

2024 DEC 19 AM 9:30

REC'D BY: *mc*

**SUFFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MEETING OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2024**

PRESENT:

**Glenn Neilson, Vice Chairman
Norm John Noble
Ray Wilcox
Beth Fanous
Gary Phelps
Tom Elmore
Jessica McCue**

ACTING TOWN ENGINEER:

Dana Steele

CONSULTANT:

Keith Morris

CALL MEETING TO ORDER- 7:00 P.M.

Vice Chairman Neilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and stated that Chairman Christian will not be attending the meeting. He then stated that he is turning the chair over to Secretary Noble as he is third in charge. Consultant Morris read the agenda. Acting chair Noble stated that Alternate commissioners McCue and Elmore shall be voting members in place of Commissioner Reilly and Chairman Christian who are not present.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION:

Southwick Conservation Commission

Norm Cheevers, member of the Southwick Conservation Commission, addressed the commission. Mr. Cheevers presented a draft pamphlet that addresses the jurisdiction of both the Southwick and Suffield conservation commissions in regard to Congamond Lakes. He is hoping that the two towns can finalize the pamphlet and send it out to the residents on the Congamond Lakes in both Southwick and Suffield to be used as information regarding what is allowed within 100 feet of the lake and what would require a permit from the respective commissions.

The hope is to have the pamphlet finalized and approved by the Board of Selectman in each town. Southwick would pay for the production and mailing of the pamphlets.

A brief discussion followed and the commission will discuss the proposal with the Suffield Board of Selectman.

Solar Farm – Southeast corner of Hickory and North Streets.

This discussion will be tabled to a future meeting

APPROVAL OF THE 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

After a brief discussion Vice Chairman Neilson made a motion, seconded by commissioner McCue, to approve the 2025 meeting schedule of the commission. The motion was carried unanimously.

PLAN ACCEPTANCE:

Permit # 1718 – Burke (owner) – SFH – Lakeview Drive. This property is located at 407 Lakeview Drive. Assessor’s Map 10H, Block 3, Lot 161.

Consultant Morris presented the application for 407 Lakeview Drive for the demolition of an existing structure and construction of a new single-family home on the same footprint. After a brief discussion commissioner Phelps made a motion, seconded by commissioner Wilcox, to accept the application and put it on the agenda for the January 14, 2025 meeting of the commission for a possible decision. The motion was carried unanimously.

Permit # 1719 – Roy (owner) – Garage – Thompsonville Road. This property is located at 331 Thompsonville Road. Assessor’s Map 52H, Block 45, Lot 19.

Consultant Morris presented the application for 331 Thompsonville Road for the construction of a garage. After a brief discussion Vice Chairman Neilson made a motion, seconded by commissioner Phelps, to accept the application and put it on the agenda for the January 14, 2025 meeting of the commission for a possible decision. The motion was carried unanimously.

Permit # 1720 – Burrell (owner) – Site work – Forest Road. This property is located at 623 Forest Road. Assessor’s Map 1H, Block 1, Lot 28.

Consultant Morris presented the application for 623 Forest Road for site work. After a brief discussion commissioner Phelps made a motion, seconded by commissioner Fanous, to accept the application and put it on the agenda for the January 14, 2025 meeting of the commission for a possible decision. The motion was carried unanimously.

Permit # 1721 – Egan – Retaining Wall – Lakeview Drive. This property is located at 485 Lakeview Drive. Assessor’s Map 10H, Block 3, Lot 173.

This application will be tabled until a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

PUBLIC HEARING (Cont. 8:00 P.M.):

Permit # 1715 – MJL Realty Investments, LLC - (owner) – Phase 2, Eastwoods Active Adult Housing – East Street South. This property is located on the west side of East Street South, nearest intersection being Juniper Lane. Assessor's Map 78H, Block 47, Lot 91 D.

Consultant Morris gave the Commission an update since the last meeting on October 22, 2024. At the last meeting there was a discussion as to whether or not the application was a renewal of the original permit, which by case law had to be approved if there are no major changes under the jurisdiction of the commission or whether the commission could act on the application as a new filing. Consultant Morris referenced a letter from Town Counsel, Blackburn, Donnelly, & Pabon, dated November 8, 2024 and entered it into the record. In short, the opinion of Town Counsel is that if the Commission finds that there has not been a material change from the original application, it must grant Eastwood's application and if they find there has been a material change to the subject property or to the application then they must treat it as if it were a new application to the commission. Mr. Morris stated that Town Counsel also recommended that the Commission hire an outside consultant to review the project and render an opinion on potential environmental impacts and whether or not they feel there has been a material change from the original proposal.

