

**Alton Conservation Commission
Minutes of May 25, 2006**

Approved by the Conservation 6-8-06

Members Present: Co-Chair, Justine Gengras; Co-Chair, Earl Bagley; David Lawrence, Roger Burgess, Thomas Hoopes, Gene Young, Alan Sherwood as Selectmen's Representative

Others Present: Jack Szymplenski – Benchmark Engineering, Don Prudhomme, Steve Prudhomme, and Jeremy Dube – Chairman of the Planning Board

Call Meeting to Order:

Co-Chairman J. Gengras called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion made by T. Hoopes and seconded by D. Lawrence to include the written sections. The motion passed with all in favor.

Public Input:

Jeremy Dube – Chairman of the Planning Board – Jeremy showed at the meeting to thank J. Gengras and E. Bagley for attending the last Planning Board meeting and giving input. Jeremy encourages everyone to go to the Planning Board meetings. He also would like to see more participation between the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of minutes from May 11, 2006 meeting.

D. Lawrence moved to accept the minutes as written, second by T. Hoopes. The motion passed with all in favor.

Presentations/Consultations:

1. Jack Szymplenski – Benchmark Engineering for Timber Ridge Subdivision
Jack gave the Commission a new deed to review with requested revisions.
J. Gengras let Jack know that the Conservation Commission did not see the deed until late March of 2006 and the Selectmen also has to approve the deed.
Jack doesn't know why that was because the Planning Board had the deed since the summer of 2005.

Motion made by J. Gengras to accept the easement deed and seconded by R. Burgess, providing Attorney Sessler reviews and approves. NSTS Development, Timber Ridge Subdivision easement extension subject to approval by Attorney Sessler.

E. Bagley – abstained and J. Gengras, R. Burgess, D. Lawrence, and Gene Young in favor.

T. Hoopes stepped down

Timber Ridge Subdivision. J. Szymplenski explained that the terrain is steep on the lots and the driveways are long. Timber Ridge is looking to combine 4 single driveways in to 2-shared driveways. A variance is needed for the shared driveways with less grades and it would be environmentally friendly. The plan is approved for 4 driveways. Timber Ridge is looking for support from the Conservation Commission for the 2-shared driveways on the steep slopes.

A. Sherwood – having shared driveways now might not be an issue but eventually it could be.

Jack – initially the Conservation Commission supported the shared driveways.

J. Gengras – given the steep terrain, I would like to see 2- shared driveways instead of the 4 individual driveways.

Motion made by R. Burgess to support the 2-shared driveways instead of the 4 individual driveways, seconded by D. Lawrence. Motion passed with all in favor.

Standard Dredge and Fill Applications:

1. C&D Interests Map 15 Lots 56, 56-3, & 60 – Construction of a 19-Lot subdivision (continued from 5-11-06 meeting).

Discussion:

T. Hoopes stepped down.

J. Gengras and E. Bagley went to the Planning Board meeting and gave comments as part of the public input addressing Commission concerns about the amount of alteration terrain, hydrology, drainage and erosion control. The way the plans are drawn there is no way to monitor the proposed voluntary easement property without trespassing on other people's land. NH Soils provided a draft easement deed and if the project design changes than they might have to go into mitigation and they would also need a waiver length. The road that was moved out of the wetlands impact is now on a steep slope. Conservation's issue is the steep slope not the road length. If the land is transferred to the town as currently proposed it would be transferred as a landlocked parcel.

Can the Planning Board create a lot with no road frontage?

A. Sherwood noted that the easement land could be declared common land with each owner paying taxes on their share of the interest. There is a Planning Board site walk scheduled for Thursday, June 8, 2006 for this subdivision.

The following are comments are submitted to NHDES regarding the Norby Subdivision for the Standard Dredge and Fill application.

Re: NH Wetlands Bureau Standard Permit Application #2006-00868

Carl Norby & David Reynolds, Tax Map 15, Lots, 56. 56-3 & 60; proposal to fill 7,348 sq ft [with bank impact] for a 21 Lot Subdivision

Dear Ms. Degler,

The Alton Conservation has the following comments on the above referenced wetlands permit application:

Background:

Project representatives attended two Commission meetings to explain the project and answer questions.

