

Rochester Conservation Commission

Minutes of the December 18, 2013

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

(Approved January 22, 2013)

Members Present:

Deborah Shigo, Chair

Michael Dionne, Vice Chair

Jack Hackett

Members Absent:

Meredeth Lineweber (absence excused)

Mark Jennings (absence excused)

Jeff Winders (absence not excused)

Staff: Seth Creighton

REGULAR MEETING

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

Minutes: The regular and non public meeting minutes of November 20th were reviewed. Jack Hackett made a motion to accept both meeting's minutes as presented, Michael Dionne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Conservation Overlay District - Conditional Use Review:

a) Conditional Use Permit Application Presentation –John O'Keefe and Bill Martin regarding a proposed wetland buffer encroachment at 29 Milton Rd (215-65-3) for a new commercial development (retail use).

Owners/developers John O'Keefe and Bill Martin explained that significant changes had been made to the proposal since the last time they were before the Commission. John O'Keefe said that the major change was that only 10' of the 50' wetland buffer would be impacted, and the impact was due to grading and a small area of pavement; the buffer impact reduction was a result of a change to utilizing porous pavement. Deborah Shigo suggested that O'Keefe visit UNH and the Lowe's in Greenland/Stratham to view the porous pavement that is in place there. Michael Dionne talked about the changes to drainage, and Seth Creighton added that a rain garden area was also proposed at the front of the lot. Jack Hackett reminded the owners that snow storage is an important topic that would need to be discussed at the Planning Board meeting.

There was general discussion about Low Impact Development and the associated costs and maintenance.

Jack Hackett motioned to approve the CUP as presented. Michael Dionne seconded the motion; Deborah Shigo voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Dredge and Fill Applications:

a) 773 Portland St (East Rochester School):

Seth Creighton, Staff Planner explained the Wetlands Dredge and Fill application submitted by the Rochester School Department for property they own at 773 Portland St, Rochester, NH, and also explained the school's proposed expansion.

The Conservation Commission reviewed this application and asked that the comments be forwarded to NH DES:

1) Rochester Conservation Commission (Con Com) does not support the proposed wetland filling because the impacts could be minimized by utilizing less impacting alternatives (i.e. – narrower parent access road; locating parent access road closer to the school; reducing the amount of grading between the brook and the parent access road via steeper slopes, vertical footwall(s), and/or an alternative stormwater conveyance system).

2) The stream contiguous to the proposed impacts is a direct tributary to the Salmon Falls River, and is only ½ mile from the river; please refer to attached GIS map. The proposed impacts are located too close to this stream.

The Commission would like NH DES to require that the project design be revised so that the proposed wetland impacts be avoided or minimized.

Seth Creighton said that he would draft a letter to NH DES.

Correspondence:

a) NH DES Wetlands Letter of Compliance – 69 Strafford Rd /Map-Lot 235-34: Deborah Shigo reminded the Commission that this was property that Mark Jennings had looked at before.

b) NH DES Wetlands Permit – PSNH Electrical Line Upgrades: PSNH Right of Ways, multiple locations- Seth Creighton told the Commission that Jeff Winders had been in his office talking about PSNH's wetland impacts. Michael Dionne said that this winter (now) is the right time of year to do the work. Deborah Shigo reminded the members that they had worked with PSNH to mitigate impacts.

c) Strafford Rivers Conservancy Membership and Contribution Solicitation: There was no discussion.

d) NH DRED Notice of Sale of Timber at NH DOT Land/ Map-Lot 207-48: Seth Creighton explained what this notice was about, there was no further discussion.

e) NH DES Alteration of Terrain – Farmington Rd / Map-Lot 216-11: Deborah Shigo asked Seth Creighton if a submission to the City was expected soon for this project. Seth Creighton said that a submittal had not yet been received, and was unaware of when would be made.

f) Moose Plate Grant - Hope Farm Letter: Deborah Shigo and Jack Hackett reminded the Commission that an email had previously been sent regarding the \$4,999 award from Moose Plate.

g) NH DES Alteration of Terrain Approval – Sensible Self Storage (201 Highland St / Map-Lot 106-3): The Commission recalled the application and review process of this storage unit development, but had no additional comments regarding this correspondence.

Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber:

a) Notice of Intent to Excavate – Little Falls Bridge Rd (Map-Lot: 207-1): There was on discussion.

b) Notice of Intent to Cut – 106 Brock St (Map-Lot 129-15, aka: Rochester Armory): The Commission noted that they have already seen trees being cut at this site.

c) Notice of Intent to Cut - NH DOT Land “Gonic Shed Property” Flagg Rd (Map-Lot 258-41): The Commission discussed where this lot was.

Reports: Deborah Shigo informed the members that the Hope Farm LCHIP grant application was unsuccessful –there would be no funding coming from LCHIP, however, the Commission would still move forth with purchasing an easement using Conservation Funds. Deborah Shigo said that she may meet with LCHIP to discuss how the application could have been improved.

Old Business:

a) Deborah Shigo asked the members to continue to read and consider what language should go into Conservation Easements.

b) Deborah Shigo asked if anyone had received a response regarding the letter Con Com sent to the ZBA (letter was in regards to ZBA's processing of Conservation Overlay District variances). No member had received a response. Seth Creighton told the Commission that he heard that the ZBA was pretty upset with the letter and were thinking about issuing a response letter. Deborah Shigo wondered why the ZBA doesn't just invite the Commission to a meeting to have a discussion. Jack Hackett suggested that if the ZBA writes a response letter, both letters should be sent to the newspaper's editorial section.

New Business:

The Commission discussed the proposed 2014 Conservation Commission agenda schedule. Deborah Shigo suggested that either the November or December 2014 meeting be cancelled because end of the month meetings are hard to attend when the holidays are so close. Jack Hackett suggested and motioned that the December meeting be cancelled, Deborah Shigo seconded, Michael Dionne said that he was fine with either way but will vote in favor of the Commission; the motioned passed unanimously.

Other Business:

a) Green Infrastructure Grant update: Seth Creighton let the Commission know that City staff is thinking about forming a committee to help develop/review new stormwater regulations and a member of the Con Com is welcome to be on the committee. Meetings will likely be held during the day because of the number of staff and professional consultants involved and other night meetings. Deborah Shigo suggested that the meetings be held at night, because that is when the City's volunteers will be available; Seth Creighton said he'd bring this suggestion back to the Green Infrastructure working group.

b) Conservation Easement Project: Seth Creighton explained that he had an email conversation with Chris Kane from Kane Conservation regarding how to reference/list Rochester's conservation easements in the report. Seth Creighton suggested that the properties be referenced by Tax Map-and-Lot numbers, and Kane indicated that he currently is following the GRANIT database's way of referencing/linking parcels. Seth Creighton asked the Conservation Commission for their thoughts. The Commission members collectively agreed that referencing by Tax Map-and-Lot numbers is best.

c) "Conserving Your Land" books – Seth Creighton asked the Commission if some of their funds should be used to purchase additional "Conserving Your Land, Options for NH's Landowners" books because he only had one left, after having given one to Jeff Winder's on Tuesday. Deborah Shigo said that more should be ordered, but that a more recent version was available and it is that which should be ordered. Michael Dionne said that he would like to have a copy of one, when available.

Adjournment:

At 8:12 p.m. Jack Hackett made a motion to adjourn. Michael Dionne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Seth Creighton, Staff Planner