

OFFICIAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

December 8, 2014

S. Couture called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Steve Couture, Chair; Cindy Robertson, Vice-Chair; David Hess, member; Phil Fitandes, member; Todd Lizotte, Town Council Rep.; Frank Kotowski, Planning Board Rep.

Excused: JoCarol Woodburn, member

Public Input

None.

Meeting Minutes

C. Robertson motioned to approve the meeting minutes for November 10, 2014. Seconded by T. Lizotte. Motion passed. F. Kotowski abstained.

Non-Public Meeting Minutes

C. Robertson motioned to approve the non-public meeting minutes for July 14, 2014. Seconded by F. Kotowski. Motion passed. T. Lizotte abstained.

C. Robertson motioned to approve the non-public meeting minutes for September 8, 2014. Seconded by T. Lizotte. Motion passed. D. Hess abstained.

Consensus to keep the July 14, 2014 and September 8, 2014 non-public meeting minutes sealed.

Appointments

a. Nick Golon, TFMoran, Industrial Park Drive – Special Exception

- **General Electric Aviation, 30 Industrial Park Drive, Map 18, Lot 43) A Special Exception is requested from Article 18, Section E.1.(a) and G.2.(a) of the Zoning Ordinance to fill approximately 2,453 square feet of wetlands and impact 17,385 square feet of its associated buffer relative to**

their proposal to discontinue a portion of Industrial Park Drive and expand GE Aviation Building #2.

- **NH Business Finance Authority, 21 Industrial Park Drive, Map 24, Lot 34) A Special Exception is requested from Article 18, Section E.1.(a) and G.2.(a) of the Zoning Ordinance to fill approximately 2,453 square feet of wetlands and impact 17,385 square feet of its associated buffer relative to their proposal to discontinue a portion of Industrial Park Drive and expand GE Aviation Building #2**

D. Coburn: My name is Dave Coburn. I'm an employee of GE Aviation on Industrial Park Drive. I'm here with Nick Golon from TFMoran to discuss a project I'm working on with General Electric. We have an aging workforce and an aging product line, which is deteriorating over the next 5 to 10 years. I've been presented with an opportunity to backfill that work and keep these jobs in Hooksett, and keep us as a prime employer in Hooksett for quite some time. As part of this project we do need to expand onto our facility. We've invested about \$50,000,000 in equipment to fill up this 55,000 square foot addition. We need to secure our position in aircraft engine hardware. I'll turn it over to Nick, but I just wanted to introduce the team and let you know what we are doing here.

N. Golon: As Dave mentioned, I'm Nick Golon. I'm a licensed engineer and project manager with TFMoran. We are assisting GE as well as GZA with the project at hand. I am here presenting an overview of what is being proposed, a 55,000 square foot expansion of GE Plant #2. A portion of Industrial Park Drive is proposed to be discontinued a part of this project. The project team has met with Town staff, Town Council, and Planning Board to get clear understanding on the viability of this project. The feedback we received was positive. The Town Council agreed that if we go through the site plan approval process and receive approval for the proposed expansion, they would be willing to discontinue this portion of Industrial Park Drive subject to traffic studies, site plan reviews, and the like. This evening we are here to speak to the special exception request for impacts to the wetland and the wetland buffer associated with this project. The wetlands in question are located in the north/northeast corner of the building. These wetlands pass under Industrial Park Drive via a 72-inch culvert. This stream is associated with Peters Brook where it passes under Industrial Park Drive, flows through the NH Business Finance Authority land, then flows through an oversized box as an outlet structure, then another culvert and ultimately discharges into the Merrimack River. The way we started designing this project is looking at the environmental characteristics. We know that there is an existing culvert there and that with discontinuing this portion of the road we still need to provide a viable turnaround for police and fire access, as well as access to the adjacent parcel of land. To the north is the old Allied Waste facility and they have an easement for access though GE land, so we must maintain that access. Looking at turning movements for oversized vehicles is very important for not only emergency vehicles, but also for accommodating that existing easement. In place of the portion of Industrial Park Drive is an oversized cul-de-sac to provide the appropriate access needed. It is consistent with Town requirements as far as size and turning

