

**Town of Freetown
Conservation Commission**

Minutes of the Monday, March 11, 2024 Meeting
Held hybrid, at the Police Station Community Room, and over Zoom

Present in Person: Charles Sullivan, Margaret French and Steven Tripp

Absent: Christopher Mather

Call to Order: Charles Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Request for Determination of Applicability – 5 Simmons Street

Scott Miller, owner, was present. He explained that the project is to put an addition on the side of the house. The siltation control must be on site to keep a barrier, any soil dug up is not carried away and that soil was to stay within the siltation control.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to issue a negative determination #3. The motion carried unanimously.

Request for Determination of Applicability – 5 Washburn Road, James White Memorial Library

Keven Desmarais, Health Agent for the Town of Freetown, explained that he is not the applicant. John Ashley, representative from James White Memorial Library, was present. Mr. Desmarais explained that he was called out to the library three weeks ago for a blocked toilet. The toilet was not blocked, the septic was pumped but ground water was going back into the septic tank. The existing tank was the original tank from 1946. It is sitting in the water table. Mr. Desmarais consulted with the inspector, Dale Barrows and they recommended a tight tank. A tight tank was the safest option for the area and was a last resort. A traditional system would include blasting stones and cutting down trees. The Board of Health was in favor of a tight tank and if the building use were to change then they would need to reapply to the Board of Health. Mr. Desmarais explained that silt socks or hay bales would be installed only on one side due to the uphill elevation. This was an emergency situation. There would be no blasting and no intent of jack hammering. The area that the tight tank would be installed is five to six feet above the flood zone and should withstand if Fallbrook flooded.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to issue a negative determination #3 and #5. The motion carried unanimously.

Request for Certificate of Compliance – 46 Braley Road; SE 026-0630

Mr. Sullivan explained that the request was from Bradford Steel and the project had been completed for at least a year.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to issue a complete certificate of compliance. The motion carried unanimously.

Request for Extension of Order of Conditions – 13 Estelle Avenue; SE 026-0621

Thomas Luiz, applicant, was present on Zoom. Mr. Sullivan had visited the site on March 11th and Ms. French had previously visited. The Commission was concerned with the amount of work that had not been done. The original permit was issued four years ago and the project had not moved forward. Mr. Luiz explained that COVID happened and he was not able to get materials. He had a hard time finding a contractor to do excavation work. He had finally found a contractor. Then the water level increased and caused the project to be put on hold. Mr. Sullivan brought attention to the erosion control and that there was none on site. Mr. Luiz explained that there was erosion control on site but during the last storm, the water rose and tore everything to smithereens. Mr. Sullivan explained that the erosion control would need to be replaced and suggested that the erosion control be installed further up and away from the water line. Mr. Luiz stated that silt socks would be installed. Mr. Sullivan requested that the erosion control be completed within two weeks. The Commission agreed that the retaining wall was to be completed within the next year.

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to issue a one-year extension and that the retaining wall to be completed within the next twelve months. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and Vote on South Main Street Bridge Replacement Options Study

Victoria Alfaro explained that there was no new information. She had reached out to GPI. The Planning Board is waiting for more information before making their recommendation. The study consists of three options. The Environmental impacts would be greatly reduced with option #3 in comparison to the other two options. The Commission agreed to get more information before making their decision.

Discussion and Take Action Relative to Conservation Agent/Consultant Job Description

There is a budget of \$25,000 for a Conservation agent. A draft of the job description was compiled. The Commission agreed to take more time to review the job description. Mr. Sullivan suggested to reach out to other local agents that are not full time and recruit them.

Discussion and Take Action Relative to Land Fund Warrant Article for Annual Town Meeting

Mrs. Alfaro explained that in the last five years, on average, there was \$30,000 in the land fund. Typically, the Conservation Commission request roll back taxes to be appropriated into the land fund yearly. Currently, there was roughly \$100,000 in the land fund. There would not be enough funds in the current land fund, if land was to come up for sale. In Fiscal years 2023 and 2024, there were no requests to take property out of Chapter 61A. Mrs. Alfaro recommended to start with a request of \$30,000. Mr. Sullivan asked if money was deposited into the account, could it be removed in an emergency and be reallocated. The land fund is solely under the authority of the Conservation Commission. There are specific reasons that have to be followed in order to use the funds. Ms. French recused herself for this matter. The Commission decided to discuss and take action at the next meeting.

Minutes

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to approve the 02.12.2024 meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Any other business properly to come before the Conservation Commission

Mr. Sullivan commended Mrs. Alfaro and Nicole DeMoranville for the good job being done in the office.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Margaret French, seconded by Steven Tripp, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

This is a True Record by me

Attest: _____
Nicole DeMoranville, Senior Clerk