

WEST TISBURY  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
August 10, 2021

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

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

**Staff Present:** Maria McFarland

**Also present for all or part of the meeting:** Tim Boland, John Hoff, Leah McGaven, Kristen Leader Kate and Geoffrey Lauprete, Kat Monterosso, Joan Smith, Elizabeth Thomas, Mallory Watts, and Claudia West,

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 July 13, 2021 meeting were approved as revised. Roll Call Vote: Geraldine, Whit, Angela and Donna voted in favor. John abstained.

The minutes of the July 27, 2021 meeting were approved as revised. Roll Call Vote: Whit, Angela and Donna voted in favor. John and Geraldine abstained.

**Public Hearings:**

**Map 23 Lot 3.1 and 3.2:** A public hearing under the requirements of G.L. Ch.131 § 40, as amended and the West Tisbury Wetlands Protection Bylaw and regulations to consider a **Notice of Intent** filed by Vineyard Land Surveying & Engineering, Inc. on behalf of Kate and Geoffrey Lauprete and JMMoulton Realty Trust, and Harold Bartelt Realty Trust (lessees) of property located at 71 and 81 Tisbury Lane West respectively, owned by Seven Gates Farm Corporation for an Ecological Restoration Limited Project involving the removal of invasive plant species and downed trees within 8 acres of Bordering Vegetated Wetland, Buffer Zone and Riverfront Area.

Reid Silva summarized the history of the project to date. The purpose of this NOI is to gain approval for a project started in 2018 under Order of Conditions SE79-385. Because of some technical issues with the original filing and Order, and the magnitude of the proposed phase 2, a new NOI was required by the Board.

Reid reviewed his site plan. This project will take place within actual resource areas and in the Buffer Zone covering over 8 acres of land.

Claudia said that the property looks like pristine habitat with lots of greenery, but the majority of the remaining native plant communities are being choked out by invasive vines. This is an unusual and amazing project. They have hired a professional land manager to do the work being proposed. She said it is not a beautification project.

The primary issued discussed was the removal of 7 fully matured Black Locust up to 16” DBH, 12 Black Locust saplings, and 7 Western Cedars. The Black Locust are non-native invasive trees that have grown in the wetlands. The Western Cedars are not native, but they are not invasive. Reid described the process of removing trees of this size without heavy equipment. Larger sections may have to be removed on a skid via the access paths. Stumps will be flush cut. Equipment might include a bobcat or dingo. Stumps will be flush cut.

Commissioners Comments/ Questions:

The following points were made during the discussion:

Geraldine asked how the applicant plans to handle the Black Locust stumps which can sprout and spread without the use of herbicides. Claudia said they will manage them by hand using a weed whacker to keep the sprouts down.

Whit asked Tim Boland to comment on the management techniques used at Polly Hill Arboretum that consists of using black plastic to cover the cut stumps. Tim explained that Black Locust nitrifies the soils and invites invasive into the soil. Constant pruning does work, but is labor intensive.

Geraldine asked if anyone has used Bruce Marchand and his horses for tree removal. Reid said he still does this work but didn't think this site would be appropriate. The applicant has a relationship with a local landscaping company but they haven't hired anyone yet.

Angela asked what the board thinks about the sequencing plan and monitoring the cleared areas before approving new plantings. Maria said she is more concerned about plantings in the resource area as opposed to new plantings in the buffer zone.

Claudia said after the invasives are removed they will be able to get a good sense of the remaining seed bank after one or two growing seasons. By the second growing season if things are still bare, there is a good chance nothing will come back.

Tim Boland offered that one growing season is probably sufficient. Maria said typically the condition is usually two growing seasons.

Board members stated their support for the project and their interest in seeing how it evolves. They expressed confidence that the applicant's representatives will do a good job.

A motion was made by John, seconded by Angela, to continue the public hearing on this matter to August 24 at 5:10 PM. Roll Call Vote, Angela – aye, Donna- aye: Geraldine -aye, John – aye, and Whit-aye.

