

## Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – October 18, 2022

Wakefield Conservation Commission (Commission) – Minutes – October 18, 2022

Attendance: Chairman Jim Luciani, Peter Miller, Ken Alepidis, Bob Romano; Teresa Belmonte; associate member: Haley McHatton-Ballou

Absent: Paul Wendelgass, Silvana Bouhlal

Rebecca Davis, Agent

10/4/22 minutes – Ms. Belmonte made a motion to approve the 10/4/22 minutes.

Mr. Luciani made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.

DEP 313-XXX -100 Hemlock Road – Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School – Continued Public Hearing: Notice of Intent for the demolition of existing school, construction of new school, parking lots, athletic fields, utilities, and stormwater management system within Bank, Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW), the Buffer Zone, and the Riverfront Area – Dan Wells and Andrea Kendall from LEC Environmental Consultants; David Conway, engineer and Paige Simmons from Nitsch Engineering; Kevin Nigro and Joe DeSantis from PMA Consultants; Kate Simmons, Carl Fransechi and Vlad Lyubetsk of DRA and Neil Denner Construction Manager were present for the applicants.

Ms. Kendall reviewed proposed impacts to wetland resources. The entrance driveway from Farm Street will have retaining walls at wetlands 1, 3, 3A and 4. Wetlands 1 and 3 are Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW). There will be 2 permanent alterations at wetland 1 totaling 840 square feet. Temporary wetland impacts will occur in the wetland replication areas. Work in the replication areas will consist of lowering the elevation then adding wetland soils. Wetland plants will then be added. The wetland buffer zone will be restored with trees and shrubs. There will be 403 square feet of disturbance at wetland 3. Replication in this area will mimic that of wetland1. Proposed replication is 1.5:1. Replication areas will be sited close to the impacted areas. The plantings will BVW monitored for 2 years.

Mr. Luciani asked if the contours in wetland replication area 2 would remain the same.

Ms. Kendall stated that they would. She added that the wetland would be maintained via a 12' culvert.

Mr. Romano suggested shifting the road to the south closer to the ledge. This would move the work away from the wetland.

Mr. Luciani noted that shifting the road to the south would eliminate permanent wetland disturbance.

Mr. Conway stated that shifting the road 8' would require more blasting of ledge which would be costly.

Mr. Luciani noted that the applicants are already proposing a substantial amount of blasting.

Ms. Davis asked if the proposed roundabout would be presented to the Commission.

Mr. Conway stated that this will be constructed solely on Farm Street.

Mr. Miller expressed concern with the road being placed up against the wetland. He noted that the south facing sun would degrade the exposed wetland.

Ms. Belmonte asked if the Town had accepted the roadway plan without a sidewalk.

## Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – October 18, 2022

Mr. Conway stated that if it has to be added the curb would be moved away from the wetland. He noted that the school building team does not want a sidewalk. They are also opposed to a rotary.

Ms. Davis noted that in a meeting with Town Administrator Steve Maio, he had been adamant that a sidewalk would be required.

Mr. Conway stated that a meeting with the development team, Voke Superintendent David DiBarri and Mr. Maio would be held this week. He will report back at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Alepidis asked if there are any additionally proposed site plan changes.

Mr. Conway said that he knew of none.

Mr. Romano suggested having the proposed roadway exit north of the existing road.

Mr. Conway stated that this would impact the wetland 3 series.

Mr. Romano suggested coming through above the wetland replication area.

Mr. Conway felt that there would be some wetland impact. He felt that a zoning variance may then be required due to the proximity to the property line.

Mr. Romano requested that the applicants review that option.

Mr. Alepidis suggested pushing the road south to avoid the 2<sup>nd</sup> replication area.

Mr. Conway stated that it would move into the non-jurisdictional wetland.

Mr. Alepidis noted that there is leeway in order to avoid the vernal pool. He asked how straight the road needed to be.

Mr. Conway felt that it would require a lot of ledge removal vs. the proposed wetland impact that would be mitigated.