simulations (a 53-foot tractor trailer could make that turn). In looking at design needs versus environmental impacts we took a good look at what is out there now. We have the culvert itself, some ancillary wetlands that surround that culvert, and the stream itself. We limited our impacts only to those ancillary wetlands that fall outside of the stream. The wetlands were delineated on site by our survey crew to make sure we weren't impeding upon that stream. What this accounts for is 2,453 square feet of wetlands and 17,384 square feet of buffer impact. The wetland impacts were minimized to the extent practical to the design. There is the incorporation of a 14- to 15-foot retaining wall. We are not grading out into the wetlands. We have provided what we felt is the minimum to provide the safety and access we need at this location. The buffer is a bit more of a sticky situation than the wetlands. We wanted to make sure we had a discussion with this Commission on this. You should have a letter provided by our project team that provides info on our mitigation strategy and the impact fee schedule. In evaluating a buffer, you have to look at its functionality. We provided a snapshot of what this buffer area consists of: existing pavement and/or gravel surfaces and the rest of the area was previously disturbed by the construction of Industrial Park Drive and the associated culvert. That's not to say there is no value. There are some trees that have reestablished themselves, there is some benefit relative to the remaining wetland that surrounds it for sediment and toxin removal, flow storage and groundwater recharge. Our strategy thus far, relative to these environmental impacts, is minimizing those impacts wherever possible and when we can't, how we can recreate them. Two items I noted are the infiltration of groundwater and sediment toxin removal. One thing I didn't mention yet is that we are removing almost 20,000 square feet of Industrial Park Drive that currently drains untreated into the wetland. Our proposal would be the 55,000 square foot building expansion, which is considered impervious but, relative to its classification, it's essentially clean. There's not a whole lot that will be landing on that roof that wasn't there already. When we look at sediment pollutants those are more associated with salting or sanding of roads or things associated with driving vehicles. We won't have those uses on our roof that would generate that type of sediment level, so we have a much cleaner surface on which is being discharged. In order to meet the pre- and post-development calculations required by the State and the Town, we have to make sure we are balancing out our pre/post flows. We are taking the lion's share of the runoff from that roof and we will recharge it in underground storage chambers that will be below the paved surface both in the cul-de-sac and the southerly side of the building where we have a proposed parking lot. We are providing a benefit in that there is going to be treatment of the existing and proposed impervious surfaces and we will be able to recreate what would be lost as far as a resource for the recharge of the wetland that would be impacted. You will notice Photo A: a west view of the 320 square foot wetland impact. That area is most adjacent to the existing stream. It's identified as an impact even though it's not directly impacted by the construction of the wall. When you construct a wall, especially one that's going to be about 15 feet, you need a little bit of room outside of it for a construction zone. It's a temporary impact while the wall is being constructed. The area will be stabilized afterwards and allowed to re-vegetate. Photo B is a 72-inch concrete culvert that is out there now. Peters Brook goes through there and it is

constantly flowing. It is contained on either side by a culvert control. The area is also stocked by a GE in-house project.

D. Coburn: About 20 years ago we started a program on Earth Day with the Cawley School where we invite the children down to release trout into that area.

F. Kotowski: Are you still doing that?

D. Coburn: Yes, we are.

F. Kotowski: Thank you.

N. Golon: I bring it up because it's part of the functional assessment of the wetland scientist who says that there is a great fish habitat and we are able to tell them that we kind of created it ourselves. Relative to the area in which we are working, it's not something we would be impacting. On Photo C, this area has a present discharge from Plant #2 taking runoff from around the facility and discharging it to a rip rap apron swale, which drains down into Peters Brook. There has been some erosion. You can see where our cul-de-sac sits we would be completely removing that rip rap. It would be a paved surfaced which would then drain to a catch basin and discharge to a stable path. We would be able to do some corrective work to erosion, which would be a benefit. Photo D is the east view of the 320 square foot wetland and buffer impact. It's not a real dense canopy. The trees are pretty well spaced out. Photo E is the north view of the wetland buffer impact that takes place on the GE property. It's primarily pavement (Industrial Park Drive, driveway, and a gravel apron extends just beyond the paved surface). Photo F is the beginning of the cul-de-sac we are proposing which has a paved and gravel surface. The last one, Photo G, shows the primary wetland impact, which is just over 2,000 square feet. It's a low lying area just outside of the wetland stream, not a whole lot of vegetation, and primarily flat. There won't be a lot of vegetation removal because it is mostly in the periphery. When we look at our buffer, that is one of the things we account for is what is there now versus what we are removing. As far as the type of wetland, this is a PF01E, a common, run of the mill wetland. You will be seeing a minimum impact expedited wetlands permit which coincides with this. In the interest of time, we want to have this by the time we go to Planning Board but we are still working through the design, so these impacts may shift marginally one way or the other, ideally down. We are here for your comments and for any improvements.

