

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The primary function of the Conservation Commission is to ensure local-level compliance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the Lancaster Wetlands Protection Bylaw, and issue decisions relating thereto for all development projects in Lancaster.

The two types of applications most often reviewed by the Commission for development projects are Requests for Determination of Applicability (RDA) and Notices of Intent (NOI). The Commission also performs other regulatory functions, per the Wetlands Protection Act, such as reviewing Resource Area Delineation (RAD) applications and Certificates of Compliance (COC) for completed projects, and issuing Enforcement Orders (EO) for those who are in violation of the Wetlands Protection Act or Bylaw.

During the course of 2013, the Commission reviewed the following projects:

Filing	Applicant	Location	Action	Date
RDA	Donald Leger	60 Fire Road 1	Approved	1/13
NOI	John Kanis	Pine Hill Road	Approved	1/13
NOI	John and Susanne Barker	220 Fire Road 3	Approved	1/13
NOI	Borrego Solar Systems	267 Brockelman Road	Approved	2/13
COC	M.B. Realty Corp.	450 Old Union Turnpike	Approved	2/13
NOI	Paul and Rita Leblanc	108 Fire Road 12	Approved	3/13
NOI	Robert and Linda Martineau	15 Mountain Laurel Lane	Approved	3/13
EO	David King	6 Mountain Laurel Lane	Approved	3/13
COC	William Putnam	225 Kaleva Road	Approved	4/13
NOI	Robert St. Jean	195 White Pond Road	Approved	4/13
RDA	John Kanis	535 Harvard Road	Approved	4/13
COC	Town of Lancaster	George Hill Road	Approved	4/13
NOI	Town of Lancaster	Bartlett Pond Dam	Approved	5/13
EO	James Soldi	74 Pilgrim Road	Approved	5/13
RDA	Gary Baird	16 Moffett Street	Approved	5/13
NOI	Town of Lancaster	Still River Road	Approved	5/13
RDA	Jeremy and Jessica Pierce	Rigby Road	Approved	6/13
RDA	Jamison VanDyke	40 Fort Pond Lane	Approved	6/13
NOI	Ronald and Linda Abreu	31B Mountain Laurel Lane	Approved	6/13
RDA	Donald Leger	60 Fire Road 1	Approved	6/13
COC	Craig Adams and Loretta Carter	91 Mary Catherine Drive	Approved	7/13
COC	Joe Spinelli	4 Heritage Lane	Approved	7/13
EO	Paul and Jeanne Rich	Mill Street Extension	Approved	7/13

NOI	Jamison VanDyke	40 Fort Pond Lane	Approved	8/13
NOI	Eugene Christoph	32 Russell Lane	Approved	8/13
NOI	David Harper	1539 Main Street	Approved	8/13
RDA	James and Debra Piermarini	150 Fire Road 12	Approved	8/13
COC	John and Susanne Barker	220 Fire Road 3	Approved	8/13
COC	Dan Beaton	Mill Street – Lot 1	Approved	8/13
COC	Dan Beaton	Mill Street – Lot 2	Approved	8/13
EO	Central Mass. Sand and Gravel	Lunenburg Road	Approved	8/13
NOI	YMCA Camp Lowe	Fort Pond Inn Road	Approved	9/13
RDA	Alfred Dentino	431 Brockelman Road	Approved	9/13
NOI	North Lancaster LLC (soccer complex)	Lunenburg Road	Approved	9/13
Amended NOI	Borrego Solar Systems	237 Brockelman Road	Approved	9/13
RDA	Shirley Water District	Chisholm Trail	Approved	9/13
EO	Joe Spinelli	160 Fire Road 12	Approved	9/13
NOI	North Lancaster LLC (gas station)	Lunenburg Road	Approved	10/13
RDA	Assabet Industries	Shirley Road	Approved	10/13
NOI	Joe Spinelli	160 Fire Road 12	Approved	11/13
NOI	Candy Shiveley	220 Fort Pond Road	Approved	12/13
RDA	Keith Rockel	Ballard Hill – Main Street	Approved	12/13

Conservation Areas

The Commission is looking to the future of several of its conservation areas by developing master plans for each of these areas. A small team has been assigned to create the plan for each of the following areas in 2014:

- Eagle Ridge Conservation Area – off of Mary Catherine Drive
- Runaway Brook Conservation Area – off of Runaway Brook Road
- Devonshire Estates Conservation Area – off of Devonshire Way
- Cook Conservation Area – off of Lunenburg Road
- Robert J. Frommer Conservation Area at Bartlett Pond – off of Rt. 117 (North Main Street)
- Pellechia Conservation Area and Canoe Launch – off of Lunenburg Road
- Winsor Heights Conservation Area – off of Winsor Road

The master plans will determine the best conservation and recreational use for each site, along with an implementation plan for bringing these uses to fruition.

Land Acquisition

The Conservation Commission was offered and accepted a donation of two parcels that are part of the Winsor Heights subdivision, located off of Winsor Road. These parcels (approximately 8 acres) will connect to the Parker Family Forest property that is owned by the New England Forestry Foundation. These new Conservation Commission parcels will be known as the Winsor Heights Conservation Area.

