



**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Monday, April 24th, 2017**  
**6:30 P.M.**

**Town Hall – Lower Level Meeting Room**

Present: MD: Marshall Dennis  
CP: Christopher Picone  
AH: Andrew Henderson  
LC: Linda Couture

**6:30 PM: Agenda Review/General Discussion**

MD opened the meeting of the Ashburnham Conservation Commission under the MA Wetland Protection Act, M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, and in accordance with the Ashburnham Wetlands Protection Bylaw and associated Rules and Regulations.

**Public Meetings/Hearings:**

**6:35 PM – Notice Of Intent – Cushing Academy Dining Hall Addition and Renovations (Map 21, Parcel 106):** This NOI is for the construction of a Dining Hall addition, renovations and additions to Ashburnham House (including student/faculty housing), as well as site grading within the Riverfront Area (RFA) of a perennial stream.

In attendance were Brian Milisci (BM: Whitman and Bingham) and Sean Donnelly (SD: CSL Consulting representing Cushing. Also in attendance was Bettyna Donelson (BD) representing the Ashburnham Historical Society.

MD requested a site visit following this meeting, which was agreed to by Cushing's representatives and scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) at 10 AM.

BM presented the project plans. The Ashburnham House building needs to be upgraded to be brought up to fire codes. The changes will also improve the student/faculty ratio in the dorm, and add ADA accessibility. The "servery" and kitchen will be brought onto the same floor.

A campus-wide plan also was presented indicating the total RFA, as was a table listing previous developments on-campus and associated RFA impacts. In this regard, BM claimed that, in reality, there are not clear property lines on the campus as it is all in "common ownership."

- However, the Assessor maps show the campus separated into distinct lots. As such, to comply with the State wetland regulations, it may be necessary to calculate the total RFA and project-related RFA impacts solely on the Ashburnham House lot as designated by the Town Assessors. MD will clarify the appropriate approach by Thursday's field visit.

BM then discussed various development-related alternatives and the RFA impacts associated with each option. He also noted that the preferred option only increases the impervious area within the campus-wide RFA from 0.5% to 1.8%, with most of the increase occurring in the outer riparian zone. Further, all RFA impacts will be to existing impervious surfaces and maintained lawn areas. Project implementation will not affect any forest land.

MD presented a letter from the Ashburnham Historical Commission, noting that demolition of the Stone Building is subject to the historical buildings 'Demolition Delay Bylaw. Consequently, a Public Hearing on the matter will be required. BM noted that the demolition permit has been submitted to the Building Inspector, which triggers a limited time before the hearing must be held. The burden now is on the Historical Commission to schedule the hearing. Regardless, BM acknowledged that no demolition can begin until the hearing has concluded.

BD asked about the possibility of moving the Stone house closer to Route 12. SD noted that such an action would be both complicated and challenging. But, if permitted to be demolished, SD stated that the Historical Commission would be free to remove anything considered of historic significance. SD noted, however, that the interior had been renovated, so there may not be much of historic value.

Other comments/responses are as follows:

- MD asked about the location of the stream as shown on the project plans. BM assured the Commission that the stream as depicted on the plan is accurate.
- MD noted that the Site Utility Plan filed with the Commission is missing the proposed development and stormwater management plan. BM responded that those particular CAD layers were accidentally 'turned off' during printing, and that the Plan will be revised and submitted to the Commission. To further address this issue, BM distributed a small-scale Site Utility Plan showing the proposed building addition, as well as the stormwater management system.
- In response, MD stated that a formal Stormwater Management Plan addressing compliance with the State Water Quality Standards had not been filed with the NOI. BM stated that the Plan had been prepared and that 2 copies would be provided to the Commission.
- MD subsequently noted that the small-scale plan showed a drainage pipe from the proposed underground stormwater storage area that apparently discharged in front of Cooke Hall. BM explained that the plan was in error and that, in fact, the extension of this pipe to its actual point of discharge needs to be added to the plan.
- MD noted that on the Site Permitting Plan, there was a label associated with the parking area behind Ashburnham House that stated "Existing Drainage Not Known, May Req[ui]re] New Stormwater Drains & Piping". BM noted there was just 'over-the shoulder' drainage proposed for that location. Therefore, MD requested that the label be removed.
- Since none was provided with the NOI, MD also requested a planting plan for the large areas of shrubs, trees, etc. to be landscaped within the riverfront area.
- MD further noted that the plans indicated differing locations for the proposed propane tanks and requested that this issue be resolved.

- AH questioned why the location of the proposed addition couldn't be shifted to avoid the Stone House and also preclude RFA impacts. BM stated that he would review this issue with the building architect, but that he believed that such a shift would block the pedestrian flow into the main entry to the building.
- CP questioned whether 2 floors in the dining hall would make more sense since it would reduce the building footprint in the RFA. He acknowledged that two levels in the dining area likely would increase the project cost, but that the added expense also might be offset by a smaller addition.
- MD asked that W&B refer to RFA performance standards in the State wetland regulations and that and put in writing how they are complying with each standard. Such an RFA compliance statement will assist DEP's review of the project.

MD stated that there was no need to adjust the plans until after the site walk scheduled for Thursday (April 27<sup>th</sup>) at 1:30 PM.

The applicants requested that the Hearing be continued to May 8, 6:35 PM.

MD motioned to continue the Hearing to May 8, 2017.

AH seconded.

Approved 4 – 0.

In addition, MD requested that the silt fence on the Cushing dirt pile adjacent to Route 101 be repaired, or an enforcement order will be issued. SD assured the Commission that it will be done by "the end of this week."

#### **Guest & Visitors**

None scheduled.

#### **Other Commission Business/Administration:**

Certificate of Compliance issued for 10 Forristall Road. The work was never done.

The Commission received a letter from a citizen complaining about the piles of sand and salt near a stream at the proposed DPW site on Platt and Williams Roads. MD and/or RT will investigate.

The Commission also received a letter of complaint about destruction of trees and possible dumping at 30 Water Street. RT will investigate.

MD noted that RT had issued a Determination of Negligible Impact for 139 Ashby Road. (new well).

MD further noted that RT had issued a Determination of Negligible Impact for 205 Ashby Road. (repair wall and improve driveway grade).

MD motioned to adjourn.

LC seconded.

Approved 4 – 0.

8:00 Adjourned.