S. Couture: Thank you. I want to give some background so everyone is aware of the communication that took place. I saw that this special exception was on the ZBA agenda so I emailed Carolyn and asked her to make sure that TFMoran was aware of the mitigation requirements.

N. Golon: That was appreciated, thank you.

S. Couture: As Chair, I am satisfied with everything you presented.

F. Kotowski: The Planning Board feels the same way.

P. Fitanides: What is the additional sewer flow going to be?

N. Golon: As far as the total additional flow, I don't have that information specifically. GZA is coordinating with the Sewer Commission to make sure all those facts and figures are straight. But that is information we could provide at a later date.

P. Fitanides: The culvert shown on photo B, what is the flow? Is that a 500-, 200-, or 100-year storm?

N. Golon: As far as what's flowing in it presently, that's just an average November day.

P. Fitanides: Are you increasing it at all?

N. Golon: We are not. There will be no increase in runoff to Peters Brook. We would be seeing runoff into the right-of-way or into an off-site property. Relative to what the existing culvert can carry, FEMA would have done an evaluation and we are outside of the floodplain in the majority of our work and the flood way in its entirety. That is information that is publicly available though and I could get that to you.

P. Fitanides: Another question I have is relative to discontinuing that section of Industrial Park Drive. How will you reroute traffic? Will there be a public hearing?

N. Golon: We met initially with Town Council to make sure what we are proposing is a reality. There will be a Town meeting where the Council will have to vote to discontinue that area. It would be a public meeting, but not a vote by the public.

D. Coburn: If you look at Industrial Park Drive, north and south, there would still be access on the southern leg.

P. Fitanides: So the shortcut will be eliminated.

N. Golon: The remainder of Industrial Park Drive will remain and the cul-de-sac will be there for turnaround access. Relatively speaking it's a small portion of the road that is being requested to be discontinued.

S. Couture: Are there any other questions on the wetlands impacts and proposed mitigation?

T. Lizotte motioned to support the special exception request and the calculation of mitigation for impacts to the wetlands and buffers in the amount of \$2,419.27 as presented by TFMoran. Seconded by F. Kotowski. Motion passed.

Other

S. Couture: We have a permit application and a plan set. The Planning Board is meeting on December 15th for completeness review of the Edgewater Drive/Merrimack Reserve project. They are looking for our comments. According to the process set by the Town Council, if the Planning Board approves the plan, the applicant would have to come back to the Conservation Commission for our approval. The question is when do we want them to come back to us and present to get into the nuts and bolts of the development? Should that be the gist of our comments to the Planning Board?

Consensus to send comments to Planning Board stating that the applicant needs to come back to the Conservation Commission to present.

S. Couture: We also have a DES permit for Ridgeback Self Storage to install a new 13-foot wide box culvert that can pass a 100-year storm. The wetland impact is 2,693 square feet.

P. Fitanides: There's a big pond on Thames Rd that takes on overflow, dumps into a wetland and travels through Peters Brook.

F. Kotowski: They appeared before Planning Board and keep coming in for extensions. They say that they are waiting for economic conditions to change and we see a lot of that.

S. Couture: We should have them come to us and present.

P. Fitanides: I just want to comment, when the weather is really bad with rain storms it becomes rapids and runs through the trailer park and I notice there's a lot of wildlife in there. I don't know where they come from but they come out during the big rain storms – lots of waterfowl and ducks.

S. Couture: Carolyn, can you contact Peter Schauer and ask him to present this?

C. Cronin: Yes.

a. Merrimack Riverfront – Funding Updates

S. Couture: I have before me the recommendation for the CIP from the Town Administrator. This went to Planning Board and included our request, but was not recommended by the Town Administrator. I spoke with Dean briefly before this meeting. His explanation was that he considered it an expansion of services because it was new trail and the guidance he received from the Town Council, as far as the tax rate, was that the CIP was not including new services. The next stopping point is going to the Saturday, January 3rd Town Council meeting about budgets. Will the Council be looking at this recommendation and will there be a “question and answer” that we should be at?

T. Lizotte: Yes. There are a lot of these requests. I brought up a small discussion about how we get a lot of different things that are brought to the Town with no fiscal impact study considering the cost to maintain it. If we get ten of those requests, it adds up. You start to get into the budget crunch. The concern with this is if there is any obligation or liability to the Town in regard to maintaining trails or anything built. If a taxpayer pays for something to be built, who will pay to maintain it?

