provided additional information about the installation of hydrants. Commissioner Moriarty asked whether BVH would be the

company to see through the whole project, and Mr. Velleman clarified that BVH is the engineer while Bond will be the construction manager overseeing the contractors that will be doing this work, and that BVH would be on site during construction. Commissioner Moriarty then asked if there was an O&M plan, which Mr. Velleman confirmed and explained. Commissioner Moriarty asked if they could forward information from the construction plans for the workers to the Holyoke conservation agent, and Chairperson Bowler discussed how that would have to be a condition, and Mr. Velleman said he would have no problem with doing that personally. Commissioner Moriarty asked about the extent of conditioning if this were to be accepted as an RDA, and Chairperson Bowler detailed the options. Chairperson Bowler then asked Director Glogower if they should talk about excluding the water mains, and he said he thought it was a worthwhile topic. But first, Director Glogower asked Mr. Velleman how long the EPA stormwater pollution plan is in effect for, to which he replied that it is a construction plan in effect throughout construction, and that Holyoke Community College would be provided with post-construction guidelines that would not be enforceable by BVH. Director Glogower asked if it could be provided to the Commission, and Mr. Velleman said he did not see why not, as it will be public record. Director Glogower pulled up the Wetlands Protection Act for the attendees to see and described some aspects of it. Vice Chair Horan discussed whether they could do the project as an RDA. Chairperson Bowler asked about erosion control and what they would be filling further-out sections with, and Mr. Velleman answered loam and seed. Mr. Velleman asked Mr. Waehler if the original RDA application and submitted drawings showed erosion control, and he replied yes. Mr. Velleman then referred to his diagram to explain further details. Chairperson Bowler asked where the debris will go. Mr. Williamson explained how certain sections of the campus will be closed off at times for the project, and that they will likely need temporary staging areas for the debris in adjacent impervious parking lots, and that surplus would be removed from the campus and properly disposed of. He said that there will be a pollution prevention plan. Possible conditions were then discussed. Director Glogower said he has started to keep a running list of them, and that he is up to three, summarized them, and the Commission discussed them.

Chairperson Bowler then started discussing about the variance, asking Mr. Velleman if he wanted to do a presentation on the four conditions to be met. Mr. Velleman first pointed out that impact would mostly be within paved surfaces and that there would be very small pockets of impact or disturbance outside the roadway within a buffer. Then he talked about the second condition regarding alternative designs, talking about the placement of a water line and why plan to place it under the roadway. He explained that there was not an alternative design for storm draining. For the third item, he talked about limitations of the particular lot and project design, with the limitations requiring a water loop system around the ring road and through the middle of the campus.

#### 10. Roll Call Vote - Approve Order of Conditions

Vice Chair Horan made a motion to approve the variance for the HCC stormwater and water main project, and Commissioner Moriarty seconded the motion. Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the variance.

#### 11. Roll Call Vote - Approve Request for Determination of Applicability

Chairperson Bowler asked if there were any additional questions. Commissioner Perdrizet asked about whether erosion control should stay in place until the project is completed, and Mr. Velleman answered yes with some additional detail. Director Glogower suggested to condition the RDA based on the pollution prevention plan. Chairperson Bowler determined that the water main replacement could be a Negative #5 while the rest would be Negative #3, with three conditions, and also discussed that Yoni should probably go out and speak with everyone at least one time. Vice Chair Horan made a motion to approve the Request for Determination of Applicability at location MBP 155-00-004, and Commissioner Dodge seconded the motion. Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the RDA.

12. Item No.4 - Discussion – Upcoming Items for 5/12/22 Meeting

Director Glogower mentioned a new RDA for Freight Farms to be discussed in the next meeting, stating that they want to move their hydroponics facility to some of the open grounds at the high-power computer center. Chairperson Bowler asked whether a site visit would be necessary, and Director Glogower confirmed, stating that they had put "proposed dates to be determined." Commissioner Moriarty mentioned attending a tree replanting at Kennedy Park the next day, thanks to a grant written by Director Glogower a year and a half prior.

13. Adjourn

The Commission adjourned the meeting.