

City of Laconia
Conservation Commission
Wednesday, January 20, 2021 - 6:00 PM
City Hall in the Armand A. Bolduc City Council Chamber
Accepted 2/17/2021

1/20/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair D. Anson called the meeting to order at 6PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chair Dean Anson, Vice Chair Deb Williams, Lisa Morin, Mike Foote, Planning Board Liaison Stacy Soucy

Members Absent: Wes Bates, Marnie Schulz

Staff: Conservation Technician Ashley Ruprecht

Guests: Dawn Scheffer owner of 50 Carriage Ln., Spencer Tate representing Leighton Av N. Lots 16 & 17, and Dan Higginson representing Gilman St (MBL 410-90-42).

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.I. Acceptance Of Minutes From December 16, 2020

D. Williams motioned to accept the minutes. L. Morin seconded. All voted in favor.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.I. 50 Carriage Lane Wetland CUP Application

Dawn Scheffer, owner of 50 Carriage Ln., provided an overview of the application which proposes to impact the 50ft wetland buffer in the rear of the lot in order to construct a house with a porch. There will be silt fencing installed during construction, and a rod iron fence is proposed in the rear of the home. A. Ruprecht added that the lot was created when the wetland setback was 30ft instead of 50ft, which is the relief the applicant is requesting from the Commission.

L. Morin said she has concerned about the root systems being removed during the removal of dead, diseased, and dying vegetation and requested the roots are not pulled. D. Scheffer says that she can leave the roots in tact.

M. Foote asked whether the house could be redesigned to be constructed outside of the 50ft buffer. D. Scheffer said that the house size was already reduced by 400 sq.ft. and that it cannot be moved closer to the road due to zoning setbacks.

D. Anson commented that the house would be in line with house on the lot to the east. There is discussion about the abutting properties that have already been constructed, one of which recently received a CUP for wetland buffer impacts and variance for the porch that was constructed in the side setback.

D. Scheffer explained that the proposed lawn area is existing lawn and that the trees located between the proposed fence and wetland will remain. D. Williams requested that plantings are done between the fence and wetland to prevent erosion. D. Scheffer said that she can do that. There is discussion about the drainage swale located in the drainage easement on the plans and it's maintenance. D. Scheffer

said that the HOA maintains the swale currently but if the Commission would like native vegetation to be planted there as well that she is open to doing that. Chair D. Anson would like for the Commission to speak with Long Bay and Willow Pond regarding the environmentally friendly ways to maintain the drainage structures within the development.

L. Morin requested A. Ruprecht to provide "Landscaping at the Water's Edge" to D. Scheffer. D. Scheffer showed a photo of the existing vegetation to the Commission.

The Commission additionally recommended that within the wetland buffer, fertilizers will not be used, the landscaping contractor to identify invasive species and remove, leaving roots intact, hand-tool digging only, and no additional placement of structures.

M. Foote said he will not support the application because he believes it can be designed to conform to the setback.

L. Morin would like for it to be known in the memo to Planning Board that the Commission is supportive since this is the last remaining lot proposing to be developed as the other homes on the wetland have been constructed.

D. Williams motioned to support to application with the conditions and recommendations discussed. L. Morin seconded. Chair D. Anson, D. Williams, and L. Morin voted in favor. M. Foote opposed. The motion passes, 3-1.

4.II. Leighton Ave N. (MBL 21-253-16&17) Wetland CUP

Spencer Tate of Meridian Land Services who is the agent on behalf of the owner, Chris Cahill, presented an overview of the application. The application is requesting a CUP for wetland buffer impacts for the driveway to a single-family house. The house and septic are outside of the buffers. The lot is an existing lot of record approved in 1977. Strawbales are proposed as erosion control, vegetation removal will be limited to areas necessary within the wetland buffers. After construction, disturbed areas will be restored with native grass seed mix.

There is discussion about the access from lot 16 to lot 17, per an easement. S. Tate said that it is the only reasonable means of access to lot 17. The proposed wetland buffer impact is just under 4,000 sq.ft.

Chair D. Anson said that he lives on Leighton Av N and asked if they could access lot 17 from lot 18 as it would be more gradual. S. Tate agreed the access is more gradual, but the owner of lot 18 is not amendable to an access easement, and access would still require wetland buffer impact. There is discussion about the grade of the driveway, topography, test pits, leach field and well.

D. Williams asked if any of the wetlands are vernal pools. S. Tate provided an overview of the vernal pool assessment that was conducted in April or May of 2020. The pond does not dry up enough to be a vernal pool and the other wetland does not have the depth necessary. The poorly drained wetland flows into a culvert underneath Leighton Ave N. There is an elevated culvert adjacent to the pond, so it is not draining constantly.

S. Tate said the driveway material has not been determined, but with a 12% grade, paving would likely be preferred for safety reasons. S. Tate explained to potential origin of the pond, stating that it was likely formed due to the road creating a berm as the wetland was likely flowing unimpeded into Winnisquam Lake prior to development.