S. Couture: Ultimately it will be the town, just like when we buy property. I talked with Leo Lessard to get a ballpark and it is approximately \$3,000 per year. However, that is a difficult estimate to make because it will change from year to year. One year it may cost nothing because we get a lot of volunteerism and one year it may cost a lot if for example, we need to replace the boardwalk.

T. Lizotte: If there was a protocol it would be easier, if there is a shared responsibility.

S. Couture: Exactly, and that’s the conversation I had with Leo. Seeing if Kiwanis wants to help or if we make an annual clean-up, those are things to consider.

T. Lizotte: Did you go through Dean to get to Leo, or did you just talk to Leo?

S. Couture: Initially, I went to Leo about a different conversation actually.

T. Lizotte: I only ask because we have had a lot of folks going the direct route and promises are made outside of Chambers. Then when it comes up, if a side deal was made, it doesn’t exist. We have to codify it and it needs to go to Dean. We are looking at a lot of third party projects over the last ten years. We need to be up front with the Town Administrator.

S. Couture: I understand your point. We could do a Memorandum of Understanding internally perhaps.

T. Lizotte: This is different because Conservation Commission is part of the government. Third party agreements are different. But internally we should have a letter that goes up the chain of management.

F. Kotowski: The key is to make sure that Dean is the first contact and take it from there. Kiwanis has done a lot of things in the past. We put in the Kids' Kloset, which is very successful, and we built the Head's Pond trail, which benefits the whole community. The trails shouldn't be a hard sell because people want these things and the Town should maintain it because that's part of doing business.

S. Couture: As far as the discussion with Leo, I asked about the process for impact fees. I met with the Parks and Rec Advisory Board and the Board goes to Leo, which is why I spoke to him because we had the idea for the warrant article. Now we know that January 4th is the meeting to see if they want to do the 6 cents per \$1,000 tax increase for the warrant article. I'm not sure if we will have any news on the grants by then so that's the extent of the Merrimack Riverfront funding update for now.

b. Sheraton Wayfarer footbridge

S. Couture: Did everyone see the emails on this? We have a unique opportunity to get the footbridge from the Sheraton Wayfarer in Bedford and use it as part of the Merrimack Riverfront trails. What do people think?

F. Kotowski: I don't know about the economics of it. I don't know about the cost to take it apart and move it.

D. Hess: If I remember correctly, that bridge is covered and is twice as long as what we need.

S. Couture: I actually think it's not long enough. Correct me if I'm wrong but Dan Tatem said it was one hundred and something feet that we need for that crossing.

D. Hess: I thought that span was only about 40 feet.

S. Couture: I'll have to double check. Anyway, Kathie Northrup brought it to our attention so I thought I would bring it up.

T. Lizotte: We would have to take it down? There will be a demolition fee.

D. Hess: How long is the bridge?

S. Couture: About 60 feet.

C. Cronin: I'm looking through this email and it says the footbridge is a 65-foot span. Dan said that we may be able to use it on a 50-foot section of bridge so we would end up cutting off part of it.

S. Couture: We can get in touch with Jeff Kevan and see what they think and get an estimate. If we are really interested we should pay someone to assess the bridge.

P. Fitanides: Would we have to pay to have the ground assessed? It might not even be feasible.

F. Kotowski: It would need site preparation.

S. Couture: What do we think, should we continue to explore it?

T. Lizotte: The age is an issue, the engineering could be expensive.

D. Hess: Can we have Leo or someone look at it? It's almost a historic landmark.

T. Lizotte: Is there any state money to pay for this?

S. Couture: We could explore LCHIP but we are out of the funding cycle right now. If there is good material we can always salvage and re-purpose it and put up a sign recognizing the history. I'll ask Leo if he has time to go look at it.

D. Hess: Please tell him if I am available I'd love to go with him.

c. Clay Pond Stewardship Plan – Town Council Presentation in January

S. Couture: Due to the budget schedule, we are looking at January 14th for the Town Council presentation.

d. Pike Conservation Easement – Minor Adjustments

S. Couture: There were some additional questions and improvements from Dave after the meeting, so we asked for a friendly amendment. We asked if it was feasible if they would include them and they did. It is much better on our end now, especially pertaining to hunting. There's good clarification language. I just want everyone to know that it happened post-meeting and was presented as an unofficial amendment. It was a good process and they were really reasonable.

D. Hess: I have a question about the proposed chart at the end of their package showing the areas of proposed expansion and the conservation areas. Correct me if I'm wrong but we haven't agreed to this as such yet, have we, in terms of the area and footprint of the easement?

