

Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – November 15, 2022

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

Absent: Rebecca Davis, Agent

11/1/22 minutes – Ms. Belmonte made a motion to approve the 11/1/22 minutes.

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

DEP 313-620 -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, Marco Zappala from PMA Consultants, Carl Fransechi and Vlad Lyubetsk of DRA, Neil Denner Construction Manager and Commission consultant Matt Burne of BSC were present for the applicants. Revised plans were submitted for review this evening.

Mr. Conway stated that a site walk was conducted last week with Ms. Davis and Mr. Luciani. As a result, plans submitted this evening show a revised roadway alignment. The proposal would move the roadway further south. This would allow work to mostly remain outside of the 25' wetland setback to wetland #1. Retention of several mature trees could also be accommodated. The road would also be moved away from wetland #2. This would allow for plantings along the roadway. An additional wetland crossing has also been added. Wetland #3 would not be impacted under the new plan. Impacts to wetland #4 would be replicated.

Mr. Alepidis asked if replication would be provided adjacent to wetland #4.

Mr. Conway stated that they would need to map out a replication area to ensure that the existing vegetation and trees are not compromised.

Mr. Burne felt that this plan is an improvement. He asked if additional drainage would be necessary at wetland #4.

Mr. Conway stated that there would only be drainage from wetland #4 to wetland #3 at the overflow area. The pipe would be placed in that location.

Mr. Burne asked if additional drainage at wetland #4 would change the wetland jurisdiction status.

Mr. Conway stated that there would only be water moving through the pipe during large storm events.

Mr. Luciani expressed concern regarding the need for an uninterrupted path of water.

Mr. Conway contended that flow would mimic current conditions.

Mr. Luciani expressed concerns regarding blasting.

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Mr. Conway stated that their blasting expert has assured them that the wetland would be protected by the hydrolic soil layer.

Mr. Alepidis questioned the extent of blasting.

Mr. Conway stated that the new roadway configuration would require additional blasting.

Mr. Luciani asked the depth to bedrock.

Ms. Simmons stated that it was between 4.2' and 5.6' across the test pit area.

Ms. Belmonte asked how the remaining mature trees along the roadway would be retained.

Mr. Conway stated that they would make every effort to preserve them.

Ms. Simmons noted that there would also be a landscaped shoulder between the roadway and the trees.

Mr. Burne stated that he had submitted comments regarding buffer zone impacts, wildlife in the roadway and lighting impacts. He felt that these areas should be addressed.

Mr. Conway stated that a written response to Mr. Burne's would be forthcoming.

Mr. Burne asked if the proposed plan changes affect the storm water design.

Mr. Conway stated that they would not.

Jennifer Fanning – Pheasantwood Drive, Wakefield – asked if the applicants had considered an elevated bridge over the wetland.

Mr. Conway stated that the proposed culverts act similar to a bridge. He added that a bridge would be cost prohibitive and more impactful to the wetland resources.

Christine Rioux – Woodland Road, Wakefield – requested a copy of Mr. Burne's review and comments.

Mr. Romano stated that it will be posted on the Commission's website.

Linda Ireland – Nowell Road, Melrose – expressed concern with a possible disconnect of water flow between wetland areas. She felt that elevating the roadway in certain areas would benefit amphibian travel. She also noted that the proposed blasting area is a Priority Habitat.

Bob Brooks – June Circle, Wakefield – concerned with the possibility that an excessive amount of water would enter wetland #1. He is concerned with the culvert flow at June Circle as the applicant's obligation ends at their property line.

Ms. Simmons stated that the proposal would meet or exceed storm water management requirements for the 2, 10 25 and 100-year storm events. Existing conditions would be maintained as much as possible in order to maintain hydrology within each wetland series. Five sub-surface catchment systems will be used across the site, deep sump, hooded catch basins will be installed along the roadway and roof runoff will be captured.

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Mr. Luciani questioned runoff over the property line.

Mr. Conway stated they will confirm off-site calculations and report back.

Mr. Luciani asked if all discharge points are directed towards the wetlands.

Mr. Conway stated that they would mimic the current conditions.

Mr. Burne stated that the implications of discharge into the potential vernal pool near Breakheart needs to be reviewed. Additional treatment may be required.

Mr. Conway will review this issue and report back.

Ms. Rioux about maintenance of the water quality structures as well as whether regular water quality testing would be undertaken.

Mr. Conway stated that the system would be designed to capture 80% of total suspended solids. The system would be inspected once per year and cleaned twice per year. This work would be contracted out. Water quality testing would not be undertaken.

Ms. Simmons noted that per Massachusetts standards, water quality value must be met. The proposed structures are sized to meet those requirements.

Ms. Rioux expressed concern with the both quantity and quality of the water.

Mr. Brooks asked where water would flow from the rock face.

Ms. Simmons stated that the adjacent rock trough would be sloped so that any drainage from the rock face or the parking area would be captured in the swales. Water would continue on to the closed drainage network.

Ms. Ireland asked if the rock area was added into the impervious calculations.

Mr. Conway stated that it was included in both the impervious and storm water calculations.

Ms. Ireland asked if the concrete entry stairway would be treated with salt. If so, was that runoff considered in the storm water calculations.

Mr. Conway stated than a yet to be determined deicer would be used.

Ms. Fanning asked the effect of the storm water cost reductions noted in the value management log.

Mr. DeSantis contended that this has been taken out of context and that the value management log is not relevant. He noted that the storm water system would be decreased in size but would provide the same function.

This matter was continued to 12/6/22.

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DEP#313-120 – 2 Anjim Lane - wetland fill review – At the applicant's request, this matter was continued to 12/6/22.

Trail steward program and handbook- The Commission endorsed the establishment of a trail steward program. Stewards would visit a designated trail then report back to the Commission the status and any issues. A draft handbook will be reviewed and discussed at a future meeting.

Proposed energy park- The Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light Department (WMGLD) has proposed the installation of an energy park between the high school and the vocational school. Use of the proposed lot, designated as State protected Chapter 97 parkland, will require 2/3 approval at Town Meeting (11/19/22 at 9:00AM) as well as approval from the Massachusetts legislature. More than 100 trees will be taken down for this project.

It is proposed to exchange this Town-owned lot for 2 additional Town-owned lots. The Commission has not been provided with these lot locations, nor solicited for input or comment. The WMGLD Commission will hold a hearing on this matter 11/16/22.

Ms. Belmonte did not feel that this could be considered a land swap as both parcels are Town-owned.

Mr. Luciani stated that this would provide emergency power for both schools.

Tree policy edits – Mr. Alepidis noted that Ms. Davis had suggesting addressing canopy loss instead of number of trees lost.

Ms. McHatton felt that the amount of carbon held by trees should be highlighted.

Mr. Romano would like water uptake value noted as well.

The Commission will review tree benefit calculators for addition to the webpage and tree policy. This will serve to heighten the awareness of what would be gained through retention and planting of trees. This discussion was continued to 12/6/22.

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