

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 18 March 2009
Conference B, Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki, Scott Lehmann, Joan Stevenson. *Members absent:* Quentin Kessel, John Silander, Frank Trainor. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:38p by Vice Chair Robert Dahn.

2. The draft **minutes of the 21 January 09 meeting** were approved as written.

3. IWA business.

a. Lehmann participated in the **IWA field trip** on 03/16; his report is attached.

b. **W1423 (Shafer, Echo Rd.)** A 10 ft x16 ft garden shed is proposed on top of a small knoll. The shed would be quite close to wetlands -- about 45 ft from Echo Lake and 30 ft from a wetland to the S. However, there does not appear to be a satisfactory alternative to the proposed site. Small spills of gasoline or other pollutants would probably be absorbed by the sand-gravel soil rather than washing into the wetlands. No foundation work is involved. The Commission agreed unanimously (motion: Stevenson, Lehmann) that this project is unlikely to have a significant impact on wetlands.

c. **W1424 (Whispering Glen LLC, Meadowbrook La.)** A 37-unit condominium development is proposed for the flat portion of a 10-acre site on Meadowbrook La; to the S, the land drops steeply to wetlands and Conantville Brook. The current plan for the sewer connection does not involve crossing wetlands (as indicated in Lehmann's field trip report); instead, the line will run from the SE corner of the developed area down along the property line to a connection with an existing line S of Ledgebrook East. There will be a lot of impermeable surface (roofs, driveways) in this development, and the storm water management system appears under-sized to some Commission members. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (motion: Dahn, Stevenson) to make the following comments on this proposal:

- The design of the stormwater management system should be scrutinized to insure that it is up to the task; uncontrolled runoff could erode the steep slope and dump sediment into the wetland and brook below.
- The erosion potential of the trail providing access to the conservation area could be reduced by running it along the bottom of the slope rather than half-way up.
- To enhance protection of the wetland and brook, the steep slope should be included in the conservation area.

- Given the high density of development and the potential for storm-water impacts on the slope and wetlands below, the Commission suggests eliminating those units proposed for construction within the regulated area.

4. Mansfield 2020 Strategic Plan. The Commission has been asked by the Council to comment (by 04/01) on the action plans for the “Historic and Rural Character, Open Space and Working Farms” and “Sustainability and Planning” sections of the Mansfield 2020 Strategic Plan. Unfortunately, the focus of these action plans seems a bit tangential to the concerns of the Commission. Little or no attention is given to wetland and aquifer protection or to preservation of non-agricultural open space (insofar as it is not agricultural), and that is a concern. Water issues seem to be viewed in terms of providing infrastructure for moving water to consumers rather than protecting sources. The action steps designed to preserve agriculture in Town appear insufficient. Lehmann agreed to write up a comment including such points, to be circulated by e-mail for approval before submission to the Town Manager.

5. Adjourned at 8:42p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary
18 March 09

Attachment: Report on 16 March IWA Field Trip

W1423 (Shafer, 45 Echo Rd). The applicant wants to construct a 10x16 garden shed to store mowers, garden tools, etc. atop a small knoll S of the house. The knoll falls fairly steeply to Echo L on the W and to a wetland to the S. The shore of the lake is about 45 ft from the proposed site of the shed, the edge of the wetland about 30 ft. In this location, the shed could be moved back a bit from the lake, but there is little that can be done to increase distance from the wetland, short of moving the shed off the knoll (which I would not want to do if it were my property). The proposal does not involve digging a foundation or footings.

Assuming that the applicant takes reasonable precautions to prevent spills of gasoline or other unpleasant material at the site, there is probably little risk of contamination to the wetland or lake.

W1424 (Whispering Glen, 763 Meadowbrook Rd). 37 upscale condominium units are proposed for a deeper-than-wide 10-acre parcel on the S side of Meadowbrook Rd; an existing (unoccupied) house on the property will be demolished. The area proposed for development is flat, but drops off steeply to wetlands and Conantville Brook on the S. Much of this flat area is now an impenetrable jungle of brush, so we could not walk back to its edge; instead, we drove around to where we could look up from below, behind the VNA building. The condominium units will be served by sewer and water lines, so no provision for septic systems or wells need be made, allowing for dense development. The sewer line will have to cross the wetland and brook; the only other

aspects of the project with a potential impact on wetlands are storm-water runoff and (possibly) a trail contouring the steep slope. There will be a lot of impermeable surface (roofs, driveways); runoff is to be directed to rain gardens and to a retaining pond at the SE corner of the flat area at the edge of the drop to Conantville Brook for removal of sediment and floating debris before discharge into the brook. The flat area below the development between the brook and the steep slope is designated a conservation area, to which the developer is proposing access via a trail that contours along the steep slope. The development will be shielded from Meadowbrook Rd. and development to the E by landscaping.

Somebody should verify that provisions for handling storm-water are up to the job. To increase protection of the wetlands and brook, the conservation area should extend to the top of the slope, and the projected trail should be routed along the bottom of it rather than halfway up.