

## **Hanover Conservation Commission Minutes, February 13, 2013**

Members present: Ruth Bleyler, Edwin Chamberlain (chair), James Kennedy, Douglas McIlroy (scribe), John Trummel

Staff present: Vicki Smith

Others: Russ Rohloff, Perry Seale, Paul Tougas, Richard Whitmore, Roy Schiff, Ellen Arnold, Adair Mulligan, Nancy Collier

### **Hypertherm wetlands application**

Kennedy recused himself, as he has consulted for the applicant. He wished, however, to make some professional observations about the application, to which neither the commission nor the applicant objected.

Chamberlain had attended a site visit and the staff review of the project.

Russ Rohloff of Pathways presented plans to repave parking lots and driveways at their Great Hollow Road locations. In addition the project would provide ADA parking near one building, pave the connecting path and add turn-arounds to two driveways. Existing surfaces of pavers, gravel and hardpack have either failed or proved difficult to maintain. All will be imperviously paved. Swales and bioretention basins will be constructed to mitigate runoff, as requested by Peter Kulbacki. Much of the project falls within wetland buffer areas.

Kennedy said that a high water table will impair the functioning of swales and suggested that a constructed wetland instead of one swale would provide better treatment and habitat than a mowed swale. Rohloff objected to the prospect of adding to the already extensive wetlands on the property and said the habitat gain would be negligible.

Chamberlain advised the use of geosynthetic fabric to bar underlying muck from percolating into the base course. This would add cost, he said, but save in the long run by preventing frost damage.

Kennedy pointed out that one bioretention basin could endanger adjacent shallow-rooted pines and that the other could interfere with use of a nearby volleyball court and urged that alternative locations be considered.

The sitting commissioners did not deem these comments to be crucial. McIlroy moved that the Commission support the application. Bleyler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Dartmouth College crew dock wetlands application**

Kennedy returned to voting status.

Roy Schiff of Milone and MacBroom presented plans to extend the crew dock, pave an existing gravel driveway down to the dock, remove a 35-cubic yard deposit of gravel that had eroded from the driveway into the river, replace a paved ditch with a vegetation, and create a raingarden to retain and treat the first inch of stormwater that enters the project area from a 1.7-acre watershed above.

Schiff described piping of overflow from the raingarden and runoff from the swale into the river. Silt from the raingarden will be trapped in a catch basin to be cleaned annually. Velocity will be

limited by a small-diameter, low-incline final section of the pipe, capable of handling a 25-year storm. Larger storms will overflow a lower catch basin. Due to the raingarden, the total volume at the outfall will be less than at present.

McIlroy objected to the term “raingarden”, as the proposed basin lacks an appropriate subbase and underdrain. He did not want to set a precedent of blessing lesser measures as raingardens. It was agreed that this feature is intermediate between raingarden and detention basin, not exactly described by traditional nomenclature.

Kennedy pointed out that the gravel deposit serves to stabilize the bank. Its removal would expose a concrete pad at the shoreline to undermining by the fluctuating river. A cross-section in the plans fails to show how this threat would be averted. Chamberlain added that the cross-section should show water levels.

Chamberlain asked about infiltration in the stormwater treatment area (aka raingarden). Rohloff said the infiltration rate had been estimated from the soils map. Chamberlain warned of the hazards of making a bad guess, and recalled the massive bank failure at Rivercrest where a basin was perched at the top, somewhat as here.

Realizing there were inadequate data and calculations to judge the safety and effectiveness of the stormwater treatment area, the Commission left resolution of the issue up to DES. Kennedy proposed stipulating that the design comply with DES Alteration of Terrain rules. Ellen Arnold of Dartmouth Real Estate objected to acquiescing to a requirement whose implications are not understood, and said a small project should not be burdened with rules intended for much larger ones. Conformance with DES Water Quality Volume design guidelines was proposed instead, without objection.

Kennedy moved, with Bleyler seconding, that the application be supported, provided:

- 1) That the stormwater treatment area meets current NH DES water quality volume design guidelines.
- 2) That the details of the construction at the riverfront be clarified relative to the water level and reference line.
- 3) That the riverbank be stabilized in the area of the concrete pad.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **South Esker MOU**

Adair Mulligan represented the Hanover Conservancy for a discussion of a draft memorandum of understanding among the Town, the Conservancy, and Richard Bower about placing a conservation easement on this property. Mulligan and Smith explained that, besides adding protection for the land, the easement would clarify various ambiguities arising from the original purchase by the Town from Bower with the assistance of the Conservancy (then known as the Hanover Conservation Council). The intent is to ask Town Meeting to authorize the Select Board to grant the easement.

The MOU draft specifies what the various parties will do in connection with establishing an easement, and lists particular provisions that various parties deem important to be included. Chamberlain said a prohibition of picnic facilities is for the benefit of neighbor Bower, who wants to discourage possibly rowdy parties. Structures would be prohibited, with the exception

of lean-to, dock, or observation deck. McIlroy thought it inconsistent to ban picnic tables and permit lean-tos, which were accordingly struck.

McIlroy moved to forward to the Select Board a request for an authorizing warrant article. Bleyler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Smith announced that Commission members are invited to a neighborhood meeting about the proposal, to be held at Bower's home on March 11.

### **Trails Committee**

McIlroy reported:

There is lots of timber down on the Ridge Trail. A major work party is planned for May 14.

John Taylor has arranged with Jeanie Kornfeld for the Hanover High environmental club to install and repair timberwork on the River Trail as an Earth Day project.

The committee will fight sign pollution at Balch Hill trailheads. At Hemlock Road an ugly pole that bears three disparate signs will be replaced by an unobtrusive pole with consistent signage. At Grasse Road the town sign will be removed, letting the Conservancy's kiosk mark the entrance. In return, the committee will ask the Conservancy to name all three owners of Balch Hill on the kiosk. Mulligan said that information is already there. The committee also recommends removing two more signs: a trail-name sign that could be replaced by a you-are-here indicator on the kiosk map, and a no-hunting sign that duplicates another just 50 feet away.

### **Open Space Committee**

Chamberlain reported:

Discussions about the Tug Hill easement continue with Barry Shuster, who represents the Manegolds. Besides laying out boundaries on the ground, the committee wants to assure that any new construction, like the existing house, does not protrude above the ridge line.

On March 25 the Select Board will hold a public hearing about partitioning the Dana Preserve.

The committee worked on the South Esker MOU discussed above.

A Hayes/Trescott management plan is in the works. Public input will be heard at 7PM at the March meeting of the Commission, to be held in Trumbull Hall.

### **Approval of minutes**

Bleyler moved that this agenda item be deferred until the March meeting. Chamberlain seconded. The motion passed unanimously.