Mr. Desantis felt that the current proposal minimizes wetland impacts.

Mr. Romano would like the applicants to reduce need for replication. He felt that this could be achieved with slight adjustments to the road. He also reiterated that there would be cutting and blasting at Farm Street regardless of whether the sidewalk is added. Flipping the proposed maintenance building location with the road was suggested.

Mr. Nigro stated that this was not practical.

Mr. Conway stated that he would provide a sketch of this proposal for the next meeting.

Ms. Belmonte noted that zoning relief could be requested. This was not seen as a reason not to pursue an alternate option.

Mr. Romano noted that this option would avoid impact to that wetland series.

## Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – October 18, 2022

Mr. Conway expressed concern that moving away from one wetland would impact another. He will review sliding the road south towards wetland 3.

Ms. Belmonte requested review of how performance standards had been met.

Ms. Kendall stated the following:

- They would achieve 1.8 to 1 replication.
- The grade of the replication areas will be similar to the adjacent wetland.
- The location of the replication areas are proximate to the impacted area.
- An unrestricted hydrologic connection to the same waterbody will be met.
- 75% cover of wetland vegetation planting will be achieved.

Mr. Miller asked if the applicants had concluded that placing asphalt up against the wetland would not impact the wetland.

Ms. Kendall stated that a lot of projects impact wetlands. She noted that there was a dense cover of sweet pepper bush and trees in this area. Additionally, storm water treatment would be achieved. She conceded that there could be long term impacts, however, mitigation is being provided. She felt that the general intent would be achieved during construction.

Mr. Miller stated that there would also be impact to the wetland after construction is completed. He noted that it is incumbent on the applicant to mitigate any future impacts as well. He reiterated that a lack of shade from tree removal would heat the wetland thereby affecting its functional value. He does not believe that this plan considers long term wetland impacts.

Mr. Conway stated that they are trying to mitigate alterations. He added that the buffer zone is not a no-build zone.

Mr. Miller contended that buffer zone impact affects are based on science. He felt that the applicants need to answer why they contend that wetland is not being degraded.

Mr. Conway stated that the replication and storm water standards are being met.

Mr. Byrne stated that the roadway entry in the buffer zone would likely result in wetland changes. He noted that storm water management would maintain water quantity and quality. The buffer however protects the functional value of the wetland. He felt that the functional value should be reviewed. Additional mitigation may be required. He asked how the construction would impact the functional value of the wetland as well as any additional impacts resulting from the removal of the buffer vegetation. It was reiterated that it is the applicant's burden to prove.

Mr. Conway stated there would also be mitigation in areas outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

Mr. Romano also requested review of the impact from loss of canopy and salting/sanding of the road.

Ms. Davis noted that there is an outstanding Order of Conditions from the construction of the school. Per Department of Environmental Protection, the applicants should request a Certificate of Compliance.

Mr. Conway stated that they are in the process of completing this.

Ms. Davis stated that questions that remain to be answered are: count of trees to be removed, total square footage of area to be disturbed and offset of the proposed road to the wetland.

## Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – October 18, 2022

Mr. Conway stated that the offsets can be measured off the recently submitted plans. The tree count number was based upon a rough density estimate of 34 trees per 10,000 square feet. In areas of buffer disturbance only, a total of 260 trees, 5" in diameter or greater, would be removed. Land disturbance – previously unaltered land disturbance is 13.82 acres.

Ms. Davis asked what the number would be with the addition of existing alterations.

Mr. Conway stated that this would be provided at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Desantis stated that per the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) comment letter, the potential alteration area is 20.42 acres. He will forward this letter to the Commission for review.

Ms. Davis asked if there had been any plan changes since the issuance of the MEPA letter.

Mr. Desantis stated there had not been.

Ms. Davis stated that she had spoken with Town Engineer Bill Renault regarding the storm water review. It was suggested that the Commission enlist a consultant to undertake the review.

Mr. Romano agreed.

Mr. Byrne stated that BSC could conduct the review.

Mr. Nigro asked how a consultant from BSC was secured.

