

*Approved as amended 12-1-21*

**Plainfield Conservation Commission**  
**Minutes of Meeting Held October 27, 2021**

As the Town Hall heating was out of order, the meeting was held in the Plainfield church meeting room. Members present: Erik Burcroff, Judy Ferber, Jack Nelson, Alice Schertle, Judith Williams (chair)

Also present: Simon Hildt, representing Eversource Energy  
Kathleen and David Filkins, owners, 13 Maple Street; Marilyn Patti, abutter  
Andre-Anne Chenaille, Charles LaBatt, Guntlow & Associates

**Call to Order**, Judith Williams, 6:35 p.m.

Jack moved, Erik seconded that the minutes of 8/25/21 be approved. Unanimous.

Judy moved, Erik seconded that the minutes of 9/29/21 be approved. Unanimous.

**Eversource Transmission Line Rebuild Project**

Simon Hildt gave a presentation describing planned tower replacement along Eversource Line 312, extending from Hinsdale to Montague, and including 5 ½ miles in Plainfield. Lattice towers along the south side of the Right of Way were constructed about 100 years ago and, though some have been replaced over the years, all are in poor shape. They will be removed and replaced with steel monopoles generally 5-10 feet taller than the lattice poles. Conductor wires will be replaced with wires increasing lightning protection and fiber optic capacity and capable of carrying more current obviating the need for new power lines. The newer wires will require more clearance for sagging and lateral blowing. Eversource will maintain 50 feet of clearance from the center of the structures to the nearest tree trunk. In general 10-15 feet will be required beyond what's currently cleared.

Their current estimate indicates a little under an acre of tree removals in Plainfield Resource Area, and more than that in non-jurisdictional areas. Trees will often be removed by hand; in some cases a bucket truck or crane may be used. There will be no grubbing of stumps. Timber matts will be used as necessary in wetland areas. Tree removals are not exempt and will be included in the NOI Eversource will submit. Matting is exempt but will be included and noted as a temporary impact. About a dozen additional work pads will be required. Instead of removing the entire footing under the old towers enough will be removed to permit the placement of a foot of topsoil over them.

Trees cannot be replanted in areas of removal but Simon said the project will not result in a loss of Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW). He described an offsite mitigation plan Eversource has used in which they teamed up with a non-profit, the All Farms land trust, to connect low-income families with land they can farm. Eversource helped them purchase land which included some wetland and some arable land to be farmed using low-impact, organic practices. He provided maps showing the project in Agawam. Such a program can mitigate BVM loss by preserving or restoring an area otherwise vulnerable to environmental damage from development or other use.

Eversource aims for a project start date of mid-2022.

**NOI Filed for Kathleen and David Filkins, 13 Maple St., for Repair to a Dam**

On 10-17-21 a site visit to the property was made by Jack, Judy F., Judith W., and Alice.

Charles La Batt and Andre-Anne Chenaille of Guntlow & Associates described the project, which involves repairing a dam washed out some time over the past decade. They provided maps and diagrams to show existing conditions and the proposed dam construction. Ninety linear feet of Bank would be impacted. A concrete outfall structure will be built and an outlet pipe installed. Weir boards will be installed to enable change in water level.

Charles addressed DEP's concern about the flexibility of the water level. He felt it would be prudent to have the ability to adjust water level for temporary maintenance or repair. He said it might be necessary to lower the level if a potentially destructive storm was predicted. Charles said he would welcome a condition that stresses the necessity of an NOI to change the water level. Issues were brought up concerning the time it would take to process an NOI before a storm and what would be involved in obtaining an emergency permit. We discussed concerns about the timing of water level changes when wildlife could be harmed. It was pointed out that downstream areas could be affected by water release

Abutter Marilyn Patti asked about the purpose of the pond. David Filkins responded that they want to renew and protect wildlife habitat particularly for fish and birds. Charles said that current conditions are unstable and the area will continue to erode. Marilyn said it is very important that the work not be done in mud season due to conditions on Maple Street and asked that communication be maintained concerning timing of the project. Charles said the ideal time to start would be late spring or early summer and that the concrete structures will be pre-cast off-site to accelerate the work process.

Judith W. said we need more time to formulate conditions for this project. She moved that we continue consideration of the NOI to the next ConCom meeting on 12-1-21 at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall. Jack seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Charles said he and Andre will remain available for any inquiries concerning the project. They will write a letter to DEP, cc Mark Stinson, in answer to DEP concerns.

Erik suggested that a 50-year flood plan would be better than the 25-year flood plan used for the project. He felt an overflow pipe should be required.

Judy Ferber will draft an Order of Conditions for consideration by the ConCom, including the necessity to file an NOI before changing water level, the notification of abutters, use of emergency certification for a private property issue, and other issues addressed tonight.

**Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) from Geoffrey Thayer for Map/Plot 26-8 off of Summit Street**

On 10-13-21 a site visit to the property was made by Erik, Judy F., Jack, Alice, and Judith W.

Judith W. said the only pertinent question on the RDA is whether the area depicted is subject to protection under the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). There is a wide strip of wetland along the road with dry area further inland. An area could be delineated which is not jurisdictional, but jurisdictional area would have to be crossed to access it. There is no access without crossing wetland.

Judith W. moved, Erik seconded, that the Commission issue a Positive Determination on WPA Form 2, under B (1): The area described on the referenced plan(s) is an area subject to protection under the Act. Removing, filling, dredging, or altering of the area requires the filing of a Notice of Intent. Vote was unanimous in favor. All commissioners signed the Determination.

Due to holiday schedules the next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on Wednesday December 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall.

**Adjourned**, 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Schertle