

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 17 April 2013
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Aline Booth (Alt.), Joan Buck (Alt.), Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Michael Soares. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:31p by Chair Quentin Kessel, who appointed Booth and Buck voting members for this meeting.

2. The **draft minutes** of the 20 March 2013 meeting were approved as written.

3. **IWA referrals**

a. **W1514 (South Windham Post & Beam, Woodland Rd.)** The application is for re-issue of an approved wetlands permit, now expired. There are no changes to the site plan (as amended) and no changes in wetlands regulations since the amendment was approved. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Silander, Buck) that no significant wetlands impact is to be expected from this project, assuming that standard erosion controls are in place during construction.

b. **W1515 (Lowe, 86 Puddin La.)** The applicants propose constructing a 27-ft. diameter above ground pool on level ground behind the house (formerly owned by Sam Dodd), about 55-60 ft. from Sawmill Brook. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Silander, Buck) that no significant wetlands impact is to be expected from this project, assuming that standard erosion controls are in place during construction.

c. **W1516 (Town of Mansfield Parks & Recreation, Bicentennial Pond)** The Town is requesting an “outdoor recreation” exemption from wetlands regulations for upgrading the existing trail/route around Bicentennial Pond to provide ADA accessibility. The upgraded trail would be surfaced with stone-dust and graded to permit wheelchair use. Most of the route lies within 150 ft. of wetlands; in some areas the existing trail crosses wetland soils. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Silander, Booth) that (1) the wetlands impact of this project should be minimal if erosion controls are employed during construction and (2) a small wetlands impact is an acceptable trade-off in providing recreational access to wheelchair-bound visitors.

4. **Reports.** Kessel reported that, according to a story in *The Hartford Courant*, Toll Brothers (a luxury home builder) is suing the Newington Conservation Commission for rejecting its application for a wetlands permit, alleging that the Commission did not present evidence that the proposed subdivision would have a significant impact on wetlands. Closer to home, the Mansfield PZC has rejected a proposal to designate the eastern end of Browns Rd. a “Scenic Road,” according to today’s issue of *The Chronicle*. Its story cites concerns that scenic-road designation would make safety improvements “difficult,” though there appears to be no rational basis for such a worry.

5. **Membership.** The Commission may have one vacancy. Kessel mentioned Pat Suprenant, who writes for the *Mansfield Independent News* and has followed the UConn water supply issue, as a possible candidate. The Commission suggested that he invite her to attend a meeting.

6. Mansfield Tomorrow Project. Project Manager Jennifer Kaufman would like the Commission to be represented in the agriculture focus group. The focus groups had been advertised as resources for planning, able to provide expert counsel in their subject areas. But there is no focus group on conservation, and the Commission has no particular expertise in housing, economic development, or agriculture. Buck indicated that she would attend the agriculture focus group meetings. Facchinetti has volunteered to serve with the housing focus group, and Lehmann agreed to try to attend a meeting of the economic development group on 01 May.

7. Hazardous Waste Transfer Station. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Kessel, Buck) to forward the following statement drafted by Kessel to the Town Council:

The Mansfield Conservation Commission is pleased with the University of Connecticut's decision to move the MMA (formerly known as the Hazardous Waste Transfer Station) out of a Mansfield public water supply watershed that contributes water to the Willimantic Reservoir. The Commission further notes that a similar decision was reached by the University about ten years ago, but the University never followed through on the recommendation to move the transfer station. The Commission therefore requests that the Town Council assist the University in any way possible to effect the move this time.

8. PZC 1317 (Pre-application review, 574-596 Middle Tpk.) The applicants will propose a 5-lot commercial subdivision at the Rte. 44 end of the yet-to-be-built North Hillside Rd. extension from UConn. Some misgivings were expressed about the contribution of the extension and its alignment to traffic problems on Rte. 44. However, the Commission adjourned without making any comment on the application (which concerns "the lots, not the road location or design," according to Linda Painter's memo of 11 April).

9. Adjourned at 8:40p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 15 May 2013.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 18 April 2013; corrected 15 May 2013 (QK).