Bartlett Pond Dam Removal

The Department of Dam Safety (DDS) determined several years ago that the Bartlett Pond dam is in critical need of repair or removal. The Town of Lancaster is the owner of the property and is responsible for the dam. The Lancaster Conservation Commission oversees the property, but is not directly involved in decisions pertaining to the future of the site because its primary function is to issue permits under the direction of the Department of Environmental Protection.

PARE Engineers, who are retained by the Town to offer design engineering and monitoring services, suggested at an open forum that the projected costs of removal or replacement stood at about \$750,000 for either option. In subsequent meetings, it was agreed that removal would be much less expensive because the sediments are generally free of toxins that would require removal and disposal. Also, it is much more ecologically beneficial to restore it to a free flowing brook.

The Town received a permit from the Conservation Commission to remove the flash boards and debris from the dam allowing the pond to be drawn down and bringing it into partial compliance with the demands of the DDS. Also, one of two turbines was removed and restored by private citizens of the Town at no expense, and will be put on permanent display in the park area. Town Meeting then approved \$50,000 from the Capitol Stabilization fund for the design, engineering and permitting for the dam removal.

Several grants have been obtained to defray the costs to the Town for the project. The dam has now been removed. Much of the subsequent work will be done using Town equipment and skill. Final costs to the Town for the dam removal are projected to be significantly less than \$100,000.

Experience has shown that once a dam is removed, it is best to let nature take its course for at least one year before stream enhancements and park redevelopment are undertaken. Several Lancaster residents are actively involved in planning future uses of the site and linking it with adjacent town-owned tracts of land. Several grants are being pursued to finance these activities. Anyone interested is invited to participate.

Solar Arrays

Solar energy generating facilities use rows of photovoltaic cells (also known as solar panel arrays) to collect sunlight and produce electricity. Because generation of electric power from solar energy is renewable and does not emit greenhouse gases that might contribute to climate change, it is also known as “green” energy. As an economic incentive for the development of more solar arrays with larger generating capacity, Massachusetts law allows owners of such

facilities, depending on the amount of electricity produced, to sell what are known as “net-metering credits” to the power companies that in turn provide the electricity to consumers.

The Conservation Commission has been introduced to the permitting of such facilities over the last two years, gaining an education on their impacts to the natural landscape. Several projects have been reviewed:

- A town-owned 500 kilo-watt solar energy generation facility at the site of the former landfill on Lunenburg Road. The array went live in September 2013.
- A private 6 mega-watt solar energy generation facility at the site of the former Shirley Airport on Shirley Road to be developed by UGT Renewables. Construction is expected to start in early 2014.
- A private 4 mega-watt solar energy generation facility on Brockelman Road to be developed by Borrego Solar Systems. Construction has been completed, and it is set to go on-line in early 2014.

Other Business

The Commission did some re-organization throughout the year, as follows:

- Tom Christopher was appointed as a Full Member
- Nathan Stevens was appointed as a Full Member
- Ruth Anderson stepped up to become a Full Member
- Ken Rapoza resigned in May, but was then re-appointed in July
- Brooke Blew did not seek re-appointment to the Commission
- Eric Schreiber did not seek re-appointment to the Commission
- Cara Sanford did not seek re-appointment to the Commission
- Mark Melican did not seek re-appointment to the Commission
- Ken Rapoza was re-elected as Chair, and Tom Christopher was elected as Vice-Chair
- James Lavalee was appointed as a Full Member

It is with great pleasure that the Commission welcomes our new Conservation Agent, David Koonce. David is a resident of Boxboro and a long-time member of their Conservation Commission. He currently works part-time as a Conservation Agent in the Town of Winchendon, and also the last few years as an agent in Templeton, culminating in over 20 years of combined professional and volunteer experience working in wetlands protection and land conservation.

What's New for 2014

Some of the Commission's upcoming activities in 2014 will include the continued conservation of open space properties, maintaining the conservation land throughout the town to provide a rural environment for the residents to enjoy, working with potential developers in seeking

permanent conservation easements for path systems, and similar ideas for a variety of other conservation-oriented projects.

The Lancaster Conservation Commission is a seven-member appointed board, with associate members. The Commission meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 PM at the Lancaster Community Center. Everyone is welcome to join the Commission for these meetings and public involvement is always encouraged.

The Community Development and Planning Office coordinates all meeting schedules and is open Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. As always, we welcome citizen's questions, comments or suggestions. Please feel free to contact us at 978-365-3326 (David x1054, Jeanette x1310), dkoonce@lancasterma.net or jggalliardt@lancasterma.net. For more information on conservation issues in Lancaster, please visit us on the town's web site: www.ci.lancaster.ma.us.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Rapoza, *Chair*

Tom Christopher, *Vice-Chair*

Peter Farmer

Ted Manning

Ruth Anderson

Nathan Stevens

James Lavalee

Tom Early, *Associate Member*

