

**CITY OF CHICOPEE  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
Minutes of Meeting  
September 6, 2023**

**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, September 6, 2023 at 6:15 PM in the Chambers Conference Room, City Hall Annex, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 274 Front St., Chicopee, MA 01013**

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**Celeste Donovan opened the meeting at 6:17 PM and announced that the meeting was being recorded.**

Conservation Commission attendance:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Excused</b>
Celeste Donovan	<b>X</b>		
Charles Payne	<b>X</b>		
Meghan Balakier	<b>X</b>		
Richard Valcourt	<b>X</b>		
Bianca Thomas	<b>X</b>		
Barbara Chamberlain	<b>X</b>		
Sharon Balcom	<b>X</b>		

Planning/Conservation Staff attendance:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Excused</b>
Lee Pouliot, Director			<b>X</b>
James Dawson, Development Manager	<b>X</b>		
Nick Kiser, Associate Planner			<b>X</b>
Patrick Collins, Assistant Planner	<b>X</b>		

**Item 1:** RDA for the demolition of the existing penstocks associated with the Chicopee Falls Hydroelectric facility, except for a portion recently repaired, and replace with similar steel penstocks with stiffener plates at the support saddles. The new steel pipe would maintain the alignment and geometry of the existing penstock and utilize the existing concrete saddles. Location: Main St. Assessor Map 202, Parcel 14. Applicant: James Lisowski, Chicopee Electric Light, 725 Front St., Chicopee, MA 01020

**Notes:** Aimee Rutledge of DuBois & King, Inc. (project consultant) and James Lisowski of Chicopee Electric Light (CEL) presented the RDA to the Commission. The project involves replacing existing penstocks that are no longer functioning properly. The plans call for the addition of stiffener plates to provide additional support to the structure. CEL noted the existing penstocks were installed in the 1980s and typically they have a much longer lifespan of up to 100 years. However, improper maintenance of not reapplying a protective seal coating every 3-5 years appears to have shortened their lives. The site is currently not operational but is being maintained by CEL. When it is operational again it will provide a non-carbon form of electricity (about 1.5 megawatts). CEL has no plans to expand the facility at this time, but the upgrades will cost several million dollars. However, if nothing is done it will cost several million dollars to retire the plant. The project is expected to go to bid in late September 2023 with start date in June 2024 and completion in Fall 2024. The contractor will determine the most appropriate form of erosion control for the site. The Commission imposed its typical erosion control conditions. The Commission issued a negative 5 and a negative 6 Determination.

Motion to issue a Negative 5 and a Negative 6 Determination with conditions was made by Charles Payne and seconded by Barbara Chamberlain. Vote was 7-0 to issue a Negative 5 and a Negative 6 Determination with conditions.

<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>			
Meghan Balakier	<b>X</b>			
Richard Valcourt	<b>X</b>			
Bianca Thomas	<b>X</b>			
Barbara Chamberlain	<b>X</b>			
Sharon Balcom	<b>X</b>			

**Item 2: Minutes from August 2, 2023**

Motion to approve was made by Charles Payne and seconded by Richard Valcourt. Vote was 5 in favor and 2 abstentions. Celeste Donovan and Meghan Balakier abstained as they were not in attendance on August 2, 2023.

<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>			
Meghan Balakier				<b>X</b>
Richard Valcourt	<b>X</b>			
Bianca Thomas	<b>X</b>			
Barbara Chamberlain	<b>X</b>			
Sharon Balcom	<b>X</b>			

**Item 3: Sign Bills**

**Notes:** Staff had one bill for the Commission to sign.

**Item 4: Upcoming Projects/Discussion/Communications**

- Ratify Emergency Certification for the Chicopee Comp stormwater system failure.
- Discussion on the progress of Enforcement Order (23-E001) at 129 Dejordy Lane – At the August 2, 2023 hearing, the Property Owner informed the Commission he was in contact with a few Wetland Specialists and was waiting on replies. Since the meeting on August 2, 2023 Mr. Antonio has been in contact with Staff and it appears he has secured a Biologist Steven Riberdy to assist him with his filing. Both Mr. Riberdy and Mr. Antonio have been requested to attend the meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Notes:** Mr. Antonio attended the meeting and explained he was working with Mr. Riberdy. The Commission was happy to hear the news and explained to Mr. Antonio that time was running out to get vegetation established to stabilize the disturbed areas before colder weather sets in. Mr. Riberdy noted he did not see any erosion in the disturbed area of the property. The Commission advised Mr. Antonio that they would like to see a restoration plan submitted to Staff by September 20, 2023 so it can be presented to the Commission for the October 4, 2023 meeting.

**Item 5: Adjournment** – Next scheduled meeting is September 20, 2023

Motion to adjourn was made by Barbara Chamberlain and seconded by Charles Payne. Vote was 7-0 to adjourn.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Deny</b>	<b>Continue</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Celeste Donovan	X			
Charles Payne	X			
Meghan Balakier	X			
Richard Valcourt	X			
Bianca Thomas	X			
Barbara Chamberlain	X			
Sharon Balcom	X			

**Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.**