

City of Laconia
Conservation Commission
Wednesday, April 5, 2023 - 6:00 PM
City Hall in the Armand A. Bolduc City Council Chamber
Accepted July 19, 2023

4/5/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Call to order: 6:15PM

2. ROLL CALL

Dean Anson (Chair), Deb Williams (Vice Chair), Lisa Morin, Mike, Foote, Stacy Soucy (Planning Board Liaison)

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

4. RECORDING SECRETARY

Sheena Duncan Conservation Planner Technician

5. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Dean Trefethen, Director of Planning and Community Development

Sheena Duncan Conservation Planner Technician

6. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

7. OLD BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES APPLICATIONS

9.I. Winnisquam Watershed Network Presentation

Cindy O'Connell of the Winnisquam Watershed Network discussed the installation of a rain garden planned for the Gale Ave Park/ Beach area, noting the severe erosion that has been caused by years of fast-moving water down Gale Ave, across the site, to the lake. The rain garden is designed to slow the water down, and allow storm water to infiltrate, negating the erosion problems. It will be lined with grass only, rather than elaborate plantings. A backhoe will likely be on site at the end of April- soil testing and survey work will likely take place at this time.

D. Anson asked if the project would be exempt from the requirement for state permitting- D. Trefethen said that they would need to check with the state to be sure. There would be no need for a conditional use permit.

Open to the public at 6:40PM

Mark Townsend of 47 Gale Ave said that there had been a series of intense storm events over the last few years that had caused much of the erosion. Additional erosion had been caused by a backhoe

parked in the area for work done on an adjacent property.

Closed to the public at 6:48PM

C. O'Connell said that there would be soil testing on the site to determine requirements for the design to prevent damage to the raingarden due to intense storms.

C. O'Connell was requested to return to the Conservation Commission with updates to the final plan when details were settled.

9.II. Conceptual Discussion Regarding Lot 375/324/4 On Lexington Drive

Bob Gallagher explained the location on Lexington Ave, explaining that much of the water on the site was the result of the stormwater flowing off the adjacent development at Smith Tube. The proposed future Conditional Use Permit would be required to allow for a wetland crossing and a buffer violation outlined on the plan. The rear portion of the development would consist of a cold storage building, and a gravel parking lot, and discussed the general site conditions.

D. Anson asked B. Gallagher if he would be willing to make provisions for conservation of the undeveloped areas at the rear of the lot to allow for water to flow from the rear, toward the existing conservation property at the low end of the grade of Lexington- noting that there was a similar agreement on the adjacent property.

L. Morin noted that the language could be reflected in any agreement made for this property, and should be researched.

D. Williams asked where the snow storage would be- B. Gallagher said that they would plow the snow to the left (away from the wetland).

S. Soucy said that the Planning Board would ask about the use of gutters- B. Gallagher said that he would be happy to put in storm water erosion reducing measures at the base of the building (such a French drain or plantings), preferring not to use gutters in the event that they were to freeze over.

D. Anson asked about the size of culverts to be used- D. Trefethen said that DPW would have comments regarding the proper size to be used.

L. Morin asked D. Trefethen if he had any comment about the site- he said that the wetlands had existed for maybe 50 yrs (no one knows) but they had been the result of storm water from the adjacent development, noting that this was the last lot undeveloped in the industrial park, and that it was a deeded lot that had always been intended for that sort of use, and this is a low intensity industrial use.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

D. Williams presented the final designs for the WOW trail signs with activated QR codes. She noted that there would be a Cohort presentation on April 20, and a presentation/ display at the Belknap Mill, open to the public starting May 4th from 4:00PM to 7:00PM. She discussed the weed removal at Bartlett Beach, hosted by Parks and Rec, and Tyson Morrill of the Merrimack River Watershed.

Regarding the lack of buffers on wetlands under 3,000 sf, S. Soucy reminded the Commission that they had passed the ordinance a year ago.

D. Anson said that he was not afraid to admit that he had made a mistake, and that he thought that the wetland buffers should be evaluated based on their functions and values.

D. Trefethen said that municipalities were not required to consider functions and values- S. Soucy said that wetland scientists believe it to be in the best interest of the environment to do so. D. Trefethen posed the question- "will the evaluation of these small wetlands out weight the cost effectiveness of development?"

S. Duncan mentioned a recent issue at a property that had received a CUP for a wetland buffer before the ordinance had changed, noting that the driveway and house was allowed to be build a less than 50' from the wetland, and now it was expanded due to spring thawing. She said that snow storage was currently filling the wetland with salt, sand and gravel. She said that wetlands like this one should be looked at on a case by case basis to better understand how intense storm events, and melting, would impact them as they serve as storm water retention areas that could have unexpected changes that could result in negative impacts based on site conditions.

L. Morin asked if the Planning Board was enforcing the rule that no additional stormwater flow would be allowed to leave newly developed sites- D. Trefethen said that if there was a problem with the ordinance, S. Soucy would discuss it. He said that he didn't see a problem, and that Con Com should solve the problems that the perceived before approaching an ordinance change.

D. Anson said that he understood that the best land in the city had already been developed, and that what remained was riddled with wetlands, but he didn't believe that removing the buffers on all wetlands under 3,00 sf was the best way to cope with that fact.

S. Soucy said that DES was getting a lot of complaints about flooding that was taking place due to development adjacent to wetlands that were not evaluated on functions and values.

Motion to adjourn L. Morin. D. Anson mentioned hat there would be no meeting on the 19th, and cohort business would take place on the 12th. In the event that there was a major issue, or an important application , there would be a meeting scheduled on the 19th.

11. LIAISON AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

12. STAFF REPORT

13. ADJOURNMENT

D. Williams motioned to adjourn, seconded by M. Foote. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.