

CITY OF FITCHBURG CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2018

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tracey Sarefield, Chair, Bryan Breau, John Cordio, Mike Donnelly, Harry Karis, John Koutonen, Mary Heline (Assoc. Member) [7]

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Smith. Mike O'Hara

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 6:01 at Fitchburg Municipal Airport, 567 Crawford St., Administration Building, Room 106.

Ms. Sarefield read an introduction stating the mission statement of the Commission, and the role & responsibilities of the Conservation Commission and the eight interests of the Wetlands Protection Act.

MINUTES

Motion made & seconded to approve minutes of April 24th & June 26th meetings. Vote in favor.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Notice of Intent - Fitchburg Municipal Airport - Shift & extend runway 14-32 in Riverfront Area
Hearing opened. Present: Nik Ippolito, Project Mgr. Gale Assocs., Steve Riberdy & Josh Surette, GZA; Scott Ellis, Airport Mgr.

Project is a follow-up of FIT's 2008 Master Plan which included making runways meet current FAA standards for runway length, safety & approach zones. Runway 14-32 will be slightly re-aligned (by 1.5°) and lengthened from 4,500 feet to 5,000 feet. The crosswind runway 2-20 will be eliminated. This option is one w/ the lowest environmental impact while still meeting FAA standards.

Site plan was presented showing resource areas and the impact of the project. On western end of 14-32 runway extended by placing fill over portion of old landfill. On eastern end extended runway will be approx. 50 feet from Nashua R. Runway 2-20 will be removed, the side closed to river will be replanted & allowed to naturalize. On the opposite end of 2-20 nearest Crawford St., pavement will be removed and is expected to be developed for industrial use.

Resource areas have been re-flagged since previous flags had no numbers.

Knotweed is proposed to be controlled by mowing and then application of herbicide on new growth for two years. Herbicides will be applied by licensed applicator.

Q: Dewatering plan? Yes, they will pump to a sedimentation basin.

Wetland replication will be 4:1 - dig out upland areas 2-feet deep and replant w/ wetlands species.

Net reduction of 11.5 acres of impervious area, decrease of .66 acre in Riverfront Area

Nik: Advantages of project:

- No net loss of wetlands
- Infiltration basins provided off taxiways
- Reduction in peak runoff rate
- Reduction in impervious surfaces

A new SWPPP will be prepared for the project. Timeframes: Final design: Fall 2018. Out to bid: Spring 2019. Construction anticipated Summer-Fall 2019.

John K: Will any vernal pools on Airport property be affected? Steve Riberdy: Not affected.
Tim: On site visit he couldn't locate the existing vernal pool, and found no new ones.
Tim: The end of proposed expanded runway will be just 50 feet from riverbank. Since river's edge appears to be migrating around bend over the years, will riverbank get even closer to edge of pavement?
Tim & Mike D. suggested look at past 10-20 years of aerial photos. Has the river's edge moved over time?

Foot-by-foot flood storage calculations have been submitted to the Commission documenting that there will be compensatory storage meeting the WPA's Performance Standards.

Infiltration basins: Will they work since a large portion of airport property is in the 100-year flood zone? Soil testing shows that there will be sufficient separation between seasonal high groundwater elevation and the bottom of the basin.

John K: How to stabilize banking at end of runway? Why not install boulders/jersey barriers as part of this project to armor banking, rather than having to address the receding riverbank at a later date? Currently, the knotweed is what stabilizes the banking; what will happen when that is removed?

Public Comment:

John Beauchesne, 30 Olin Dr. concerned w/ increased jet noise overhead with a longer runway.
Chris McDermott, North Central Mass. Chamber of Commerce supports the project. Fitchburg Airport expansion is important to the regional economy.

Q: Will airport remain open during runway construction?
Scott Ellis, FIT Airport Manager: The crosswind runway 2-20 will be available for use during construction.

DEP file # not issued yet, so Commission can't make decision.
Commission agreed to have site walk Tues. Sept. 11th @ 4:30. Meeting at Airport Admin Bldg.
It will be posted as a public meeting in case of quorum. (*Note: site walk was later postponed.*)

Addition info needed prior to next meeting:

- DEP File #
- Dewatering plan submitted
- Stake out end of proposed runway expansion
- Investigate change of location of riverbank over time

Motion made & seconded to continue hearing to Sept. 25th. Vote in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Eric Lahti - improve cart road, New West Townsend Rd. (informal)

Eric presented plan of portion of former Lahti Tree Farm divided into four lots members of his family. An existing cart road is proposed to be used for access to building sites. He will fill in gaps in cart road to make it smoother, but not planning to pave, may need to widen driveway for adequate access to lots, but won't encroach closer to resource areas, no new crossings. Common drive may provide access to 3 lots, max. allowed on common driveway is 2 lots. Commission agreed to support a request for Variance for the 3rd lot. He is planning to submit NOI for next month.

North East Roads site, 135 Crawford St. (#155-621)

Grecco Alonso present to update Commission on landscape around site per restoration plan. Several plantings had to be replaced. Mike O. will check on them. This project was originally approved in 2014 but has been revised several times. It is now used as a storage yard for towed vehicles. No building is planned.

Ch. 61A Notice of Intent to Sell - Lanni, 60 ac. Pearl Hill Rd.

Petition from City Council asking for comments on whether City should exercise right of first refusal and match the offer, or assign that right to a non-profit conservation organization.

Motion made & seconded to make no recommendation either for or against. Vote in favor.

Commission discussed being selective in recommending on exercising right of first refusal on Ch. 61 land; it may be appropriate if the parcel is adjacent to existing conservation land.

Correspondence

Commission discussed a tax title parcel at 0 Cleghorn St., corner of Kimball St. Treasurer's office seeking comments on whether to auction or sell. Since it's not a building lot, is adjacent to the Nashua River and next to a parcel owned by Mass DCR parcel, Commission agreed best for City to hold on to it.

Certificates of Compliance

None.

Motion made & seconded to adjourn. Vote in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 7:54 p.m.

Next meeting: 9/25/18

Minutes approved: 9/25/18