

Conservation Commission Meeting

November 20, 2024

Members present: Bob Keating, Brad Jones, Allison Knab, Bill McCarthy, Chris West

Non-members present: Susan Connors, Planning Department; Scott R. Frankiewicz, N.H. Land Consultants; Anthony Fusco and Chris Heckman, Fox Construction

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

23 Winding Brook Drive

Mr. McCarthy invited the developers to present the proposed project for 23 Winding Brook Drive. The project requires a variance from the Wetlands Conservation District for construction within 100 feet of very poorly drained soils. The project is also subject to a Special Exception review by the ZBA for encroachment in the Shoreland Protection District. The Commission previously reviewed the driveway culvert in September and had no objections to that.

Mr. Frankiewicz noted that the house is 55.2 feet from very poorly drained soils instead of the required 100 feet. The well is the required 25 feet back and the septic system, which is currently in front of the RPC, would be behind the house. The home is approximately 2800 feet in size. Mr. Frankiewicz was unable to answer questions about the square footage of impact.

The developers indicated they would use a drip edge on the roof to mitigate runoff, not cut in the buffer zone, and planned to put up no-disturb placards along the no-disturb buffer on metal posts.

The town received two comments opposing the project. Mr. McCarthy asked for any response on the comments.

Mr. McCarthy asked whether there was any public benefit to the project, as it would have a negative impact otherwise on the town's natural resources. Mr. Fusco noted that it would add housing in Stratham.

Several Commission members stated they did not believe it to be a buildable lot. The impact to the buffer area is substantial; well more than half the house is within the setback. Buffers serve a purpose and this project would have a great impact on the buffer area. Mr. McCarthy did not feel there was a compelling reason to support the wetland impacts. The Commission agreed to write a letter to the Zoning Board in opposition to the project and noting the importance of mitigation measures if the ZBA does grant the variance.

Minutes:

- Ms. West motioned, Mr. Jones seconded a motion to approve the October 2024 meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Mailbox

- Numerous SELT publications, including a presentation on beech leaf disease on December 4
- A copy of Mr. Simmons appointment to the Commission. Mr. Simmons has not gone into town hall to take the oath of office.
- Membership dues from NHACC in the amount of \$525. Mr. Keating motioned, Ms. West seconded a motion to pay the dues out of the Conservation Commission budget. The motion passed unanimously.

- A copy of the NHDES letter regarding the illegally constructed shed at 14 Wiggin Way. DES reports that it is investigating the shed, which is in forested wetland and received no permit for construction.

Town and Other Business

- Mr. McCarthy needs to submit a budget request to the Town; it was agreed to ask for the same amount as previous years
- TMAC held a public forum on changes to dog ordinances in Stratham Hill Park and adjacent lands. Mr. Keating had attended and expressed concern that no notice had been given on the time restrictions and that they were excessive. He had gone to the police department and been told there have been 5 instances of dog complaints in the park from January to June. He noted that Rye beaches have dog restrictions that apply to summer months. There will be another public forum on January 16th. The Commission discussed the importance of enforcement for any ordinance change.

At 7:36 p.m. Ms. West motioned, Mr. Keating seconded a motion to enter nonpublic session to consider the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property. The motion passed unanimously.

At 7:50 p.m. Mr. Keating motioned, Mr. Jones seconded a motion to exit nonpublic session and seal the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

At 7:50 p.m. Ms. Knab motioned, Ms. West seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Allison Knab