The project area lies within the Hurd Brook drainage area. This area is recognized as a significant wetlands and wildlife area in Alton's Natural Resource Inventory. The project parcel is part of a large, unfragmented, undeveloped area of forests, streams and wetlands, known locally for its abundant wildlife habitat. It includes a large, significant wetland complex associated with the Hurd Brook drainage as well as many other wetlands of varying sizes. Terrain in the project area is very irregular with moderate to excessively steep slopes.

Project Plans:

You will note Lot numbers on plans submitted with the above application are not consistent between pages 1 & 2, scale 1":100 and the remaining pages, scale: 1":50. The Commission requested and received corrected maps at their May 11 meeting. We have enclosed a 11" x 17"(reduced sized) set of the corrected plans with our comments.

Field inspection:

The Commission inspected the project area May 8, 2006 with project wetland scientists, Cindy Balcus and Tracy Tarr and the project engineer. The inspection was limited to areas of direct wetlands impact. The centerline for the proposed project access road is not staked, hence we did not walk the route of the proposed access road.

Observations:

1. The wetlands we observed appear to be accurately delineated in the field and accurately represented on the project plans.
2. The site has very irregular terrain with moderate to excessively steep slopes and diverse wetlands. Exposed soils in perk tests suggest that site soils are sandy and range from sand with rocks to areas with 100% loose sand, like beach sand.
3. We saw game trails and numerous signs of moose while walking the site.
 - The substandard silt fence on the south side the current access road entrance off Old Wolfeboro Road, along the north side of a wetland [Lot #3] should be replaced and properly installed.

Wetlands:

There are many wetlands in the project area, widely distributed and of varying sizes and types. The project attempts to minimize avoid wetlands impacts by proposing a long access road which runs south and east through the parcel. The "trade off" is that excessively steep-sloped areas are impacted to achieve this end. The road proposal is dependent on receiving a waiver for road length from the Alton Planning Board. The

Planning Board is considering the request, but the waiver has not yet been granted.

- Can this project can be implemented without significant degradation of some of the wetland areas beyond proposed impacts, particularly considering the steep slopes scattered about within the project area and construction impacts located in very close proximity to wetlands? [See Plans and locations where direct wetlands impacts occur or where road/driveway cuts are very close to wetlands.]

Changes in site hydrology

The project road and lot driveways will require an enormous amount of land alternation and dissection of steep slopes. This will significantly change hydrology on parts of the site. The access road changes site hydrology, dissects small drainage basins and invades excessively steep-sloped areas.

Proposed driveways also invade steep slopes to access desirable building locations. Each driveway cut creates a “channel” for water to flow down to the access road.

- How will runoff from proposed sloping driveways be handled?
- The Commission recommends that specific driveway locations and impacts be considered in assessing site hydrology.

Erosion control

Site soils viewed in perk tests are rocky sand to very loose “beach” sand. With all the steep slopes, erosion control and site stabilization during construction are a big issue, particularly those areas in proximity to wetlands and stream drainages.

The project Wetlands Application item 3.3.2 Minimization states: “The project proposes to incorporate 2:1 side slopes where feasible to minimize impacts to the greatest extent possible.”

- Are 2:1 slopes practical, given the erosion-prone sandy soils at this site?
- The Commission recommends no clear-cutting or stump removal on steep slopes except where absolutely necessary to help prevent slope erosion.

Water quality

The Stormwater Drainage report (p. 14) says: “The presence of wetlands and steep slopes also reduce the ability to provide traditional treatment basins, swales and underground storage.”

- The application does not address winter snow melt and salt-laden runoff from the access road and sloping driveways during periods when the ground is frozen. The treatment swales will not maintain water quality if runoff occurs when the ground is frozen. Degraded runoff is a common occurrence throughout the winter and early spring.
- The Commission recommends that measures be required to prevent degraded stormwater from the road and driveways entering the project area streams and wetlands.

Aesthetic interests of the general public

- Will the striking view from Rt. 28 across the large wetland to unbroken forest beyond be substantially marred by the visibility of houses constructed in the proposed project?
- Can "no cut" areas be established in appropriate locations to screen the houses and protect the view on Rt. 28?

The proposed conservation easement

The landowner proposes a voluntary conservation easement on the Hurd Brook wetlands complex. At this time, project wetlands impacts are less than 10,000 sq. ft, and NH Wetlands Bureau does not require wetlands mitigation.

- The Commission agrees that the proposed easement is an environmentally significant area and should be protected and preserved as open space.

