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CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS  
February 10, 2021

**Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, video recordings are available at the Pollard Library, second floor reference desk or online at [www.LTC.org](http://www.LTC.org).**

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using Zoom.**

**Members Present:** Chairwoman Varnum, Commissioner Lovely, Commissioner Dillon, Commissioner Buitenhuys, Commissioner Downs, and Commissioner Standish

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Francesca Cigliano, Senior Planner; Jess Wilson, Associate Planner; Dylan Ricker, Assistant Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

7:00 PM

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

**Notice of Intent**

Corey Schutzman  
Boston Gas Company  
40 Sylvan Road  
Waltham, MA 02451  
DEP #206-0804

Project Location: Lowell Area Gas Modernization Project 01851

A Notice of Intent (DEP#206-0804) has been filed by Boston Gas Company for a proposed gas pipeline replacement including a section underneath the Lowell Connector and Interstate 495 using Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) techniques and along an existing corridor adjacent to US Route 3. The wetland resource areas include Inland Bank, Riverfront Area, Bordering Land Subject to Flooding, Land under Wetlands and Waterways, and Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW). Black Brook and River Meadow Brook are within or adjacent to the project area.

On Behalf:

Corey Schutzman, National Grid

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

L. Varnum discusses the three mitigation options proposed by National Grid, the City, and the Pawtucketville Citizen's Council. Options include: (1) DPD's interest in the promotion of the Concord River Greenway through an easement across National Grid land; (2) National Grid's proposal of habitat mitigation through tree replacement; and (3) a proposal from Pawtucketville Citizen's Council, which involves getting an accurate count of the flood depth at the Pawtucket Dam in an effort to improve coordination with the owners of the dam to lower bladder dam to let water down before it can cause damage in the neighborhoods. National Grid stated that they didn't believe that the dam project had a direct relationship with the project at hand, therefore would not be an appropriate mitigation project for their proposed work.

L. Varnum's opinion about replacement trees is that they should first take care of area that is being disturbed. She would like to see trees replaced in the path of the disturbed area first and then if any left over, plant others throughout the city.

B. Buitenhuys also wants to focus on the area at hand. He supports additional plantings and additional tree planting throughout the city.

L. Varnum said that perhaps trees replaced in the vicinity of the project area could be larger caliper to give them a head start.

W. Lovely viewed their proposal as above and beyond their original plan for the disturbed corridor. He wants clarification on what National Grid is committing to for mitigation in the disturbed corridor, and whether the letter addresses mitigation above and beyond the corridor.

C. Schutzman said that the initial proposal included natural regeneration and other enhancements, as well as preservation of mature trees. They are also proposing to contribute funding to the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, which will contribute to additional tree planting in the City.

L. Varnum asked whether this proposal is above and beyond what is included in the NOI? C. Schutzman said yes.

W. Lovely said there may be better value in adding trees to other areas in Lowell. The disturbed area will recover over time.

B. Buitenhuys said that he wants to make up for trees that were not counted in their walk/survey. He asked C. Schutzman for the dollar amount of removed trees.

W. Lovely said the amount would be approximately \$13,500, based on his read of their letter.

L. Varnum is interested in replacing the large trees with larger-caliper saplings as opposed to smaller ones.

W. Standish said that he is interested in the proposed dollar amount of mitigation as well. C. Schutzman discussed the methodology for their calculation.

Jessica Wall, Applicant's Attorney said that they will be mitigating pursuant to Army Corps requirements.

W. Standish said that he does not believe that the \$13,500 for off-site tree planting is adequate.

W. Lovely said that we can decide where to place the trees after a decision is rendered. The applicant can work with the city and partners to decide where to locate the trees. This is above and beyond what they are obligated to do.

K. Dillon said that the LPCT rely on volunteers for planting assistance.

L. Varnum would like to see the plan implemented a short period of time after the disturbance occurs. She wants the 14 large ones replaced. She would like to see tree planting accomplished in that area, and then the rest of the trees as time passes in areas of the city that need trees.

Motion:

W. Lovely motioned and B. Buitenhuys seconded the motion to issue a standard City of Lowell Order of Conditions with the following special conditions:

1. Implement the reforestation monitoring plan, as modified by the January 15, 2021 site visit with the Conservation Commission;
2. Implement a supplemental environmental project that includes a contribution to Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust (LPCT), as proposed by National Grid in a letter dated 2/9/2021. The specific details of the contribution shall be finalized with DPD staff.

The motion did not pass (3-3) due to lack of a majority.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Minutes**

January 13, 2021

January 27, 2021

B. Buitenhuys motioned and W. Standish recorded the motion to continue the minutes to the next Conservation Commission meeting. The motion passed unanimously, (6-0).

**ADJOURNMENT**

W. Standish motioned and P. Downs seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, (6-0). The time was 7:58PM.