

Rochester Conservation Commission

Minutes of the February 26, 2014

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

(Approved 3-26-14)

Members Present:

Deborah Shigo, Chair

Michael Dionne, Vice Chair

Jack Hackett

Meredeth Lineweber

Mark Jennings

Jeff Winders (arrived at 6:47pm)

Staff: Seth Creighton, Staff Planner

REGULAR MEETING

The Chair convened the regular meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Minutes: The regular meeting minutes of January 22nd were reviewed. Michael Dionne motioned to accept the minutes, Meredith Lineweber suggested some changes and seconded the motion with changes; the motion passed unanimously.

1. Discussion:

a) SkyHaven Airport - Pease Development Authority, 238 & 290 Rochester Hill Road, (by Jacobs Engineering and Smart Environmental) Wetland Conditional Use Application to extend Runway 15, extend Taxiway A, and install runway approach lighting with access road.

Dave Chamberlain, the project engineer made a short presentation that explained the runway expansion and reconstruction, as well as the proposed ODAL lighting. Jennifer Riordan (project's environmental specialist) and Andrew Pomeroy, representative from PDA, explained the proposed wetland impacts, one of which is temporary. Riordan explained that some trees north of the runway must be felled, and will be felled by hand as to minimize wetland disturbance.

The Commission asked if the impacts were necessary and the PDA said that they are because the FAA rules are very stringent and that the improvements can't be located anywhere else onsite. Deborah Shigo asked about de-icing treatments, Andrew Pomeroy explained that salt and sand is not used and said that sodium-formate is what is used at Pease, and is environmentally friendly. Jack Hackett asked about snow storage; Andrew Pomeroy said it is blown from the runway; Seth Creighton said that this means that areas of runway near wetlands will be cleared with a snow blower that blows snow into the wetlands; the Commission expressed that they don't support putting snow into wetlands, but recognize that the only alternative option here is to haul it offsite. Mark Jennings asked if this expansion is necessary and if it will allow for larger aircraft; Dave Chamberlain answered that the primary purpose was to make the airport safer, and that the expansion would not permit any aircraft larger than what is currently permitted. Jeff Winders requested that the PDA work with him to establish sparrow nesting sites; Andrew Pomeroy said that FAA rules prohibits vegetation that encourages wildlife.

The Commission noted that they don't support wetland impacts, but because there were no alternative options in this case, and the applicant has minimized the impacts as much as possible, and that the improvements are needed for safety reasons, they would support the proposal as presented. Mark Jennings motioned to support the application as designed, Jack Hackett seconded, the motion passed.

b) City of Rochester School Department, 773 Portland Street (by Lavallee/Brensinger Architects) -discussion of Con Com's comments to NH DES regarding proposed wetland impacts.

Deborah Shigo calls on the applicant to present. Cory Belden, project engineer, explains that he is here tonight to discuss the concerns that Con Com sent to DES, and that Richard Bickford, school department grounds employee is also present.

Jeff Winders exits the room to speak with the previous applicant about sparrow habitat, 6:56 pm.

The Commission and the project engineer discussed in detail what changes have been made since the last time the Commission reviewed the proposal, what could still be changed, and site maintenance concerns. *Jeff Winders returns to the meeting at 7:00pm.*

Mark Jennings and Jeff Winders asked why the existing building needs to be torn down and how many rooms the new building will have. Deborah Shigo asked that the discussion stay focused on the wetland/buffer impacts and stormwater. Deborah Shigo said that the raingardens need to be installed and maintained by folks who understand raingardens. Richard Bickford said that his staff will be responsible, and will seek training and may ask the Commission for suggestions.

Mark Jennings asked how much runoff will be leaving the site, Cory Belden explained that the stormwater runoff discharge will decrease in two storm events, and increase in one. Jeff Winders suggested using pervious pavement on the basketball court; Cory Belden said he would add this as a line item and have the Joint Building Committee review costs. Deborah Shigo and Jack Hackett requested that snow not be plowed into the raingardens or wetlands. Jeff Winders said that the impacts could be reduced if the project didn't have as many fancy walkways.

Seth Creighton recapped the comments that the Commission had previously sent to NH DES. Deborah Shigo expressed that the Commission appreciates the changes, and sees that there is still opportunity for improvement. Deb motioned to write a letter to NH DES recommending the application proceed and that these recommendations be considered:

- Rain gardens be installed and maintained by staff that has had rain garden training.
- Snow removal is to be done in such a way as to prevent snow storage within raingardens.
- Pervious pavement is to be considered for the basketball court/playground surfaces.

Michael Dione seconded, all voted in favor.

c) Waterstone Retail, Inc., 92 Farmington Road (by Tighe & Bond) Preliminary site plan to develop 300,000 square feet of multi use commercial space **and** adjusting boundaries of conservation easement.