Consultant Morris also stated that at the last meeting, there were numerous questions from the public regarding drainage and therefore the Commission asked acting Town Engineer Dana Steele from J. R. Russo & Associates to attend tonight's meetings to present his review of the proposed drainage system on behalf of the Town.

Mr. Steele went over his review in detail along with the changes he requested from the applicant's engineer to comply with the current stormwater regulations. These changes include enlarging the stormwater basin and incorporating an infiltration system with a liner with 36" of gravel and a perforated outlet pipe within the gravel. The basin requires attention if the stormwater does not drain from the basin within 48 hours after a storm event ends.

The basin shall be used as a sedimentation basin during construction and will be finalized after the site has been stabilized. Commissioner Wilcox asked about inspections of the basin. Mr. Steele stated that during construction and once finalized it must be inspected after every one inch or more storm event and/or if it is not working property.

Commissioner Phelps asked how the basin would function and commissioner Fanous asked what the lifespan of the liner is. Mr. Steele went over how the basin would function with stormwater filtering through the gravel and into the perforated pipe which leads to the outlet structure. The liner will be under the gravel and should last forever since it is not exposed to the elements.

Acting Chairman Noble opened the meeting to the public:

Public:

Rich Zipoli – 107 Juniper Lane – Asked where the stormwater was draining to. Mr. Steele stated that it is draining to the wetlands.

Diane Zipoli – 107 Juniper Lane – Confirmed that if the water in the basin did not drain within 48 hours after a storm event it needed attention. He is very concerned with who is monitoring the basin. Mr. Steele explained the process in detail.

Dave Wedderspoon – 109 Juniper Lane – Is concerned with how snowfall impacts the function of the basin. Mr. Steele stated that the stormwater manual does not recommend removing snow from the basin.

Ann Counos – 23 Greenbriar Drive – Had questions regarding the liner in the basin which were addressed by Mr. Steele.

Rick Centore – 25 Greenbriar Drive – Is concerned that there are more trees and the original permit had a condition where trees of a certain size would try and be saved and were supposed to be tagged before construction.

Attorney for the applicant, David Sherman addressed the public and the Commission. He stated that the revisions in the storm drainage system based on the new stormwater regulations are an improvement to stormwater quality over the original proposal. He also stated that inspections and maintenance of the stormwater basin would be the responsibility of a separate homeowner's association formed for the new project.

Consultant Morris stated that the wetland mitigation area was not constructed nor was the Army Corps of Engineers contacted to review the original permit as required in the permit issued in 2003. However, the current applicant will construct the Army Corp and construct the wetland mitigation area. He referenced a letter from the applicant's soil scientist, William Jackson, dated December 10, 2024.

A discussion followed on the hiring of an outside consultant to review the application on behalf of the Commission. Consultant Morris stated that he has two estimates, from REMA Ecological Services and Martin Brogie Environmental Services and that both are very similar in price. After discussion Vice Chairman Neilson made a motion, seconded by commissioner Phelps, to retain REMA Ecological Services based on their past experience working in the Town. The motion carried unanimously.

Consultant Morris then stated that the permission of the applicant is needed in order to extend the public hearing until the January 14, 2025 meeting of the Commission. Attorney David Sherwood granted permission on behalf of the applicant to continue the hearing until the January 14, 2025 meeting.

Vice Chairman Neilson then made a motion, seconded by commissioner Phelps to continue the public hearing until the January 14, 2025 meeting of the Commission at 7:30 P.M. The motion was carried unanimously.

CONSULTANT'S REPORT:

Consultant Morris informed the Commission that the applicant for 1500 Hill Street has withdrawn his application and will resubmit once he has approval from the state regarding a composting plan. The timeframe for the Commission to make a decision was running out and the applicant is still working with the State.

Consultant Morris then presented a solar array plan being proposed for Suffield Academy. After discussion the Commission will review the project under the application process for a permit as they did for the previous solar array.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 22, 2024 MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by commissioner Fanous and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Fanous made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by commissioner McCue. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by
Norm John Noble
Recording Secretary

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