Mr. Romano stated that the Commission has consulted with BSC on other projects and had a good working relationship.

Mr. Byrne stated that he would request a proposal and availability from his engineering colleague.

Mr. Desantis asked if the Commission had any concerns other than the driveway.

Mr. Romano noted that they had not yet reviewed everything.

Bob Brooks – June Circle – had questions about the slope cut.

Mr. Conway stated that this topic would be discussed during storm water review.

Jennifer Fanning – Pheasantwood Drive – asked if the upcoming meeting with the applicants, Town Administrator Maio and Voke School Superintendent DiBarri would be open to the public.

Mr. Nigro stated that it would not as it was merely a regular check-in meeting. He noted that the Traffic Advisory Committee hearing scheduled for 10/21 would be a public meeting.

Bronwyn Dellavolpe – Cyrus Street – asked who made the decision to forego sidewalks.

Mr. Romano stated that no sidewalks had been proposed as of yet. He added that there would be wetland impacts if they are added.

Ms. Dellavolpe asked why they weren't included in the design.

## Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – October 18, 2022

Mr. Nigro stated that the building committee came to that decision in concert with the applicant's design team.

Mr. Romano asked for a definition of 75% re-vegetation cover.

Ms. Kendall stated that within replication areas there needed to be 75% vegetative coverage.

Linda Ireland – Melrose – noted that the area next to the Isolated Vegetated Wetland in wetland series 2, proximate to a vernal pool, was completely stripped of vegetation during test pit work. She asked if this would be restored. She also contended that the series 3 BVW continues in a channel to the series 1 wetland.

Ms. Kendall stated that the wetland series were reviewed and approved by the Commission last year under an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation. Ms. Kendall added that the test pit areas would be re-vegetated.

Ms. Ireland stated that she had observed vernal pool species in this area. She contended that there are ephemeral connections. She felt that they would be disrupted by the roadway construction.

Ms. Fanning asked why there would be no sidewalks.

Mr. Conway stated that there was no sidewalk for them to connect to when the road meets Farm Street.

Ms. Fanning asked if the sidewalks would be added after approval of this plan so as not to exceed the disturbance threshold.

Mr. Conway stated that if sidewalks are added a new plan would be submitted.

Eleanor Axelrod – Sheffield Road – asked if the replication areas would be connected to upland areas in order to maintain a migration and habitat connection.

Mr. Romano noted the significance of BVW to wetland habitat.

Mr. Conway stated that the culvert would allow a connection.

Lee Farrington – Washington Street, Chelsea – asked for specifics regarding the published \$675,000 reduction of the project's drainage budget.

Mr. Nigro stated it was not related to this hearing. He added that this number was merely part of an engineering exercise required by the Massachusetts School Building Association as part of a value management log. He added that the public was welcome to submit questions through the school building project website.

Mr. Conway noted that they are not proposing to delete any of the storm water that is presented in the plans.

Ms. Ireland noted that since it has been stated that the MEPA numbers are the same as previously submitted, she noted that per the applicant's storm water report the net new impervious number has now increased. The numbers are not identical. She will submit this information to the Commission for review.

## Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – October 18, 2022

Mr. Nigro stated that this is the first he is hearing of this.

Mr. Romano stated that storm water would be covered at a future meeting.

This matter was continued to 11/1/22.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Committee – update – Theo Noell of the Planning Board has agreed to join the OSRP committee.

Mr. Luciani made a motion to appoint Mr. Noell to the OSRP committee.

Mr. Alepidis made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Davis stated that the OSRP consultants Horsley & Witten would be contacted to determine next steps.

Master Plan meeting – public meeting will be held 10/19. Transportation and Sustainability will be the topics for discussion.

Tree Removal Policy – edits – A requirement that snags will be left during tree removal, when practicable, has been added to this policy. This is in addition to the currently required replacement/payment to the habitat replacement fund. Homeowners will be provided with information outlining the value of snags to both habitat and soil health. The Commission will vote on this addition at the next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Belmonte made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.