

Conservation Commission
January 15, 2009
Minutes
Land Use Meeting Room

Members present:

Chair Neal Carpenter, NC; Joe Strauch, JS; Tim Flanagan, TF; Vince Ammendola, VA; Rose Fitzgerald Casey, RFC; David Lane, DL

Absent with notification: Dick Ferren, DF

Laurel Lake Preservation Association, Inc., NOI, Laurel Lake: This was a joint public hearing with the Town Of Lee on the subject of a Notices of Intent filed by Laurel Lake Preservation Association, Inc. for property located at Laurel Lake in Lee and Lenox. The applicant is seeking permission to begin a multiple year, integrated management program to control aquatic vegetation utilizing area-selective treatments with USEPA/MA DAR registered herbicides, drawdown and hand-pulling.

Members of the Lee Conservation Commission present were:

Chair Deborah Garry
John Philpot

Martie Martin, the Administrative Assistant for the Lee Conservation Commission, was also present.

Presenting the Notices were Mark Alimansky, the President of the Laurel Lake Preservation Association, Inc. and Marc Bellaud, Senior Biologist with Aquatic Control Technology, Inc. Laurel Lake is located on the border of Lee and Lenox and has a reported surface area of 170 acres.

Following (in italics) are comments made by the applicants:

In the fall of 2008 Aquatic Control Biologists conducted a baseline vegetation survey to identify and document the density and dispersal of native and exotic plant populations. A diagnostic feasibility study was completed in 2002. Laurel Lake has well established populations of submersed vegetation species. The aquatic vegetation community as a whole grows at moderate densities with an average coverage of around 50-60% in the vegetated portions of the lake. The most abundant and dominant plant species throughout the pond is the non-native and invasive species Eurasian watermilfoil. Two other non-native species, curlyleaf pondweed and spiny naiad were found in the lake. In addition to the growth of the non-native milfoil, the pond also supports a rich assemblage of native plant species.

The Applicant is requesting approval to selectively control growth of Eurasian watermilfoil and other non-native aquatic plants. An integrated management approach is proposed that utilizes herbicide treatment, drawdown, and hand removal. The objective of this project is to control invasive species, while allowing the area to be re-colonized by more beneficial, lower growing species. No significant alteration to wetland resources areas will occur as a result of the proposed management program; instead the resource areas will be enhanced by controlling the invasive species growth.

The proposed project would begin with a survey in May to determine the growth and to start treating the milfoil in June. Mr. Bellaud stated he would like to introduce a partial drawdown at three feet initially. The herbicide known by the name "Reward" would be applied at a 1 ½ gallon per acre rate. The product would not be detectable in a week and it does not bio-accumulate in animals. The lake would be closed on the day of treatment; there would be a five day restriction on irrigation and a three day restriction on drinking the lake water.

NC said that he was concerned about drawing down the lake because this could result in drying out the wetlands at the edge of the lake that are located in Lenox.

TF asked Mr. Bellaud to provide data on specificity.

The program to control the invasive plants would be ongoing for about three years and would be continually monitored to assess the progress. The treatment would then be adjusted according to its effectiveness. Hand pulling and Renovate, a systemic which targets broadleaf species, were also discussed.

RFC expressed concern about the residue in the sediment. Mr. Bellaud said that the residue is slowly broken down by microorganisms and is inactive in the sediment.

There were approximately ten people in attendance. Comments were made by Deidre Consolati, Mercedes Gallagher, and Monica Ryan. They expressed their concerns about the length of the treatment period and the use of herbicides and loss of native plants. Ms. Ryan favored the use of weevils over chemical treatment. Carl Foote spoke in favor of the proposed plan, saying a similar plan had been followed in Richmond with some success. He endorsed drawing down the lake for effectiveness.

After considerable discussion the Commissioners agreed that they would individually prepare questions for the applicants, submit to PA who would then forward to Mr. Alimansky in advance of the next meeting.

The hearing was continued to February 19, 2009 at 7:30 pm. The location will be at the Lenox Town Hall.

John Paladino & Emily Rechnitz, RDA, Tucker St., Map 47 Parcel 1. The proposed project is the construction of a 40' X 60' building including a 12 foot wide driveway.

Rob Akroyd of Greylock Design Associates presented the RDA and site plan. No problems were identified.

VA made a motion for a Negative 3 Determination and JS seconded the motion. The Commission voted 6-0 to approve.

Minutes: RFC made a motion to approve the minutes of December 18, 2008 and TF seconded the motion. The Commission voted to approve 6-0.

Respectively submitted,
Peggy Ammendola (PA)