

**CITY OF CHICOPEE**  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**April 7, 2021**

**Pursuant to Mass. General Law Ch. 131, Section 40 and the Chicopee Wetland Ordinance Ch. 272, the Chicopee Conservation Commission held a public hearing on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 6:15 PM via video conference (Zoom).**

**Celeste Donovan opened the meeting at 6:15 PM and announced that the meeting was being recorded and read the following statement into the meeting record:**

In order to ensure and satisfy CDC social distancing guidelines during the Covid-19 Pandemic and pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 23, 2020 Order as amended, the City of Chicopee is providing public notice that it will conduct a public hearing utilizing remote collaboration technology in accordance with Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. C. 30A, 18.

Copies of application materials may be requested by phone (413-594-1517) or by emailing Jim Dawson at [jdawson@chicopeema.gov](mailto:jdawson@chicopeema.gov).

To view the public hearings please tune to Spectrum Community Access Channel 191 or the ChicopeeTV website at [Facebook.com/ChicopeeTV](https://www.facebook.com/ChicopeeTV) and/or <https://vimeo.com/chicopeetv>

Public comments were received during two timeframes. The first public comment period took place prior to the opening of the public hearing on April 7, 2021. The second public comment period will take place following the April 7, 2021 hearing and remain open until April 21, 2021 for newly opened agenda items.

To provide public comments in writing please mail to the Chicopee Conservation Commission, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front St., Chicopee, MA 01013. By email to Jim Dawson at [jdawson@chicopeema.gov](mailto:jdawson@chicopeema.gov). or by calling 413-594-1517. All public comments received will be provided to all Commission Members and discussed at either of the above listed meeting dates. All commenting individuals shall state their name, address and company/organizational affiliation in addition to the item(s) that the comments pertain. Comments received up to the April 7, 2021 hearing were entered on that date. Any comments received after April 7, 2021 will be entered at the continued date of the hearing on April 21, 2021.

Conservation Commission attendance:

Member	Present	Absent	Excused
Celeste Donovan (Zoom)	X		
Charles Payne (Zoom)	X		
Sharon Balcom (Zoom)	X		
Meghan Balakier (Zoom)	X		
Richard Valcourt (Zoom)	X		
Brian Nunes (Zoom)	X		

Planning/Conservation Staff attendance:

Member	Present	Absent	Excused
Lee Pouliot, Director			X
James Dawson, Development Manager (Zoom)	X		
Patrick McKenna, Assistant Planner			X
Nathan Moreau, Associate Planner			X

**Item 1: (New) RDA** for verification that wetland boundaries are accurately delineated. Location: Pan Am Railways Rights of Way. Applicant: Pan Am Railways, Inc., Bill Wallace, Chief Engineer of Track & Structures, 1700 Iron Horse Park, North Billerica, MA 01862

**Notes:** Keith Morris, Consultant for PanAm railways explained the RDA to the Commission stating this was a 5 year Determination. Mr. Morris explained the proposed spray zones along the tracks and the no spray zones on the river crossings. Mr. Morris confirmed the note from DEP that the Commission is to make a Determination of positive 2A or positive 2B for weed

spraying purposes only, based on the submitted application. Due to Covid-19 meeting regulations, the Commission voted to continue the hearing on this item to April 21, 2021 to allow for an adequate public comment period.

Motion to continue to April 21, 2021 was made by Richard Valcourt and seconded by Meghan Balakier. Vote was 6-0 to continue to April 21, 2021.

Member	Approve	Deny	Continue	Abstain
Celeste Donovan			X	
Charles Payne			X	
Sharon Balcom			X	
Meghan Balakier			X	
Richard Valcourt			X	
Brian Nunes			X	

**Item 2: (New) NOI** for Chicopee Reservoir Annual Drawdown and Vegetation Management Project. Work will include removal of vegetation within 20' of the reservoir dam and for a five year authorization of the annual drawdown of the reservoir for maintenance purposes. Work will occur within Inland Bank, Bordering Vegetated Wetland, Land Under Waterways and Waterbodies, Riverfront Area and Buffer Zone. Location: Chicopee Memorial State Park – 570 Burnett Rd., Chicopee, MA 01020. Applicant: Sean Gaffney, Massachusetts DCR, 1048 North Rd., Westfield, MA 01085

**Notes:** Katy Wilkins of Tighe and Bond and Sean Gaffney of the DCR presented the NOI to the Commission. Ms. Wilkins explained the NOI was to reestablish previous authorization for the drawdown. The drawdown is required to maintain the beach area and for dam maintenance. She explained that herbaceous vegetation would remain but woody vegetation would be removed within 20' of the dam. Ms. Wilkins explained the process of the vegetation removal, noting that there would be no grubbing within wetland areas but there would be grubbing outside of wetland areas. The drawdown is scheduled to occur in November with refill taking place by April. Expected full drawdown of about 5' or 457,000 SF to occur in late December. Mr. Gaffney explained the nature of the drawdown as a slow process to allow fish and wildlife to migrate to deeper water. He noted the refill would be gradual as well. The Commission requested that Ms. Wilkins and Mr. Gaffney review the DEP comments one by one with the Commission. Ms. Wilkins noted she would have more definitive answers to the comments for the April 21, 2021 meeting. She also noted the NOI may have to be continued further if she could not obtain certain information. Commissioner Balcom asked if the drawdown would take place every year, the answer was yes, for the next 5 years as this is a 5 year request. The Commission requested a condition for an annual report to be submitted each year by the first Commission meeting in May. Due to Covid-19 meeting regulations, the Commission voted to continue the hearing on this item to April 21, 2021 to allow for an adequate public comment period.

Motion to continue to April 21, 2021 was made by Meghan Balakier and seconded by Richard Valcourt. Vote was 6-0 to continue to April 21, 2021.

Member	Approve	Deny	Continue	Abstain
Celeste Donovan			X	
Charles Payne			X	
Sharon Balcom			X	
Meghan Balakier			X	
Richard Valcourt			X	
Brian Nunes			X	

**Item 3: Minutes** from March 17, 2021

Motion to approve with one noted correction was made by Sharon Balcom and seconded by Charles Payne. Vote was 6-0 to approve with noted correction.

Member	Approve	Deny	Continue	Abstain
Celeste Donovan	X			
Charles Payne	X			
Sharon Balcom	X			
Meghan Balakier	X			
Richard Valcourt	X			
Brian Nunes	X			

**Item 4: Sign Bills** – Staff noted there were no bills to sign.

**Item 5: Upcoming Projects/Discussion**

- **Emergency Certification** – Eversource needs to do emergency repairs due to storm damage. Circuit had to be shut down and Cabotville placed on a back-up circuit. – There was no further discussion from the Applicant on this issue. (*Date Pending*)
- **RDA** – 56 Fletcher Circle – work within TE Soils Buffer Zone

**Item 6: Adjournment** – Next scheduled meeting is April 21, 2021

Motion to adjourn was made by Meghan Balakier and seconded by Charles Payne. Vote was 6-0 to adjourn.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Deny</b>	<b>Continue</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Celeste Donovan	<b>X</b>			
Charles Payne	<b>X</b>			
Sharon Balcom	<b>X</b>			
Meghan Balakier	<b>X</b>			
Richard Valcourt	<b>X</b>			
Brian Nunes	<b>X</b>			

**Meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.**