

HOLLIS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Site Walk

January 12, 2023

Approved February 15, 2023

Regular Members Present: Tom Dufresne, Joseph Connelly, Paul Edmunds, Mark Post
Alternate Members Present: Bernadette McQuilkin, Laura Bianco,
Staff Present: Lori Radke, Kevin Anderson
Guests: Eric Radloff, Ben Cool, Mike Watts, John Dufresne, Ian Eshelman

The purpose of the meeting was a site walk of the Stefanowicz Farm field restoration work being led by Licensed Forester Eric Radloff of Full Circle Forestry LLC. Meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm.

SITE WALK

The site walk commencement with members of the HCC, Town staff and the public present. Led by E. Radloff, the group walked to an area of logging encompassing about 25 acres of land undergoing planned agricultural field restoration as part of the agricultural lease of the property. The logging work is encompassed by an overall forest management plan approved by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The area formerly contained various young growth softwood and hardwood trees that had grown in the field since it was last farmed in the early 70's. Containing various types of trees including pine, oak and maple, the area had become wildly overgrown with various invasives including multiflora rose and bittersweet. In addition to clearing the fields for future agricultural use, the project is removing significant amounts of invasives from areas that are bordering the fields.

Loggers Ben K. and Mike W. discussed the various pieces of equipment being used in the operation, including tracked harvesters, grapplers, skidders and attachments used to trim and cut the logs.

T. Dufresne stated that it would cost the town hundreds of thousands of dollars to control the invasives and clean up this area as part of a conservation management plan. With the SB's approval, by using the revenue from the logging to help defray the cost of logging and including the forest management work as part of an agricultural lease eligible for federal funds, the property value is significantly improved at no cost to the Town.

M. Post observed that the field restoration work can not only increase the tax revenue portion of the current agricultural lease payments, but also increase the revenue generated by any future agricultural lease. That said, K. Anderson observed the primary goals of the effort are not financial, but rather, appropriate conservation management.

K. Anderson asked whether the transportation of logs are adhering to rules and guidelines regarding the management of invasive insects that may be in the trees. Answer: yes, wood is being sent locally for processing. Appropriately sized pine trees are being cut into lumber for construction and the hardwood is being turned into firewood and wood for furniture makers.

Ian Eshelman, who is a direct abutter to the field, stated how happy he is with the field restoration and how much better the area will look after the work is completed. The site walk concluded with the overall feeling by the group that the work is proceeding nicely.

ADJOURNMENT

T. Dufresne motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by M. Post. All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. Motion carried 4-0-0, and the meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark J. Post
Secretary