

WEST TISBURY  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
July 13, 2021

**Present:** Geraldine Brooks, Whit Griswold, Angela Luckey, and Donna Paulnock

**Absent:** John Brannon Peter Rodegast, and Michael Turnell

**Staff Present:** Maria McFarland

**Also present for all or part of the meeting:** Keith Gazaille, Omar Johnson, Gregory Palermo, and Bill Wilcox

Whit Griswold called the meeting to order at 5:05 P.M. The meeting was held via Zoom in accordance with the Governor's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A sec.20.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the June 22, 2021 meeting were approved as revised. Roll Call Vote: Angela, Donna, Geraldine, and Whit voted in favor.

**Public Meeting:**

**Tisbury Great Pond/ Short Cove:** a public meeting under the requirements of G.L. Ch.131 § 40, as amended, and West Tisbury Wetlands Protection Bylaw and regulations, to consider a **Request for Determination of Applicability** filed by the Conservation Commission on behalf of the Town of West Tisbury for a project to remove a stand of Parrot Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*), a non-native invasive species found in Short Cove in Tisbury Great Pond. All work will be done by hand pulling the plants.

Keith Gazielle of Solitude Lake Management joined the meeting. His company will do the work. Keith told the members that the project was pretty straight forward. A couple of workers will wade into the pond to carefully excavate the root structure of the plants out of the sediment and collect the plants into bags which will be deposited at an upland compost location. Maria will arrange for the disposal at the Refuse District. Keith anticipates it will take 2 workers a couple of days to complete the removal process. A fragment barrier, which he described as a floating collar with a 3 to 4-foot mesh screen hanging from the collar, will be installed on the southern side to catch and contain plant fragments. They will access the site via the boat landing at Sepesissa.

Gregory Palermo, who along with Margaret Curtin found this plant in 2020, recently surveyed the site and found a stand of Mitchell's Sedge (*Carex mitchelliana*) which is a State listed threatened plant in Massachusetts. Gregory offered to go to the site and flag the plants so that they can be avoided during work.

**Commissioners Comments/ Questions:**

Geraldine asked what the Commission's role is. Maria explained that she was told by the State that an invasive plant removal project done by hand could be approved by a Determination of Applicability.

Maria asked Keith if he thought the \$3,800 estimate was still good. Gregory said they did not see an explosion of growth when they recently visited the site. Keith replied that while he hasn't seen the site this year, he thinks the quote is still good.

Keith asked if there any fluctuation when the pond is open explaining that it is easier to remove the root structure if the plants are surrounded by some water. Keith was asked if the pond should be open or

closed. He said the pond/cove needs to be about half full. He said the best time to do this work is before late summer and early fall. The timing of the work will have to be coordinated with Johnny Hoy, who along with Kent Healy, determines when to open the pond.

There was a general discussion about the logistics of getting a boat reservation and the equipment Keith needs to bring with him to the island.

Keith said they will identify and flag the Mitchells' Sedge and work carefully around it. Gregory offered to place some pin flags around the plants. Gregory also offered to be on site when the work is done.

Maria will email Johnny Hoy and Kent Healy to ask about the timing of the next pond opening. Keith will need to make a boat reservation.

A motion was made by Geraldine and seconded by Angela to issue a Negative Determination of Applicability that this project is within a resource area but does not need a Notice of Intent. Conditions for the project will be that work is done by hand, a barrier shall be installed to contain plant fragments, and the Mitchells Sedge shall be protected so that it is not removed. Roll Call Vote: Angela, Donna, Geraldine, and Whit voted in favor.

#### **New Business:**

**Blackwater Brook/ Sampling for bacteria levels:** Omar Johnson, Board of Health Agent and Bill Wilcox of the Dukes County Conservation District were present to discuss the high levels of E. coli and Enterococci at the mouth of Blackwater Brook (called Coca-Cola Brook in this location) as it enters Lambert's Cove.

Whit explained that Bill Wilcox's recommendation was to do extensive testing at the outlet to Duarte's Pond, and above and below the two farms (Runamok and Blackwater), at the Lambert's Cove Road bridge and at the outlet at Lambert's Cove. His recommendation is to do the sampling during or right after a rainfall if possible.

Omar stated that the Board of Health tests Coca-Cola brook at the outlet to the sound, but not after a rain event. Because the brook is now cutting a channel along the beach, Omar has posted signs along the channel to alert people to the high bacteria count.

Bill added to Whit's summary of his email by saying that the idea is to try to determine the affect of the rainfall on the bacterial content of the stream at different locations. By sampling above and below a suspected source, such as a farm while there is runoff happening, if the farms are a source it should show up. The problem is the timing of sampling during a storm event. To be definitive, Bill recommended sampling specifically above and below a potential source. Sampling on the downstream side of any road crossing the stream would give an indication of the contribution from the road. It would be useful but not definitive.

Bill suggested that by sampling just below the lumberyard the test results would allow the board to see what the lumberyard is contributing. By sampling below the Lambert's Cove Road bridge, we might get some stormwater runoff from the lumber yard that may contribute. Doing so would allow us to separate out the road from the Cottles property.

After a detailed discussion about sampling locations it was determined that samples will be taken at 1) Outlet to Duarte's, 2) below Athearn, 3) below Leonard- Peck, 4) below Cottle's lumberyard, and 5)

below the Lambert's Cove Road bridge. It was decided not to sample near the unnamed tributary shown on the Assessor's map near Cottle's Lane.

Omar can supply the sampling bottles and train board members how to take the samples. He is not available to do the sampling. The samples can be sent to the Wampanoag Tribal Lab in Aquinnah. The charge for testing for E. Coli is \$25 and for Enterococci is \$30. Funding to pay for the sampling and testing fees and data analysis were discussed. Bill offered that the least expensive option would be to sample to test for bacterial analysis and not test for nitrogen or suspended solids. Maria said there is money in the expense budget to pay for the testing. Bill said if the first round of samples comes back with something definitive, one round might work.

Bill pointed out that lay people taking samples will to render them invalid. He suggested taking one round of samples and if the results are definitive, the Commission could hire consultant or agency personnel such as the MVC to take another round of samples.

Omar and Whit will make arrangements for a lesson in taking the samples. No vote was required on this matter.

**Map 7 Lot 28 /Cottles/Blackwater Brook Farm:** Maria said she has been holding off contacting Amy Cottle Look at find out if she has talked to Alan and to see if the cows were moved off site for the summer.

**Map 7 Lot 28.2/ Johnson/driveway:** No update

**Map 3 Lot 72/ Cottle's Lumberyard:** Maria noted that she went to the lumberyard the other day and noticed a lot of product being stored by the brook again.

**Administrative:**

**Bylaw Regulations/ MACC review:** Maria told the board she sent the regulations revisions to MACC for review several months ago, but so far no one at MACC as volunteered to look at them. The draft revisions may have to be sent to town counsel.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 6:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria McFarland  
Commission Administrator