

## Wakefield Conservation Commission Minutes – May 23, 2023

Wakefield Conservation Commission (Commission) – Minutes – May 23, 2023

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

Absent: Paul Wendelgass

Agent: Rebecca Davis; Commission Peer Reviewer: Matt Burne

This meeting was conducted hybrid. The Commissioners met in person at Town Hall.

DEP#313-620 - 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 – discuss, vote and issuance of Order of Conditions.

The Commission reviewed each wetland resource individually to outline activities proposed, whether activities contribute to interests outlined in the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) as well as whether the disturbance could be mitigated through a special condition.

### Wetland #1

- BVW and largest resource area
- Proposed temporary and permanent activities include:
  - New driveway
  - Removal of invasive plants and trees
  - Underground infiltration system

Mr. Luciani noted that ledge removal would occur approximately 56' from the BVW.

Mr. Romano stated that 2,172 square feet of work is proposed within the 25' buffer.

Ms. Belmonte stated that as the applicant had not submitted any evidence that none of the wetlands are not significant, all are presumed to be significant.

Mr. Romano stated that tree clearing for the roadway would be the first step. The result would be canopy loss which would create a thermal impact. Lack of water uptake would also be an issue.

Mr. Miller noted that there would be no canopy protection in the area proposed for two level spreaders. He also expressed concern for the health of the remaining trees along the 25' buffer. He felt that the roots would be compromised during construction activity.

Ms. Davis stated that the applicant would work with the Agent in an attempt to protect the remaining trees.

Mr. Luciani expressed concern with the fact that more water would now be added to the wetland due to the loss of water uptake from the tree removal.

Mr. Romano noted that in order to offset these losses, potential conditions that could be applied would be to replant with mature trees or move the road further away.

Mr. Luciani expressed concern with untreated runoff, particularly road salt, from Farm Street discharging within 5' to 10' of the BVW.

Mr. Romano stated that despite the applicant's best intentions, they would not be able to control road salt from coming into this area.

Mr. Miller stated that this runoff could also potentially raise the water level in the wetland.

Mr. Luciani expressed concern with blasting in this area for utility installation.

Mr. Romano wondered if a hoe ram could be used instead of blasting. Toxic chemicals used in blasting and their effect on the wetland, health of the root structures of the remaining trees as well as potential change in ground water were a concern. It was noted that blasting would result in destruction of the buffer and removal of its functional abilities. Removal of invasive species, including trees, in this area could be conditioned. The question was whether more damage than good was achieved through this removal. Selective removal would be needed.

Mr. Miller expressed concern with the lighting plan and the potential impacts.

Mr. Romano noted that 3,000 degrees Kelvin range was the standard as it is dark sky compliant.

Ms. Davis suggested a special condition requiring use of 590 nanometer lighting instead.

#### Wetland #3

- Inland bank and BVW
- Proposed temporary and permanent activities include:
  - Construction access road, driveway and sidewalk
  - Retaining wall
  - Stream crossing
  - Vegetation clearing along the limit of work line

Mr. Romano noted that the stream crossing would consist of a 3-sided box culvert which would be 15' wide, 5' to 7' in height and 60' in length. This would result in a permanent loss of 7 linear feet of bank.

Ms. McHatton-Ballou asked how the stream would be crossed during construction.

Ms. Davis stated there would be a temporary bridge.

It was noted that as this area is shown on the town-by-town Habitat of Regional or Statewide Importance map as well as listed as both a core habitat and critical landscape area in the State issued BioMap. As the area is listed in both maps, optimum stream crossing standards apply. Under this standard, a bridge is required. The bridge is required to have a minimum height of 8'. The proposed culvert has a maximum height of 5' to 7'. The Commission concurred that the optimum standard has not been met.

Mr. Romano noted that wildlife would be forced through this one area to prevent use of the road. He did not feel that the proposed height of 5' to 7' would be sufficient for large mammals.

Ms. Davis did not feel that a condition could be applied that would meet standards.

This discussion was continued to 5/30/23 at 6:30PM.

Ms. Belmonte motion to adjourn.

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Ms. McHatton-Ballou made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.