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City of Amesbury

Lakes and Waterways Commission

Meeting Minutes for August 17, 2023

7:00 PM

Location: Virtual Webcast Meeting

Attendees: Tom Murphy - Acting Chair, Cindy Roberts, Tom Volper, Bernadette Lucas, Kate Mallory, Michael Ebert (Conservation Commission), Ex Officio Member, and Art O'Dea

Completing Minutes: Art O'Dea

I. Administrative Business

A. Call to Order

- This meeting is being conducted under the Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021, by Governor Baker. Public access to participate has been made available.
- Tom Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM and stated a quorum has been met.

II. Engineer's Update

A. Engineer's Report

- Tom Murphy reported on a communication he received from the DPW staff managing the watershed. In that communication, the water levels in the city's watershed are reported at above normal levels due to the incessant rain. The heavy flow of water through the watershed has caused a decrease in raw water quality of the source for the drinking water plant. Accordingly, higher than normal chemical usage is being implemented to treat the water. By the end of August, it is expected that a more aggressive lowering of the levels of Attitash and Meadowbrook will be implemented to prepare for winter drawdown levels.
- Tom Murphy is planning to meet with Joe Buckley, DPW Director, before the next meeting to work out the details for his participation in future meetings.

III. Conservation Commission

A. Conservation Commission Activity

- Michael Ebert reported the beach refurbishment by the city at Lake Gardner is believed to be completed though the project is not fully approved with minor items left to complete.
- An emergency certification for tree removal was granted for certain trees at the banks of Lake Attitash. Michael shall investigate and follow-up on a question regarding any requirements to replace removed trees with saplings.

IV. Current Business

A. Membership Status

- Tom Murphy, as Assistant Chair, offered the position of Chair to the group; no one was interested at this time.

- Tom Murphy noted Commission member appointments expire after three years, and several members are due for re-appointment. He will coordinate the re-appointment process with each member with expiring or expired appointments noting that service on the Commission is still valid regardless of any lapse in re-appointment under the City's charter.

B. Open Spaces Committee

- Tom Volper provided an update on the *ad hoc* Committee on open spaces. No further updates have been received from the recent feedback from the Commission on the report on the Principles and Policies for Stewardship of Amesbury Conservation Land drafted by a consultant on behalf of the city. Tom Volper is planning to inquire directly and will report on any updates in the next meeting.

C. 604(b) Grant

- The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) developed under the project has been approved and the engagement of the consultants retained to assist the city with the grant is currently being extended. The next phase of the project, a review of the areas of stormwater concern, has not yet been scheduled. Cindy Roberts will coordinate the scheduling of members available to assist the consultants with the planned site visits.

D. Solar Farm

- No further updates are available on the proposed solar farm on the Vynorious' parcel 45-4 proposed by Syncarpha Capital LLC. In previous meetings, the Commission identified concerns relating to the potential for stormwater run-off from the property to impact both Meadowbrook Pond and Lake Attitash. Michael Ebert noted that the Conservation Commission has the right to review and approve projects where stormwater runoff goes into an area within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Michael noted he would contact the Conservation Agent regarding the Commission's concerns and Tom Murphy noted he would send a follow-up email to the city's planning board.

V. New Business

A. Harbormaster

- Tom Murphy reported that in his conversations with Chief Bailey, a job description has been refined for the Harbormaster and a search for candidates has been underway for the past four months. The current Harbormaster is looking to retire and Chief Bailey will be working with the Mayor and City Council on next steps in order to fill this position.

VI. Waterbodies Status

A. Catch Basin and MS4 Issues

- No further update is available regarding the status of a review of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Stormwater Plan. As noted above, Tom Murphy is planning to contact the DPW Director for participation in the Commission meetings to report on this, and other related matters.

B. Lake Attitash

- Cindy Roberts reported on the status of the pilot project to purchase, install, and evaluate phosphorus removal apparatus in six catch basins near and around Lake Attitash. Installation is delayed until the DPW can first clean the storm drains as part of their periodic maintenance procedures.
- Cindy noted the annual treatment of invasive weeds on Lake Attitash has been postponed because of the high water levels – treatment cannot take place unless the lake can be effectively isolated from the source of the city’s water treatment plant.

C. Clarks Pond

- Tom Murphy reported the water chestnut pulling project performed by local resident volunteers is complete for the year.

VII. Adjournment

- The next meeting is planned for September 21, 2023 at 7:00 PM
- Cindy Roberts moved to adjourn, and Tom Volper seconded with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.