

**MINUTES**  
**Mansfield Conservation Commission**  
**Wednesday, September 17, 2008**  
**Audrey P. Beck Building**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM B**  
**7:30 PM**

*Members present:* Peter Drzewiecki (8:00p), Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Joan Stevenson, Frank Trainor. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn. *Others present:* Hill Bullard (8:00p).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:35p by Chair Quentin Kessel.
2. The draft **minutes of the 20 August 08 meeting**, with the correction of a typo in item 3, were approved.
3. **IWA referrals.** Lehmann participated in the IWA field trip on 09/10 (report attached), but maps delineating wetlands were not available to the CC at this meeting. W1416 was considered after item 4 to accommodate Mr. Bullard.
  - a. **W1415 (Madrid Corp., Crane Hill Rd.)** The applicant is requesting approval of a building lot on Crane Hill Rd.; although the lot is large, extensive wetlands constrain development. The proposed house site is across Crane Hill Rd. from the Puddin La. branch of the Nipmuck Trail to Wolf Rock; on the southwest, the lot abuts Town land containing the Nipmuck Trail north of Crane Hill Rd. From the road, the land slopes down toward wetlands to the north and west; the house would be sited close to the road, with its septic system farther down the slope. After some discussion, the CC agreed unanimously to comment as follows (motion: Silander, Trainor):
    - The CC declines to comment on wetland issues in the absence of adequate maps delineating their location relative to the proposed house and septic system.
    - The existing roadside parking area for Wolf Rock, which is often full on fine weekends, extends to the proposed driveway cut. Retaining adequate trailhead parking space along Crane Hill Rd. should be a condition of approval.
    - The trail to Wolf Rock has been compromised by houses recently built to either side of it, and a house at the proposed site will further diminish the natural values of this area: instead of a woodland with large white pines, those returning from Wolf Rock will see another house. Consideration should be given to placing the house farther back on the site, with the septic area in front. In any case, many existing trees as possible should be preserved as a buffer in front of the house.
  - b. **W1416 (Ouimette, Woodland Rd.)** The applicant proposes a house on a wooded lot that slopes up from Woodland Rd., the house sited below a wetland, with its septic system farther downslope toward Woodland Rd. Based on Lehmann's

report, the CC agreed to the following comment (motion: Drzewiecki, Stevenson; for: Drzewiecki, Kessel, Lehmann, Stevenson; abstaining to protest lack of adequate maps: Silander, Trainor):

- The CC recommends moving the proposed house and septic system closer to Woodland Rd. to reduce the potential impact of grading on the wetland.

**4. CL&P Interstate Reliability Project.** Hill Bullard was invited to review this proposal for the CC; Mr. Bullard is active in Joshua's Trust and owns property along CL&P's right of way in Chaplin.

CL&P proposes to upgrade the electrical grid by doubling the capacity of its 345 kV line through northeast CT. Its preferred alternative is to add a second set of poles to its existing right-of-way. In Mansfield, this right-of-way is 300 ft wide through private and Town land and 150 ft wide through Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) land at Mansfield Hollow. CL&P is asking ACE for another 150 ft. In all areas, trees would be cleared on the north side of the right-of-way to leave 85 ft between the 2 columns of poles and another 75 ft to trees. This would entail loss of forest in Town land on the right-of-way where the Puddin La. branch of the Nipmuck Trail crosses. Resurgence of trees and brush would be controlled by herbicide applications.

If ACE refuses to grant the extra right-of-way, CL&P might propose (a) routing the line through Windham, avoiding Mansfield entirely, or (b) replacing existing poles in Mansfield Hollow with higher ones that could carry both the existing lines and the new ones. More sweeping alternatives include routing the line (which would start at Worcester, MA) along I-90 and I-91 ("Option C2"), avoiding northeast CT entirely. The Connecticut Siting Council will decide where the line will go; the Town may comment, but has no jurisdiction. In making its decision, the Siting Council will consider cost, so the options of running the lines underground – or through Windham -- at considerable extra expense are probably unrealistic. There will be a public hearing at the Mansfield Community Center on 10/22.

Mr. Bullard urged the CC to communicate concerns about this project to the Town Planner, asking that they be included in the Town's comment; a copy should be sent to Rep. Merrill. He suggested (a) asking for more consideration of Option C2, (b) pushing for replacing existing poles with taller ones capable of carrying the extra lines in the Mansfield right-of-way, (c) barriers to ATV access, and (d) restoration of land used for access during the construction phase.

**5. Election of Officers.** The following people agreed to serve as officers one year, starting immediately, and were elected by acclamation: Quentin Kessel (Chair), John Silander (Vice Chair), Scott Lehmann (Secretary).

**6. Membership.** The CC is short two alternates. Drzewiecki will invite Catherine Carlson to the October meeting.

7. The meeting was **adjourned at 9:30p** after the CC decided that, at this hour, it lacked the energy to consider and comment on the proposed **Verizon cell phone tower** on Daleville Rd. in Willington.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary  
18 September 08; approved 15 October 08

Attachment: Report on the 09/10/08 PZC/IWA field trip.

There were four sites on the Field Trip, but I believe that only the last two concern the CC.

IWA 1416 (Ouimette, Woodland Rd.) The applicant proposes one house on a large wooded lot on the east side of Woodland Rd. The land slopes up from the road to a large field at the property line. There is a wetland in a flat area below the field and above the proposed house site. The house is to be just 25 or 30 ft from the wetland, though the wetland is slightly uphill from it; the septic system would be located between the house and the road, i.e., farther downhill from the wetland. There does not seem to be any reason why the house and septic system could not be moved somewhat closer to the road and farther from the wetland, which would decrease the impact on it from grading (as well as reducing potential drainage problems at the house).

IWA 1415 (Madrid Corp., Crane Hill Rd.) The applicant proposes one house on a wooded lot on Crane Hill Rd., just across the road from the Puddin Lane branch of the Nipmuck Trail to Wolf Rock; Town land containing the trail north of Crane Hill Rd. abuts the lot to the southwest. Although the lot is large, wetlands limit the buildable area to what is proposed. The land slopes down from the road to wetlands to the north and west, though the slope is not great once you get beyond the road embankment. The septic system would be located beyond the house, farther down the slope and closer to wetlands, but probably not close enough to have a significant impact. Nonetheless, the conversion of this woodland, with its large white pines, to housing will further suburbanize Wolf Rock area, diminishing its natural values. A potential issue is parking for Wolf Rock; the new owners will probably not be thrilled about lots of cars parking right in front of their house. (Parking in the obvious area where the Nipmuck crosses Browns Rd. to the north is *streng verboden*, presumably at the insistence of the landowner.)

Scott Lehmann, 09/12/08