

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 17 June 2015
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Aline Booth (Alt.), Joan Buck (Alt.), Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, Grant Meitzler, John Silander, Michael Soares. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn.
Others present: Jennifer Kaufman (Wetlands Agent); Bill & Joy St. Martin.

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:31p by Chair Quentin Kessel. Alternate Buck was designated a voting member for this meeting.

2. The draft **minutes** of the 20 May meeting were approved, with the slight change that Attachment 1 be re-titled “Scott Lehmann’s Report on 13 May 2015 IWA Field Trip”.

3. IWA referrals.

a. W1550 (St. Martin, 601 Storrs Rd). Bill St. Martin described the proposed project, referring to a large to-scale map of the site. He wishes to restore an old pond, now filled with silt, in a strip of wetland through which an intermittent stream flows. The pond area (approximately 400 ft²) would be temporarily dewatered to allow dredging. Approximately 580 yd³ of material would be excavated, using machinery outside the wetland to the extent possible, and piled to dry away from the wetland. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Silander, Buck) that the proposed project would have an impact on wetlands, but a positive one, inasmuch as it would restore a natural component of the wetland system. The St. Martins left the meeting.

b. W1551 (McDonald, 93 Candide La). The applicants propose to install a 35 ft diameter above-ground pool, 35 ft at its closest point from a wetland through which an intermittent stream flows. The site slopes toward the wetland and would need to be leveled. Water discharged from the pool into the wetland would be filtered to remove chlorine. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Soares, Silander) that this project is unlikely to have a significant impact on wetlands, provided standard sedimentation controls are in place during site preparation and installation and are left in place until the area is stabilized.

c. W1552 (Wasiele, 357 Gurleyville Rd). The applicants propose to add to their house a 19.7 x 20 ft bedroom, which, at its closest point, would be 60 ft from the center of an intermittent stream. Booth asked whether the addition would require designating a reserve septic area, noting that none is shown on the map. Kaufman replied that it would, and thought this area might be across the intermittent stream. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Kessel, Silander) to advise the IWA that:

Since the map provided does not indicate where the reserve septic area would be, the Commission does not have enough information to assess the wetlands impact of this project. A reserve septic system that involves crossing the intermittent stream could have a significant impact on wetlands.

4. PZC referral: PZC 1335 (Willard J. Stearns & Sons, Browns & Coventry Rds).

{Lehmann, who owns an adjoining property at 532 Browns Rd, did not participate in discussion of this item.} Town Planner Linda Painter has forwarded conceptual yield & layout plans for a

subdivision on 36.6 acres owned by Willard J. Stearns & Sons with frontage on Browns & Coventry Rds. Such plans are part of a pre-application process designed to elicit comments before detailed engineering plans are submitted.

The yield plan calls for nine lots, including one for an existing house at 522 Browns Rd. The layout plan reduces the number of new driveways from 8 to 3: one on Browns Rd serving a single house west of 542, and two common driveways from Coventry Rd serving 3 and 4 houses respectively. To access the house site on Lot 1, the 3-lot common driveway would cross the wetland that curves through the property from S to NW. The layout plan specifies 3.9 acres of dedicated open space at the corner of Browns and Coventry Rds, plus 10.9 acres of conservation easement, most of it in strips buffering the development from adjacent properties and from Coventry Rd. Kaufman indicated that the Town might build a short trail to a viewpoint in the dedicated open space, but that it would not propose any trails within conservation easements on private land.

Booth asked whether the proposed subdivision constituted a re-subdivision of the property, which would require a public hearing. Kaufman will find out.

Soares wondered why a layout with large lots served by common driveways qualifies as a “Conservation Subdivision,” when the houses could have been more closely clustered. The answer seems to be that the layout plan is better than the yield plan (e.g., in protecting more land with conservation easements).

The Commission agreed (without formal motion) to make the following comments about the conceptual layout plan:

- a. The layout plan does protect more open space than the yield plan and maintains a buffer along Coventry Rd with fewer driveway cuts.
- b. The layout plan does not promote conservation goals by clustering houses.
- c. Access to the house site on Lot 1 requires a wetlands crossing, a significant wetlands impact that is not consistent with the conservation goals of the shared driveway permission.
- d. Do the driveways shared by 3 and 4 houses provide adequate access for emergency vehicles?
- e. Joining the conservation easement along the SW boundary to the conservation easement adjacent to the open space dedication would (i) protect the watercourse (not shown on the map) connecting wetland on Coventry Rd to the swath of wetland curving from S-to-NW through the property and (ii) help avoid fragmentation of wildlife habitat.
- f. While not all watercourses are wetlands, they may contribute to the functioning of wetlands and should be shown on site maps.
- g. The Commission appreciates the opportunity to make comments on subdivision layout prior to the preparation of engineering plans.

5. Bicentennial Pond trail. The Town is re-applying for a DEEP Recreational Trails grant to construct a wheelchair-accessible trail, with amenities, around Bicentennial Pond. One section of it would largely coincide with Byron’s trail, which would be upgraded. Some open space money might be used to make up the Town’s 20% share of the cost, if the grant is awarded. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Soares, Buck) that this is a worthy project, which the Commission fully supports.

6. Agenda clean-up. The Commission agreed that agendas for its meetings should indicate what is likely to be discussed and, accordingly, agreed that only the following items under “Continuing Business” should be carried forward:

- Review of Monitoring Procedures for Town-Owned Easements

- Mansfield Tomorrow
- Town of Coventry/Mansfield Control of Fanwort in Eagleville Lake
- UConn Agronomy Farm

7. Storrs Downtown hazardous tree removal. Thirteen trees in the Storrs Center development have been identified as “hazardous” and are to be (or have been) removed. No one could tell from the map supplied just where they are (or were).

8. Adjourned at 9:15p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 15 July 2015.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 19 June 2015; approved 15 July 2015.