There is discussion about the proposed retaining wall. S. Tate says this will be flush with the driveway and is necessary to hold the fill in place. S. Tate provided an overview of proposed tree cutting. He estimates 100-200 trees will be removed, with a majority smaller than 1in diameter, accounting for about ~3% of the total acreage of lot 17. A portion of clearing is within the 250' shoreland buffer and will

require a NHDES permit. S. Tate said no invasive species were identified on the site.

L. Morin asked about snow storage. S. Tate said it will likely be near the well. The Commission discussed logistics of plowing the driveway and would like for S. Tate to show the proposed snow storage on the plan, as well as any portable toilet to be used during construction, which should be 33ft from any surface waters.

There is discussion about stormwater runoff. S. Tate explained that while impervious surfaces will be increased, the amount of runoff should be negligible since the steepness of the slopes has a low infiltration rate currently. S. Tate said he can run the calculation and provide that information to the Commission. L. Morin asked about any possible stormwater devices. S. Tate said that none are proposed because it would increase impact to the wetland buffer and the increase in runoff is minimal.

D. Williams expressed concern about the driveway being so close to the pond. The Commission discussed whether the driveway may lead to additional development of the lots in the future. D. Williams recommended that there is no use of salt on the driveway.

L. Morin motioned to support the application with the conditions and recommendations. M. Foote seconded. All voted in favor.

4.III. Gilman Street (MBL 410-90-42) Wetland CUP

Dan Higginson of Higginson Land Services presented the plan to restore the wetland buffer and construct a single-family house with a garage. A portion of the garage (109sq.ft.) and a lawn area (873 sq.ft.) are proposed to impact the wetland buffer, a total of 982 sq.ft. Swales will be constructed for drainage and to collect runoff from the roof. The proposed landscaping shown is to restore the wetland buffer area where trees have already been cut. The plants listed are to be facultative wetland plants. Stumps from the trees that were cut have not been removed. D. Higginson said that smaller trees were cut but there is still a vegetative buffer remaining.

L. Morin spoke about her preference for the garage to be pulled forward to be level with the front of the house, moving it further outside of the buffer. D. Higginson said he could do that, but they proposed it being setback for aesthetics. L. Morin clarified that she supports recommending that the proposed 24'x24' garage to be moved forward, in line with the front of the house. D. Higginson mentioned that other houses in the neighborhood have existing lawns within their buffer areas.

L. Morin asked about the remaining vegetative buffer. D. Higginson said that at it's narrow point there is 10-15' of buffer. L. Morin suggested that the plantings are arranged in a more natural, staggered technique to blend in with the buffer. D. Higginson said he can make that change for the landscaping placement.

There is discussion about the garage. L. Morin would like for it to be a 1 car instead of 2 car garage as it'll less impact to the wetland buffer. D. Higginson said that there would likely be at least 2 cars for the home so getting in and out of the garage and driveway would be difficult with a 1 car garage. M. Foote stated he thinks the impact is minimal and supports the affordable, single-family home proposed to be built on the current vacant lot.

D. Williams recommends that silt sock is used over silt fencing that is currently installed. D. Higginson said that they will place silt sock along the silt fencing.

Chair D. Anson asked about moving the house towards the side setback on the east. D. Higginson explained that the abutter has built very close to the property line and would prefer not to move it closer to the east. D. Higginson said that moving the house closer to the the property to the east may cause drainage or fire code issues due to its proximity. M. Foote stated he does not support the recommendation to move the garage in line with the front of the house.

D. Williams motioned to support the application with the conditions and recommendations discussed. L. Morin seconded. M. Foote reiterated that he does not support the recommendation to move the garage in line with the front of the house but does support the project. All voted in favor.

5. OLD BUSINESS

At this time, the Commission decided to only discuss time sensitive agenda items, and to push the remaining items to the next meeting agenda.

5.I. Rules Of Procedure

5.II. Winnisquam Watershed Management Plan

A. Ruprecht said that Winnisquam Watershed Network is hosting a meeting on 2/2 with the Conservation Commissions within the watershed to discuss the Watershed Management Plan. A. Ruprecht provided the Zoom information to the Commission members.

5.III. Perley Pond

Chair D. Anson briefly mentioned that A. Ruprecht created a preliminary schedule for a landscaping plan.

5.IV. Natural Resource Inventory

Chair D. Anson, A. Ruprecht, and D. Trefethen will be meeting with Amanda Stone from Taking Action for Wildlife for a preliminary discussion about updating the NRI. A. Ruprecht said that there will likely be follow up discussions with the entire Commission and Amanda via Zoom to discuss the NRI.

6. NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES APPLICATIONS

There were no applications at this time.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. LIAISON AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

S. Soucy provided an overview of the conditional use permit for Cantin Chevrolet which proposes parking new vehicles within 250' of Lake Opechee. The applicant has applied for a NHDES Shoreland Permit application.

9. STAFF REPORT

A. Ruprecht announced that a resident has applied to be a Conservation Commission member or alternate member and they are scheduled for an interview with City Council February 8th. There was some discussion about the interview process and Conservation Commission's involvement. S. Soucy added that her friend is also potentially interested in becoming a member. She attended the meeting tonight and plans to attend the next meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

D. Williams motioned to adjourn the meeting. L. Morin seconded. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.