Town of Canaan

Inland Wetlands/Conservation Commission

Minutes of Regular (Zoom) Meeting, December 21, 2020

Members Present: Mark Burdick, Felicia Jones, Susan Kelsey, Ellery Sinclair

Others Present: Becky and Wade Curtis

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 P.M. by Chairman Burdick. Sinclair made a motion to approve minutes of November 16, 2020 as presented; seconded by Jones; passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

**1. Hemp Farm, 35 Stein Lane.** Burdick reported on the site visit on November 24th that he and Kelsey had with Bogdon Pawezka, the owner of the hemp farm. Approximately 1 acre had been cleared, stumped, graded and fenced. His operation is reportedly organic. There was no apparent remnant of any former wetland/ vernal pool that several neighbors reported existed prior to the clearing and grading and that appears in aerial photos. He said he was unaware that the portion of the land he hired out to have cleared may have been wetlands. Kelsey and Burdick walked the property with Pawezka and another hemp farmer associate and noted that portions of the undisturbed property just outside the fenced area appeared to have wetland characteristics (e.g. moss and hummocks). Both Pawezka and his associate said that there is no significant smell to the operation. Burdick and Kelsey informed the owner that a soil test of the area would likely be necessary to determine if the area is a wetland and under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Becky and Wade Curtis informed the members that Dillon Vadney had cleared the land. Kelsey reported that subsequent to the site visit she spoke with Ralph Stanton, soil scientist, who informed Kelsey that the soil under question is likely a Hero soil, as shown on the USDA soils map. Hero soils present characteristics similar to wetland soils but technically are not wetlands. Stanton said Hero soils could understandably have been misidentified as wetlands on the Stein Lane subdivision map. He said that if he were to identify the soil in question, he would dig several deep hole pits as the soil upper layers have been significantly altered during the clearing and grading. Members requested that Kelsey obtain a quote from Stanton to determine the soil type where the hemp farm is located. Becky Curtis queried regarding the timeline for the determination of the soil type. Burdick said that the testing would need to be done soon as Pawezka needs to order his plants in February. Jones made a motion that Kelsey get a quote from Stanton for determining the soil type of the hemp farm acreage; seconded by Sinclair; passed unanimously. A special meeting would then be called to engage the services of Stanton.

**2. Housatonic Railroad Herbicide Spraying:** Sinclair has had contact with Tim Abbot of HVA and will work on communicating with Representative Horn after the holidays to encourage legislation for more specific guidelines regarding spraying and managing vegetation in and near wetlands and watercourses.

**3. Route 7 Fuels:** The Selectmen provided the Commission with an analytical report from Complete Environmental Testing, Inc (CET) regarding the soil stockpiled at Route 7 Fuels. It appears that 3 samples were taken of the soil heretofore considered contaminated. Testing results for all volatile organic contaminants tested for in each of the three samples were “ND” (Not detected at or above the specified reporting limit). Members agreed that additional information is needed regarding the procedures used in sampling the soil (e.g. At what depth were the soil piles sampled? Were the samples taken from exposed piles or from piles that were protected from the elements? Was testing primarily limited to volatile organics?). Kelsey will attempt to contact American Petroleum for details regarding the original assessment of the soil under question. She will also attempt to contact CET for information regarding testing procedures.

**4. Northwest Rod and Gun Club:** Kelsey had not yet contacted the Club to ascertain the reason they had heavy equipment on-site at their Rt. 126 property at the intersection of Johnson Road.

**5. Sustainable CT:** Jones reported that Falls Village Housing Trust has been awarded a $7,500 matching grant for well construction at the River Road housing project. The FVHT is currently attempting to raise the $7,500. Jones said that there is a need for volunteers to join the Town’s Sustainable CT group. It is anticipated that equity training will help the Town obtain the additional credit needed for certification.

**6. Updated Regulations:** Kelsey reported she had sent the Commission’s approved updated regulations to the State but had not received a confirmation back. She will follow up with Darcy Winther at the DEEP.

**7. Chestnut Zoom Presentation:** Sinclair reported that his hour-long chestnut presentation was successful and that there are individuals very interested in and enthusiastic about the reintroduction of the American Chestnut.

**New Business:** None.

**Routing Sheets:** None.

**Communications:** A letter and a copy of the Watchtower was received from the Jehovah Witnesses.

The next meeting will occur on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 as the 18th is a holiday. Jones made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 p.m.; seconded by Sinclair; passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kelsey, secretary