

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: Q. Kessel, E. King, M. Harper, C. Rittenhouse, J. Silander, M. Soares

Members Absent:

Alternates Present: M. Davis, W. Ouimet

Alternates Absent:

Staff Present: J. Kaufman

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Soares called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Members present are Kessel, King, Harper, Rittenhouse, Silander, Soares, and alternates Davis and Ouimet. Alternate Ouimet is seated for secretary extraordinaire Lehmann, whose 5th term expired last month.

ELECTION OF SECRETARY

Soares MOVED, Kessel seconded to nominate Rittenhouse as Secretary.

Motion PASSED 8-0-1 with Rittenhouse abstaining.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

- Robert (Bob) Sitkowski: Associate Director of Real Estate, UConn, and landowner in Town. Speaking to Item 6A. UConn is reviewing submitted materials. Initial review raised the following items:
 - UConn echoes LandTech review and acknowledge response from Applicant to the LandTech review.
 - John Knuff (Lawyer for Applicant, Item 6A) asked Sitkowski to hold the public comment since it pertains to an agenda item.
 - (discussion of procedure)
 - Proceeding with Comments from Sitkowski on LandTech review – suitability of storm drainage, sedimentation controls, lack of feasible and prudent alternative analysis (echoing LandTech's issues)
 - Comments from UConn: proximity to existing development (light, heat, pollutants), historical fill (compromised function and values already – suggest buffer of 75' with vegetation), and special concern species present on site. No vernal pool found, but wood frogs confirmed in wetlands raising question of potential for offsite vernal pool.
- Paul Ferri, UConn, pertaining to items 8A and 8B in our packet, is available for questions. Cons Comm had no questions at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Soares MOVED, Kessel seconded approval of the August 18, 2020 Special Meeting minutes as presented.

Motion PASSED (6-0-2) with King and Silander abstaining.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Application of Greg Anderson for Pond Dredging on Property Located at Wormwood Hill Road (Assessor's Parcel ID 5.51.1-6) File #W1615

Applicant Greg Anderson presented the setting for the pond, which was a watering area and sacrifice field for livestock historically. Pond has silted and is currently approximately 4' deep. Pond is covered in pond weeds now. Applicant seeks to dredge the pond and disperse silt on upland near the pond. Pond was last dredged in 2014 by applicant.

Cons Comm Members asked questions of Anderson regarding wetland delineation, timing of dredging, volume of sediment, disposition of sediment on upland within the upland review area, erosion and sedimentation controls, and intended plantings.

Kessel MOVED and Silander seconded that no significant impact is anticipated with appropriate sedimentation and erosion controls in place and if executed properly, with consideration for time of year to minimize impacts to amphibians and reptiles. [Discussion of Motion: King – check on the timing. Motion amended by Kessel to include timing.]

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Elevated Agenda Item Continuing Business A:

CONTINUING BUSINESS

A. W1614-Application of Haven Campus Communities for the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven new buildings with a five-story parking deck, paved parking areas and associated amenities. The parcels are located at 1753, 1733, and 1717 Storrs Road (Assessor's Parcel IDs 8.15.8, 8.15.9, and 8.15.10).

Present on Behalf of Applicant:

John Knuff, Attorney for Haven Campus Communities (Introduction to Presentation, began at 7:43 pm)

Chase Powell, , Presented some benefits of proposed project: reducing impervious area on site, filtering storm water which isn't being done currently.

Eric Davison, Registered Soil Scientist, Certified Wetland Scientist and Wildlife Biologist.

Presented an overview of the site walk, the vernal pool report, and answered questions from the Cons Comm members regarding current site conditions and their context in the local landscape and waterscape.

Jeff Bord, Professional Engineer at Bohler in Rocky Hill. Began ~8:00 pm. Presentation on Stormwater Management and BMPs being implemented. Bord noted no existing water quality structures in place, described three drainage areas, plan east, center, and west, and answered questions from the Cons Comm members regarding water management features of the plan, including soil erosion and sedimentation during construction.

Geoff Fitzgerald, Bohler: Answered questions from Cons Comm regarding groundwater level, soils, and the perched wetland/beaver dam.

Also present:

Robert (Rob) Pryor and Christopher (Chris) Allan, LandTech, Town's third-party reviewer of the Application: Answered questions from Cons Comm members regarding infiltration rate of basins, and clarified aspects of the review and response from Applicant.

Soares MOVED and Ouimet seconded that based on the information presented at this meeting, the project will reduce peak flow on the site, add stormwater management features, pre-treatment for suspended solids, floatables, trash, and oils, and generally improve water quality. Yet, approximately 1/3rd of the construction is in the regulated (Upland Review) area. We appreciate the LandTech review and Bohler working to resolve the issues raised. Recognizing issues of basin depth relative to wetland level and groundwater level that are being explored through additional testing, we identify the following for Inland Wetland Agency consideration:

- Areas of invasive species in need of treatment and management,
- Concern for steep slopes along the perimeter of built area, especially the western border of the property,
- Concern for minimal vegetative buffer along the stream that feeds the headwater wetland and the entire wetland edge, and recommend increasing the buffer width,
- Potential for a Conservation Easement and/or public access to protect the upland areas of this coldwater system and share its benefits with the public.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Returning to Agenda:

NEW BUSINESS

B. [Tabled for October Meeting] Impervious Cover-Impact to Groundwater

(pp 17-18 of <http://clear.uconn.edu/publications/journal/30-years-land-cover-changeCT-7-2020.pdf>)

C. Membership

The Cons Comm is seeking 1 new Alternate. Alternate Ouimet is under consideration for Member with Lehmann's departure.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Silander shared that the HEEP site has utility poles going in or being replaced. Silander notified Kaufman who reached out to a contact at Eversource. Town has no jurisdiction on this.

- Soares noted the Healthy Natchaug Watershed Plan and a plan review template that the Cons Comm may be interested in as ½ of Mansfield is within the watershed.
 - Kaufman will share information for an upcoming meeting via email.
- Soares noted a recent Op-Ed by Mansfield resident Dr. Prakash Kashwan entitled [“American Environmentalism’s Racist Roots Have Shaped Global Thinking about Conservation”](#).
 - Kaufman shared that the Town has a new Human Rights Commission.

COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to the communications listed in the Agenda, the following communications were noted:

- Kaufman shared there is a Violation in progress that is being addressed.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission is scheduled for October 21, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:



Chadwick Rittenhouse
Secretary