

Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission
Meeting December 12, 2017
Approved Copy

In attendance for the FCC: John Medenwald, Acting Chair
Karen Pettersen, Secretary
Dennis Armell, Treasurer
Jen Cirillo
Amy Dohner

Guests: Lincoln Lande
Dori Barton
Kathleen Raymond

John opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

The November 14th meeting notes were moved to be accepted as presented.

A. Town Forest

1. Craig sent an email to the members of the Conservation Commission informing us of his meeting with Cynthia Shultz, abutter, concerning the permanent right-of-way thru their property to the Town Forest.
2. We have a tentative date (Sun. Jan. 14th) to check out a portion of Town Forest boundary starting at the southeast corner.

B. Future Workshops

1. Jen has access to a film about Wendell Berry, which could be shown the week of Feb. 19th. We would need a different screen for that showing.

C. groSolar Micro Grid

1. Lincoln Landre, representing groSolar Micro Grid, explained the solar project being proposed at the southwest corner of Greenbush Road and Route 7. The expected life of the project is up to 35 years.
 - a. The project will be divided into 2 sets of arrays, separated by a class 2 wetland, and set back approximately 1200 feet and 2000 feet from the intersection and extending back to the railroad tracks.
 - b. The 5 MW project will be owned by Green Mountain Power. The panels will rotate vertically, but will not track the sun.
 - c. Lincoln said that the project will avoid all significant natural resources except at the wetland crossing.
 - d. Each array will be surrounded by a 7'-8' high deer fence consisting of wood posts strung with 6x6 metal mesh. Outside the fence area, but inside the lease area, the vegetation will be brush hogged 1-2 times a year. Inside the fence area the vegetation will be mowed 1-2 times a year.
 - e. A pollinator mix will be used within the fence area. They are not sure if they will contract with a bee keeper.
 - f. There will be Tesla battery storage cabinets located on the east side of the northern array. Each cabinet will be 6'x 6'x 6'.

- g. SE Group prepared a Planting Plan to screen the project from Route 7 and Greenbush Road after doing a visual analysis. There is extensive use of native species with a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs. All new plantings will be maintained and replaced if needed.
 - h. The access road to the project will be moved further north along Greenbush Road than what is shown on the site plan. The road will divide to provide access to both sets of arrays, and the electrical connection between the two arrays will be placed under the access road culvert that will be used to cross the wetland.
2. Dori Barton, Consulting Ecologist with Arrowwood Environmental, presented her findings. In general, there will be minimal impacts to the surrounding plants and animals. Her final report will be completed shortly.
 - a. She will be filing a wetland permit for the wetland crossing for the access road. There will be an aquatic amphibian crossing at the culvert under that access road.
 - b. There are no rare, threatened or endangered species within the project's disturbance. There are uncommon plants along the access road.
 3. John requested that the mowing be restricted to 10 feet outside the fence.
 4. Dennis asked about the timeline. Lincoln responded that it may start in the fall of 2018 , but probably in 2019. Dennis, also, asked if the deer will be affected by the reflectance of the panels. Lincoln responded that it has not been studied. Lincoln added that the sound from the panels will be very low, however, the batteries are noisier and a sound fence will surround the battery cabinets.
 5. Karen asked Lincoln to compare the area of this project to the existing Pomerleau project on the west side of Rt. 7 outside of Vergennes. The output of the Pomerleau project is 2.1MW vs 5MW for this project, and the land area of the Pomerleau project is 2/3s of the groSolar project. The land area of the groSolar project area is only a third larger than the Pomerleau due to the increase in efficiency over the intervening years. Karen, also, asked if the solar panels in the northwest corner would be visible by people using the access road into the Fish and Wildlife Area, and Lincoln said no.
 6. The present members supported the project. Lincoln will contact the Commission if they need a support letter from us.
- D. Raymond, Claflin lot #1, Hand Road, proposed fence along their southern property line
1. Kathleen Raymond explained that they wish to put up a fence along the 4 sides of their property to keep their 2 dogs and horse secure. There is an existing old fence along the southern line that was installed by the abutter, presently Dorothy Muzzy. That existing fence isn't suitable to contain her dogs.
 2. The Claflin subdivision permit calls for a 'no cut zone 25 feet from the Muzzy property line', which was based on FCC testimony. Our intention was to maintain and potentially enlarge the existing hedge row surrounding that common property line to provide a protective corridor for wildlife traveling to and from Fuller Mountain.
 3. The Raymonds invited Cliff Mix, the Town Tree Warden, to assess the trees on their property. In the area of the southern property line he said to take out all the Common Buckthorn because it is an invasive species. Kathleen said that there is a lot of buckthorn in that area. If they put their fence 25 feet from the Muzzy fence they didn't think the deer would travel in that alley with all the buckthorn. If they put their fence closer to the Muzzy fence they would need to clear out the buckthorn to install and maintain the fence.
 4. The Raymonds have installed a number of game cameras. The cameras show that the deer travel on the east and north sides of the patch of woods on their lot and not along the hedge row.
 5. A few members of the Commission stated that the hedgerow can be used by other wildlife, not just deer.

No other business was discussed and the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm. The next scheduled meeting is January 9th, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Pettersen, Secretary