

Stratham Conservation Commission

Public Meeting Minutes

10/23/19

Present: Allison Knab, Pat Elwell, Tim Copeland, Brad Jones, William McCarthy, Ana Egana

Public Session

Called to order 7:02

Minutes

None available for review.

New Business

Brendan Quigley, Gove Environmental Services was present to discuss the NH Dredge and Fill wetlands application for work to be done at Lindt. Also present, Josh Vanhaus, developer, and Jeff Getts, representing Lindt.

Brendan explained that the parking improvements accepted by the CC and previously approved by the PB for Lindt were never implemented therefore this is an entirely new proposal. There is a severe parking shortage and that is what is driving the proposal change. Because the entire site has been completely built out the only remaining areas for development are in the wetlands and this proposal has substantially greater wetland impacts than the previous proposal. The previous proposal had approximately 20,000 sq. ft. of wetland impact whereas the proposal being reviewed tonight has approximately 97,000 sq. ft. of impact. The old garage/parking plan provided for 200 parking spaces; the new garage/parking plan would create two lots with 700 parking spaces.

Money had already been paid \$102,000 towards the DES ARM fund for the expected 20,000 sq. ft. impact. Since that project was never completed, DES said it would be willing to credit those monies towards the new ARM fund payment requirement of \$493,000. They have been meeting with DES but are still in the discussion phase as the wetland dredge and fill application is in the early stages.

Josh Vanhaus stated that this expansion would allow Lindt to support its staffing needs through 2025. He also stated that future development would not have "any further wetland impacts." Lindt will be losing parking spaces with the expansion that is expected to occur in the future. In the past, the CC has been mostly supportive of the Lindt expansions, however this proposal drew a lot of a concern from the CC as we have been told in the past that there would be no further impacts with expansions, and it is not clear to the CC that all options have been fully vetted.

Ana asked if they had thought outside of the box for parking, especially in regards to carpooling and possibly scheduling shifting that could allow bussing. Currently 30% of Lindt staff are carpooling.

Pat expressed concerns about the CC having repeatedly being promised that there would be no more future impacts and that, if Lindt is only assured of having enough parking through 2025, there is always a possibility that they decide to move and wetlands would have been impacted for no good reason.

Tim asked if Lindt had considered going to the ZBA to request that they to go a garage with greater vertical height. Josh felt that a larger building would have even greater impacts. Bill asked about the possibility of sharing parking space in other areas of the industrial park. Lindt has met with other tenants of the park but no permanent solution will ever exist.

Bill stated that the CC would want to see Lindt show the need for such an exceptional wetlands impact. The representatives from Lindt stated that if they go to a fully automated packaging system, they would still require all the proposed parking because the current parking is some walking distance from the facility causing difficulty and danger for workers, particularly in the winter. They noted that the “truck staging” area would not require wetland impacts.

Brendan stated that the wetlands to be impacted are “isolated” because they are surrounded by industrial buildings. He also noted that drainage could be compensated by the current drainage system on the site and that not a lot of grading would be necessary. They feel that they have a lack of options. Tim asked about snow storage, but Josh explained that the designers are working on those specifics and there is no information at this time.

Brendan requested a copy of the letter of comments that the CC would be sending to DES. Bill will forward him a copy outlining concerns.

Allison thanked them for attending

Mailbox

Bill received an invoice for the NHACC membership. Allison moved; Pat seconded approving payment of \$475 from the 2020 budget. Motion passed.

A copy of the *Trails for People and Wildlife Handbook* was received from Fish and Game/NH Estuary Reserve. This is a guide to help with development of trail networks while minimizing impacts on natural resources.

The Dredge and Fill application for Lindt was received.

Old Business

Allison stated that the town has a new Finance Administrator, Dawn Duhamel.

Pat stated that the Master Plan had been reviewed by the PB but because it wasn't complete, a final draft was not approved and will be reviewed again at the first Nov. PB meeting.

Pat attended the Electric Bike show at Stratham Hill Park several weeks ago. Some municipalities have started to define what is a motorized vehicle and some level one electric bikes have received approval to be treated as any other bike. This would be particularly helpful to those who may be covered by the ADA guidelines. Pat encouraged the CC to begin exploring new language in order to come up with its own guidelines.

Tim moved, Ana seconded, close of meeting. Motion passed 8:25.

The next meeting will be held Wed. Nov 11 at 7 pm, at the Stratham Municipal Center.

Respectfully submitted, Pat Elwell