The easement proposal, as currently drawn, has a problem, which needs to be resolved. Access to it will be blocked on all sides by private property. We learned at the Planning Board meeting that it is current "attached for Planning purposes to Lot 6." This creates a problem for any entity who holds the easement, as it cannot be accessed or monitored without trespassing through private property.

- Should this project change and the easement considered for mitigation, the Commission recommends resolution of the access issue prior to execution of any easement deed.

Thank you for permitting us to comment on this application.

Justine Gengras, Co-Chairman

cc: Carl Norby
Cindy Balcius, NH Soils Consultants

No action taken by the Commission. T. Hoopes rejoined the meeting.

Notification of Routine Roadway and Railway Maintenance Activities

None at this time

Permit By Notification

1. Thomas Pricione Map 33 Lot 24 – Replace (2) dock piling pushed by ice. Impact 2 sq. ft. J. Gengras – Co-Chair sign 5/24/06 FYI
No action taken by the Commission
2. Mildred Johnson Trustee Map 63 Lot 18 – Repair existing crib (7'x24') down to bottom log. Replace decking on 8'x26' dock. Impact ~208 sq. ft. J. Gengras – Co-Chair signed 5/24/06 - FYI

No action taken by the Commission

Minimum Impact Expedited

1. Ellen Koehler Map 47 Lot 7 – Repair a grandfathered breakwater to include 3:1 slope, 6 ft. gap between the shore. Rebuild a grandfathered patio area and perched beach.

Discussion:

The Commission discussed the project and found that it appeared to meet NH Wetlands Bureau rules.

Motion by R. Burgess to direct a Co-Chair to sign application, seconded by T. Hoopes. The motion passed with all in favor.

Commissioner Reports:

1. Norby Easement Discussion - **The proposed conservation easement**
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No action taken by the Commission

Other Business:

1. Michael Cornelissen Map 5 Lot 66-2 & 66-3 – Driveway Application with DOT concerns. A request was made for the secretary to fax the letter to Attorney Sessler for comments.

No action taken by the Commission

2. T. Hoopes – Eley Comments – a complaint from the property owner, Frederick Eley that the property was really wet and wasn’t sure if it was from the beaver dam. T. Hoopes provided background on the history of the beaver dam activity on the Eley property.

No action taken by the Commission

3. A. Sherwood – Household Hazardous Waste – D. Lawrence volunteered for August 19th and T. Hoopes volunteered for September 16th and October 21st.

No action taken by the Commission

4. J. Gengras – Belknap Mountain Range – There is a meeting at the Cooperative Extension Services in Laconia on 6-29-06 in the Federal Building. The following are interested in going: T. Hoopes, Jeremy Dube, David Lawrence, E. Bagley, and A. Sherwood. J. Gengras will forward the original e-mail with meeting details to those interested in attending. She will also send contact information to Nanci Mitchell, Gilmanton Conservation Commission, who is coordinating the meeting.

No action taken by the Commission

5. Conservation Land Signs – J. Gengras documented the signs that are in the attic at Town Hall and what signs are still needed for the Town conservation areas. D. Lawrence and T. Hoopes are willing to work on the sign wording and how many additional signs are needed.

No action taken by the Commission

6. Avery Hill Road Improvement Projects – Conservation Commission was not noticed for the trees to be cut on Avery Hill Road. The trees that are to be removed are marked. The issue the Commission has is with the few trees that are marked for cutting that sit under the Avery Hill Cemetery. The plans don't show the contours or the tree cutting. Ken Roberts is willing to work people on their concerns.

No action taken by the Commission

Correspondence:

1. FYI – Frederick Gallant Map 38 Lot 27-1 – Wetlands Bureau Complaint
No action taken by the Commission
2. David Vincent Map 74 Lot 22 – Permit Approval
No action taken by the Commission
3. 2006 Coastal Illicit Discharge Elimination, Municipal Storm Sewer Mapping and Illicit Discharge Surveys Grant.
No action taken by the Commission
4. Wetlands Restoration Monitoring Report for Hannaford Brothers Company at Homestead Place - FYI
No action taken by the Commission
5. Clay Point Homeowners Association Map 18 Lot 36-1
No action taken by the Commission

Adjournment:

Motion made by R. Burgess and seconded by J. Gengras to adjourn at 9:15pm. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Fortin
Secretary to the Conservation Commission