

*Approved as amended 6-30-21*

**Plainfield Conservation Commission  
Minutes of Meeting Held May 26, 2021**

This meeting was held by remote participation consistent with Governor Baker's temporary modifications of the Open Meeting Law, with steps taken to enable public access to the meeting. The Google Meet was initiated by Jack Nelson.

Commissioners present: Erik Burcroff, Judy Ferber, Jack Nelson, Alice Schertle, Judith Williams (chair).

Also present: Tim Walter, Plainfield resident; Val Kohn, Windsor resident.

**Call to Order**, Judith Williams, 6:33 p.m.

Jack moved, Erik seconded, approval of the minutes of 4-28-21 as presented. Unanimous.

**Joint Boards Meeting**

Erik reported that the Joint Boards met once since the last ConCom meeting. Erik has provided the Joint Boards with a synopsis of Plainfield's Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP). Judy Cole will provide a synopsis of Plainfield's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). Judith said that the ConCom should be sent a copy, on its completion, of the Joint Board's grant application to fund the Conway School of Design's work on the Climate Resiliency Study .

**Certificate of Compliance Request from Plainfield Solar, LLC**

Judith read the letter requesting a COC. Arthur Allen, a wetland scientist, has given written confirmation that the work is complete and meets all requirements. Judith read the ConCom's Order of Conditions, which specifies a replication of the wetland using the existing dominant species.

Erik, Jack and Judith made a site visit to the property on 5-23-21. Jack showed photos of the replication area, in which only grasses are growing. Judith said native shrubbery along the edges may or may not fill in. Erik pointed out that hay bales had been pushed up against the replication area, preventing native species in the area from revegetating the replication.. Erik, Jack and Judy felt erosion controls on the site are satisfactory but the wetland replication area is not.

Judith moved, Erik seconded, that the ConCom withhold a COC until the area is restored with the original native plant species, as required by the Order of Conditions. Vote was unanimous in favor. Judith will write a letter to Plainfield Solar, attaching Jack's photos and explaining our requirements before a COC can be issued. The ConCom will continue to monitor the replication.

**Vernal Pool, Pleasant Street**

The Commission heard a report from Plainfield resident Tim Walter and Windsor resident Val Kohn, who has volunteered to represent Plainfield at Westfield Wild and Scenic in regard to vernal pools. They were present to express concern about the condition of a vernal pool on Pleasant Street. Tim said that a culvert is draining the vernal pool which he has seen diminish to a small portion of its original size. He has observed salamander and wood frog eggs in the pool. The culvert, about a foot in diameter, was installed before the vernal pool was certified in 2016. Jack said it was not a good installation; the southern end of the culvert is perched. Tim suggested

the bottom half of the culvert be covered to diminish the flow and lessen the amount of water draining the pool. Judith said we value vernal pools but have to be careful with culvert modification, which requires an RDA or NOI. We have over 150 culverts in town, many of which need attention. All our efforts, with the cooperation of the Highway Department, have been to increase rather than reduce flow through culverts. Jack will ask DEP Circuit Rider Mark Stinson to inspect the pool and advise the ConCom. Tim asked that he be included in Mark's inspection of the pool.

We thanked Tim and Val for their assistance and concern. They left the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

### **Wild and Scenic Westfield River**

Erik reported on John Burns' contact with Westfield Wild and Scenic in which John inquired about WWS designation for Plainfield. John was told that the National Park Service funds all designated WS areas without regard to length of river/area; all get the same amount of funding. Westfield Wild and Scenic feels they already have a very large area to cover without receiving extra funding for their size. They recommend that requests be made to the National Park Service to change the way WS areas are funded to recognize the greater need of larger areas.

Alice read the email from John describing his contact with WWS. Judith will ask John to continue his discussion with WWS.

### **Future NOI, Epsilon Associates**

Judith has received notice from Rhianna Sommers of Epsilon Associates inquiring about procedures for an anticipated NOI. We do not yet know the nature of the project covered by the NOI, which is likely to be submitted for our next meeting.

### **Paving Project**

Jack, Erik, and Judith met with Mert Taylor on 5-19-21 to inspect areas to be paved on 116 and West Street. The project is exempt as the road will not be widened nor the elevation changed.

Mert expressed concern about a beaver problem on West 116, past 8A, where beavers have completely blocked a culvert. Mark Stinson checked it and sent Judith extensive materials on dealing with beavers. Erik volunteered to examine the materials and work with Mert and Mark to address the beaver problem.

### **Forest Cutting Plan**

Erik reported on a 10-acre cut on East Main on property with an out-of-town owner, Paul Zecchi. The FCP, prepared by Richard Valcourt, was approved by Service Forester Alison Wright-Hunter. There are no stream crossings or NHESP issues.

Judy Ferber will take over from Erik to report on Forest Cutting Plans for the ConCom.

### **Plainfield Wetland Bylaw**

Jack felt that regulations will have to be both incorporated within the bylaw and documented separately. We discussed Jack's revised focus points as well as the MACC Buffer Zone Guidebook. The Guidebook is full of data and references we will need in drafting the bylaw.

We reviewed performance standards in the Guidebook, eliminating or amending some for our bylaw. There was a discussion of the ramifications of making the Buffer Zone a resource area. One hundred feet from a wetland is considered core habitat for many species. Jack will revise his focus points incorporating points made during our discussion.

We will need public informational forums before we present the bylaw.

Because of the time demands of the project, Judith will arrange for a special ConCom meeting to work on the bylaw.

Erik said it has not yet been decided at the state level whether in-person meetings will resume. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjourned, 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Schertle