**New Business:**

**Climate Action Committee/3-5-year action plan/ comments:** Donna reported that the Climate Action Committee is working to narrow down the scope of the plan which will be recirculated for comment at a later date. No action was taken.

**Map 25 Lot 1.1/Ag Society/ Test MV:** The board discussed a request to move the COVID-19 testing center from the WT Elementary School to the Ag Hall. Members wanted to know if there was an alternative location that could be utilized such as the Grange Hall.

Maria explained that the testing center needs to be in a facility that has good internet service, access to electricity, the ability to handle drive up testing and a building with heat for the winter.

After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to send a letter to the Select Board that the Commission is not in favor of this the use of the Ag Hall for community related purpose is being invoked too frequently, creating excessive impact both to the site itself and its abutters. Also, the

board would like to know if alternative venues were looked at. Roll Call Vote, Angela – aye, Donna- aye: Geraldine -aye, John – aye, and Whit-aye.

**Old Business:**

**Map 5 Lot 2.3/SE79-408/Review of Landscaping Plan:** The purpose of this meeting is to review and approve a landscaping plan as required under the Order of Conditions.

Joan Smith, owner of the property gave the board some history of the property. The cottage being renovated dates back to the 1940's when there was an adult summer camp run by the Daggett family. Members reviewed photos of the current state of construction.

Leah McGaven, the project architect prepared the landscape that will be executed by John Hoff of Oakleaf Landscape. The main reason the landscape plan has grown is because of a decision by the Building Inspector that the floor level not be changed from the existing grade. Because of this requirement, the builder had to dig down to maintain the floor level. There is a walkway to the main door which she called a moat. The cottage was meant to sit just above grade with no need for a lot of landscaping except to replace the timber retaining wall on the north side of the cottage. They considered raising the house but it would have been extremely expensive. The landscape plan being submitted addresses the issues created by this requirement. The wooden walkway around the cottage is needed to cover the gully around the house.

The retaining walls being replaced are in the second 50 feet of the Buffer Zone. Took more space on the north side of the house to provide more room for an outdoor shower that has been replaced. Keeping as much of the existing vegetation as possible. Replacing rail road tie steps with stone steps.

**Commissioner's Comment's Questions:**

Geraldine asked about the restoration areas required under the Order of Conditions. Maria explained that Vineyard Land Surveying will install the boundary markers for the restoration areas. The new landscaping project is being handled by Oak Leaf Landscaping.

For the benefit of the applicant and the landscaper, the board went over the conditions of the permit related to the landscaping. No pruning of vegetation between the new deck and the pond is permitted. The access route shown on the project plan and used for the reconstruction of the cottage shall be used for the landscaping work. Leah said this was understood.

John Hoff said he wanted to do a bigger project than what is being proposed. Plantings will consist of shad, clethra, and bayberry. Disturbed ground will be seeded with a native conservation seed mix. The landscape plan provides a plant list with size and quantities to be planted.

A motion was made by John seconded by Angela to approve the landscaping plan as presented. Roll Call Vote: Angela – aye, Donna- aye: Geraldine -aye, John – aye, and Whit-aye.

**Blackwater Brook/ Sampling for bacteria levels:** The board reviewed the test results from the second round of sampling done by Whit on August 3. In addition to the original sampling sites, Whit sampled at Duarte's Pond. The Enterococci and E. Coli numbers have gone down across the sampling sites.

Whit said the next step would be to decide if the board should look at doing a more formal survey. Maria will check with Bill Wilcox. No action was taken.

**Map 7 Lot 28 /Cottles/Blackwater Brook Farm:** No update

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

**Map 3 Lot 72/ Cottle's Lumberyard:** No update

**Parrot Feather infestation removal:** Maria reported that Johnny Hoy and Kent Healy told her that Tisbury Great Pond may be opened in late August. Still no word from Keith Gazielle.

**Administrative:**

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 6:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria McFarland  
Board Administrator