

Town of Mansfield  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
Meeting of 17 December 2014  
Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Building  
**MINUTES**

*Members present:* Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, Grant Meitzler, John Silander, Michael Soares. *Members absent:* Aline Booth (Alt.), Joan Buck (Alt.), Robert Dahn. *Others present:* Joseph Boucher (Towne Engineering), Mary & Ross Harper, Jennifer Kaufman (Wetlands Agent)

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:31p by Kessel.

2. The draft **minutes** of the 19 November 2014 meeting were approved, after being amended to mention, in item 2, Meitzler's concern that the proposed 102 acre conservation easement in the new Tech Park be written so as to permit a utility corridor for the proposed sewer main serving 4 Corners.

**3. IWA referrals.**

a. **W1545 (Niarhakos, 101 East Rd).** The current owners of a 14.6 acre parcel on East Rd, formerly owned by Frank Trainor, propose a 3-lot subdivision: the existing house at 101 East Rd on lot 1, new houses on lots 2 and 3 downhill and to the east. Mary and Ross Harper of 129 East Rd are concerned about potential spillovers, particularly from lot 3, which abuts their own property: i) lot 3's septic leaching field is close to and uphill from their well, and ii) development is likely to increase runoff onto their property. They testified that the whole slope is quite wet from springs, probably fed by the wetland on the boundary of lots 2 and 3. Though their house has a footing drain, dampness in the basement is a problem.

Unfortunately, the developer's map does not delineate wetlands on the Harper property, so the wetlands impact (if any) of developing lot 3 is not clear. Joseph Boucher from Towne Engineering identified on the map old ditches dug to channel water away from developed areas. He also displayed photos of water running/seeping onto the Harper property from lot 3. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Kessel, Silander) to comment to the IWA & PZC as follows:

- 1) The proposed development strikes the Commission as overuse of a very wet area, requiring engineered septic systems which may have a significant impact on wetlands and on the Harpers' well.
- 2) Development is likely to impact the Harper property by increasing runoff.
- 3) The Town should learn the location of wetlands on the Harper property and assess surface water flow onto it.
- 4) On the developer's map, wetland appears to occupy more of the open space dedication than the 28% allowed.

The Harpers and Mr. Boucher left the meeting.

b. **W1546 (Renwood Apts, 20 Dartmouth Rd).** A septic system is proposed to serve a laundry in Bldg. 20; it would be 66 ft from a wetland at its closest point. The system would be located upslope from the wetland, and considerable re-contouring of the slope is called for. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Kessel, Lehmann) to comment to the IWA as follows:

- 1) The Commission does not have enough information to rule out a significant wetlands

impact from this project. The proposed septic system is 66 ft from, and upslope of, a wetland. No information about the extent and functionality of this wetland is included in the application. There may be a potential for significant nutrient loading: the proposed system is much larger than one for a typical single-family home. Will it handle only gray water, or will toilets be connected to it? 2) From the map, it appears that the system could be moved farther away from the wetland; why isn't it feasible to do so?

**4. UConn Master Plan.** Four Commission members – Buck, Kessel, Lehmann, & Soares – attended a 16 December presentation on the draft of a new Master Plan for UConn. The Town Manager is asking for comments on the draft Plan by 16 January 2015.

Kessel circulated a draft of such comments for the Commission's consideration. 1) The Plan needs a more explicit statement of commitment to preserving farm- and forest-land outside the developed campus. The Board of Trustees' 14 January 1977 statement to this effect should be quoted. 2) Agricultural land controlled by UConn contributes significantly to the Town's rural character and should be protected for this reason and others. 3) Trees on campus (often sacrificed in the past) also need protection. 4) Replacing student apartments across S. Eagleville Rd from the Town Hall and Community Center with a 4,000-seat hockey rink is a bad idea. It would be more efficient and less disruptive to site this facility in the athletic quarter of the campus.

There was general agreement that these points should be made. Concerning 1), Lehmann noted that the rationale for the Plan's emphasis on containing future development within already developed areas (by renovating old buildings and inbuilding new ones) would appear to be something like the Trustees' 1977 statement. There was speculation that UConn's Administration might resist an explicit commitment to preservation as limiting its options (which of course is the whole point).

Concerning 3), Silander reported that UConn now has an Arboretum Committee to guard against loss of specimen trees. Lehmann observed that large trees are valuable campus amenities, whether or not they are specimen trees, and that the draft Plan doesn't seem to give them much respect (e.g., it's hard to see how Whitney Rd could be extended to Hillside Rd, as the Plan proposes for 2020-25, without taking out some large trees.)

Kessel was authorized to refine his draft comments for submission to the Town Manager. He will welcome suggestions on wording from Commission members before and after he does so.

**5. Fanwort control in Eagleville Lake.** The Town has received a grant to help finance fanwort control in Eagleville Lake, but it needs to come up with \$7K of its own money. Kessel thinks getting \$7K from the Open Space Fund is a bad idea: the Town should budget for fanwort control, if it believes it's worth doing, not divert money *sub rosa* from open space acquisition. Kaufman would like some direction from the Commission about employing the herbicide Clipper to control the aquatic weed. If there are concerns, they should be addressed before she takes the proposal to the Council. Facchinetti distributed Massachusetts guidelines for using this chemical, which limit treatments to once in four years.

**6. Mansfield Tomorrow.** The new Plan of Conservation and Development will be presented to committees on 28 January 2015. Comments from the Commission are due by the end of February.

**7. Adjourned** at 9:38p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 21 January 2015.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 21 December 2014; approved 21 January 2015.