

GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

January 9, 2007

Chairman Evan Owen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room in Town Hall. Members Craig Auman, Bruce Clements, Holly Estes, and Marshall Giguere were present. Peter Morrison arrived at 7:06 p.m., and Bruce Easom arrived at 7:30 p.m. Conservation Assistant Barbara Ganem was also present.

Upon a motion by C. Auman, seconded by H. Estes, it was

VOTED: to approve the minutes of December 26, 2006 as drafted.

Members M. Giguere and E. Owen abstained from the vote.

In response to the Planning Board's request for comments, members discussed the proposed work at 60 Boston Rd. B. Ganem explained they propose additional parking spaces, drainage structures (including a recharge bed), paving, and a re-located and enlarged garage. Commissioners noted there also appears to be a changed use with storage of considerable equipment and materials.

(P. Morrison arrived at 7:06 p.m.)

The site will have town sewer so stormwater management is the major concern. Member B. Clements indicated he would not participate in the discussions as he has a business relationship with the property owner. E. Owen noted they are proposing fill almost to the wetland line, and a substantial amount of the lot will be disturbed. Seven additional parking spaces are proposed. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to send the draft comments to the Planning Board, noting the decrease in the setback to wetlands and the amount of impervious surfacing is unacceptable to the Commission.

B. Clements recused himself from the vote.

7:15 p.m. - 2-8 Hollis St. NOI continuation, DEP #169-973

Wetland scientist Sean Hale of Ross Associates explained the plan was revised to include the 50' buffer zone and the site was re-flagged using survey points. The stormwater drainage system was based on the site soils. Areas where snow will be stored are also shown on the plan, and Mr. Hale commented the Planning Board requires that any stockpiles over 3 ft. in height must be removed from the site. An operations and maintenance plan was added to the last page. Member Giguere asked if the wetland flagging was available as a shape file to which S. Hale replied, "No".

Members objected to the snow storage area nearest the wetland, pointing out monitoring the height of the snow stockpile creates a burden for the Commission. Mr. Hale stated he was not aware of the storage of any petroleum products on the site. In discussion on the salt/sand mix to be used on the driveway, the lessee, Joyce Morrow of Environ, said only sand is used.

C. Auman reiterated that the snow storage area nearest the wetland should be moved.

(B. Easom arrived at 7:30 p.m.)

It was noted the Commission typically conditions driveway treatments to a salt/sand mix at 10% salt to 90% sand. B. Clements commented that pure sand from a heated storage area could be effective. The Operations & Maintenance

Plan can be revised for more sensitive sites. The parking area is to be paved. Mr. Owen asked the elevation of the rim of the catch basins, and Mr. Hale responded it would be 104 ft. Mr. Owen commented the bottom of the sump could be in the water table. Member Clement corrected his earlier statement, saying the sand must be stored in a dry, enclosed space to be effective on snow covered surfaces.

Phillip Rury, representing the applicant, said catch basins would not be installed in unstable soils. C. Auman worried that the depth of the catch basins could result in sand and oil entering the wetlands. E. Owen recommended that the areas be suitably backfilled to assure functional effectiveness of the catch basins; none should be installed in muck soils. He questioned how de-watering will be handled. M. Giguere suggested it would be prudent to do test borings. He expressed concern about safety, noting that after-the-fact construction is more difficult as the ground may be unstable.

B. Ganem noted that the soil maps show a large portion of the lot consists of wetland soils, probably filled in some time ago. She questioned whether the drainage infrastructure would work effectively. Without confirmatory borings, the design can be faulty. S. Hale explained the Planning Board accepted the plan based on the previous review of the filing. H. Estes noted oil absorption pillows are proposed on the catch basins, but no person is designated to be responsible for this maintenance. M. Giguere questioned whether the pillows will be stored on site. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by B. Clements, it was

VOTED: to close the public hearing.

M. Giguere voted in the negative.

Members noted that removing the snow storage area nearest the wetland and any additional outstanding issues will be addressed in the Order of Conditions.

7:30 p.m. - Groton School RDA

Property Manager Tim Dumont of Groton School explained the Surrenden Farm project requires the School to provide a link from the Bird Sanctuary to access Surrenden Farm. An existing trail near the Nashua River was re-established. This trail avoids an area near the adjacent playing field and crosses an intermittent stream which requires bridging. B. Easom asked what kind of footings will be required, and Mr. Dumont responded that field stone or patio blocks will be used at either end of the bridge. The bridge will be constructed of non-arsenic-treated wood and will not touch the ground. E. Owen questioned whether this will be a community service project for the students, and Mr. Dumont said his department will do the construction as it can be completed more quickly. Upon a motion by C. Auman, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to issue a negative #3 Determination with the following conditions: no arsenic-impregnated pressure treated woods are used, no erosion occurs, no bridge footings are in the stream, and any future maintenance is conducted more than 100 ft. from the stream.