Jeff Winders excuses himself from the meeting at 7:49pm. Ken Mavrogeorge, project engineer, gave a thorough presentation of the proposed project, history of past approvals, and a summary of where the review stands with the City.

Ken Mavrogeorge then asked for the Commissions thoughts. The Commission noted that the development proposal: contains too much pavement/impervious area; (*Jeff Winders returns to the meeting at 7:57pm*) includes unwarranted wetland buffer impacts; is severely lacking in vegetation; the parking lots need to include tree species that will grow large and have large diameter crowns; sidewalk areas need to incorporate vegetation; detention ponds are not supported (in general) and the one large detention pond proposed here is insufficient; snow storage must be reviewed and not be proposed in wetland buffers or drainage areas; and, the project needs to be phased.

The project engineer briefly explained the proposal to remove an area of land from a conservation easement to construct a parking lot on it, and give a different area of undeveloped land to be added to the conservation easement land. The Commission expressed that they would not consider this until NH DES has responded to the applicant, and the Chairwoman said that time tonight would not be spent on this matter. Jeff Winders and Mark Jennings quickly offered their initial thoughts on this, which included: the Commission involvement with/thoughts on this easement in the past were ignored by City Council; the proposal to use easement land to construct a parking lot with wetland buffer disturbance is not supported; the proposal to swap a sliver of undevelopable land for the easement land is not sufficient; providing access to the easement land needs to be discussed, especially now that there is a 30' foot vertical cut proposed between the proposed developed area and existing conservation land.

No vote was taken, as no official action was required.

2) Correspondence Reviewed:

a) NH Association of Natural Resources Scientists – solicitation for membership: *Michael Dionne motioned to sign up for membership because it is only \$20 for the entire Commission, Meredith Lineweber seconded. Seth Creighton said he'd double check that it is only \$20. The Commission*

agreed to sign up if it is only \$20, but if it is more they should weigh the costs and benefits before making a decision about joining.

b) Strafford County Conservation District Collaboration – solicitation offering collaboration. *No discussion on this matter.*

c) The Source – Winter 2014 newsletter. *No discussion on this matter.*

d) 'Currents' – January 2014, Strafford Rivers Conservancy news. *The Chair noted that Strafford Rivers is a resource to use when working on conserving land.*

e) NH DES Wetland Permit – Amazon Park's Water Line (Map-Lot: 255-40) *The Commission noted they had reviewed and signed off on this previously.*

f) NH DES Wetlands Request for More Information – 773 Portland St (Map-Lot: 108-52) *East Rochester School was discussed at the beginning of the meeting, see above.*

3) Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber / Intent to Excavate

a) Notice of Intent to Cut – Farmington Rd (Map/Lot: 216-11), Granite Ridge Marketplace- *The Commission noted that this project seems to be reverse engineered and that nearly all of the trees were cut already.*

b) Notice of Intent to Excavate – 253 Rochester Neck Rd (Map/Lot: 268-5), Waste Management – *Staff explained there were no concerns with this because the applicant had provided the City with copies of previous approvals documenting that this lot was and still is approved as an excavation lot.*

4) Old Business: Hope Farm – need to set time frames and assign tasks. *The Chair reminded the Commission that Hope Farm has a deadline and that everyone needs to start working on this project to ensure the deadlines are met. She asked that everyone look at easement language and share their thoughts at the next meeting. She will also be in-touch with Bambi Miller and ask that she prioritize this too.*

5) New Business:

a) Receipt of SUR Storage Yard and Brock St Mitigation and Floodplain Monitoring Report – *The Commission noted that this was a good report and that they had no concerns with the findings.*

6) Other Business:

a) Attendance and membership – *It was stressed that members let the Chair or Staff know ahead of time if they cannot attend. The members also talked about recruiting new folks to join too.*

b) NH Association of Conservation Commissions Invitation and Dues- *The Commission voted to not join this group because the fees are much too expensive.*

c) Community Garden- *Deborah Shigo said she keeps receiving emails from someone interested in a community garden on Strafford Rd, but no one on the Commission knows where this garden is. Seth Creighton said he will try to find out more information.*

d) Conservation Lands Map, Draft – *The Commission reviewed a draft map that Chris Kane had created. The map is a draft because it currently only shows some parcels, more are to be added. The Commission is excited to see and use the final product.*

e) Other: *Meredeth Lineweber suggested posting notices and information at that Community Center.*

7) Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II(d):- (if necessary), Discussion of acquisition of real property (recent site walks/LACE sheets)

At 8:45 pm Michael Dionne voted to go into non public, Jack Hackett seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

At 9:16pm the public session resumed.

Adjournment:

At 9:16 p.m. Michael Dionne made a motion to adjourn; Mark Jennings seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Seth Creighton, Staff Planner