T. Dumont said he may have to use three main beams if the bridge is to support horse traffic. B. Easom offered to assist with the stress calculations for the structure.

In response to a request from the Zoning Board of Appeals for comments on the Jenkins Rd. Pine Ridge Estates project, members questioned how roof runoff will be recharged. No buildings are proposed within the 100 ft. buffer zone, but a drainage component outlets very close to the wetlands buffer. Members suggested shortening the T and agreed to recommend the developer consider low-impact development techniques such as rain gardens and water quality swales. E. Owen advised the use of clean fill. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by C. Auman, it was

VOTED: to send in the draft comments to the ZBA, adding a request that the Board remain diligent about enforcing the Commission's recommendations.

In discussion on the legal expenses proposed to be paid from the Conservation Fund, P. Morrison noted the Fund is to be used for land acquisitions and the Commission has been asking for conservation land maintenance funds in the regular conservation budget. The expenses cover such items as the review of conservation restrictions associated with subdivisions, as well as Surrenden Farm. B. Easom suggested looking into the CPA operating budget. P. Morrison said the use of the Fund for these expenses was not planned, nor has there been any warning. He felt the expenditure was inappropriate when the Commission has presented requests at Town Meeting for funding of the Conservation Fund as an opportunity to buy or maintain conservation land. He also noted the Commission had asked for funds for a legal line item, but was turned down in the last fiscal year. B. Easom commented if everybody had to anticipate legal expenses we would all have to put in money for worst case scenarios that might never occur.

Members requested specific information about the legal bills incurred on 11/6/06 and 11/13/06. Also the \$31 charge is for land for which the Commission is not responsible for managing. The Commission agreed to look at the legal bill again should additional information become available. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to convey comments to the Board of Selectmen that express the Commission's surprise at being presented with this legal bill.

It was agreed not to issue Certificates of Compliance for 32 Radio Rd., pending receipt of additional information, and 10 Nate Nutting Rd., pending stabilization of the site. Upon a motion by B. Clements, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to issue a Certificate of Compliance for DEP #169-879 for 93 Birchwood Ave., conditioned upon the removal of heavy machinery from the 100 ft. buffer zone.

Upon a motion by C. Auman, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to approve the submittal of the 2006 Annual Report as drafted.

B. Ganem reported there has been no progress regarding 1 Lost Lake Dr. The fines are currently up to \$450, and no Notice of Intent has been filed. Commissioners did observe on the January 6th site visit that the owner has made some improvements in the silt fencing installation, but the haybales have not been placed at the driveway entrance. Commissioners requested the owners be notified of this fact. Member Estes commented she observed sediments running across the roadway into the wetlands during the Friday rainstorm. The Commission will not sign off on the Occupancy Permit until the owners comply with the conditions laid out in the Enforcement Order and Notices of Violation. The Fire Department apparently did issue a permit for the installation of the propane gas tank, but the Board of Health has not reviewed or approved the permit.

The Coverts Project is seeking applicants for its 3-day workshop on April 26-29. B. Clements said he was interested in it if no other members wish to attend.

P. Morrison reported he attended the Selectmen's meeting last night at which they discussed the additional clerical hours requested by the Commission and Planning Board. He felt they agreed in principle, but there are some details to iron out if the position is to be combined with an assistant for the Community Preservation Committee. There are really two positions which may have different grade levels, two sources of funding, and an eventual increase in hours for the CPC assistant. The Personnel Manager will make a recommendation next week, and the request will be back before the Selectmen in two weeks.

The Station Avenue Committee has had a wetland delineation prepared, but it will not include the soil logs the Commission typically requires for an official boundary confirmation. The Committee is interested in determining how much land area they have to work with, what is considered previously disturbed, and the benefits to the Town. It would be an improvement to get the GELD telephone poles, May & Hally, and Buckingham Bus out of there. The delineation is step 1 in the process. B. Easom asked if mitigation might be a conservation restriction on municipal land. B. Ganem mentioned that another idea has been to daylight James Brook.

The Selectmen received a report on the condition of the Squannacook River dam in W. Groton. The report assigns the dam a status of high hazard due to the presence of Rivercourt, an assisted living facility just downstream of the dam. This is considered a run of the river dam, and it will be necessary to weigh the benefits of removing or repairing the dam. There are liability issues if the dam is not appropriately maintained. B. Easom pointed out the dam currently does not supply energy and doesn't depress carbon use. It is anticipated that Natural Heritage & Endangered Species would weigh in on any proposed changes to the River.

Commissioners discussed the upcoming Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions Annual Meeting. All members wish to attend, and B. Easom and M. Giguere indicated they want to enroll in the Advanced Certificate Program. The paperwork was signed, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara V. Ganem
Conservation Assistant

Approved as drafted January 23, 2007