S. Couture: Yes, we have.

D. Hess: The only reason I ask is because I just noticed there's no way to get to the back parcel.

S. Couture: There is a little connector back there.

D. Hess: I see it now on the west side.

S. Couture: The actual wetlands application has to come before us so we might see it again.

D. Hess: We don't have easements on the land next door?

S. Couture: No, it's land locked.

e. Peter's Brook Conservation Area Deficit

S. Couture: I talked about this a little at the last meeting.

D. Hess: Yes, I have alternatives here but I don't have tax maps. If it's OK with everybody I can make copies of the tax maps and bring them in. Basically there are two options. One is we have four lots on Hackett Hill Road with a total of 39 acres. Then on the east side there are two parcels about 18.5 acres and a third one Map 3, Lot 14 by Allenstown. We should have the maps in front of us.

S. Couture: Maybe for the next meeting we can have Carolyn print those tax maps out. I have some other items before Other Business. One is the stewardship calculation that we used for Pike is the LCHIP policy. I was wondering if it would make sense for us to adopt our own policy. We can use the LCHIP approach but we can accept it and present it to Council so we have something in writing. Do we think that's worthwhile?

Consensus is to draft a stewardship fee calculation policy based on the LCHIP approach to present for adoption by Town Council.

S. Couture: The other thought I had, but it needs more detail, is the stewardship component and visiting our properties to make sure there are no issues with the easements. One thing to think about is a summer intern. Interns are pretty cheap, good labor and of course the issue would be scoping out what we want them to do specifically. We would also need to make sure Town staff, and this would fall on Carolyn, is able to be responsible for managing the intern.

C. Robertson: We had discussed having an index of every property and what the easement says.

S. Couture: We started on it with SNHPC and Carolyn added to it for the celebration event.

C. Robertson: We could create a template of what we want.

T. Lizotte: Would it be a paid internship?

S. Couture: That's what I was thinking since we have the funds. We have specific funds we receive for stewardship. It could be either grad or undergrad.

T. Lizotte: I would caution the interview process because they want it on their resume but they might not be focused. It could go either way with hiring an intern. It can also become a drain on resources if they don't know how to organize.

S. Couture: Yes, it has its risks.

F. Kotowski: We had interns from UNH and got the department to recommend a student interested in that topic and it worked out really well. I wouldn't just advertise openly. I would contact individuals interested in forestry.

S. Couture: Agreed and we need a clear scope. Is this worthwhile to explore? We need a focused project by March. We could connect with SNHU's environmental program.

C. Robertson: We should have a grad student for the first time out so they come up with a good blueprint.

Consensus is to explore a summer intern for stewardship of easement properties.

S. Couture: I will look into it and into the costs.

f. Other business: Invoices, Correspondences, Etc.

i. Stantec Invoice

C. Robertson motioned for payment of an invoice from Stantec dated November 7, 2014 for MRCA Engineering Services in the amount of \$1,343.50. Seconded by T. Lizotte. Motion passed

ii. Notes from NH Municipal Association Conference

C. Cronin: I went to the Annual Municipal Conference in November. I attended a session on Conservation Commissions that was really good. What I emailed you all is my notes from that session on what I thought were good ideas to look into or think about. They talked about the Conservation Fund and we confirmed that we have been spending our money responsibly. A good resource if you ever have questions about that is to look up the "NH Municipal Conservation Fund Guidebook" which spells out the specifics of what you can do with the Conservation Fund.

C. Robertson: I love the sign that Candia put out.

C. Cronin: Yes, there are a lot of creative things that other towns are doing and that was some of the best information is seeing what innovative ideas are out there and how to have good marketing. That was one of the most interesting things that was discussed is how important good marketing is. Conservation Commissions should get their names out there so the taxpayers can see that their money is going to something good and then they will be more likely to support you in the future. You could do pamphlets on where to go hiking in Hooksett – something simple like that with your name on it. The Town of Swansea has a logo of two oxen, which is kind of weird, but people love it. It's a really good marketing plan for them to have a mascot because they can sell bumper stickers or stuffed animals of it. They also mentioned what we just talked about in hiring an intern or several interns to monitor easements annually. Interns are a great resource that other towns use. Maybe I can find some job descriptions from those towns and it

would be helpful. I also got in touch with one of the presenters at the conference who works for the Monadnock Conservancy and she kindly sent me her PowerPoint presentation to share with you all.

iii. NHACC Article for Forest Notes

S. Couture: The 50th anniversary of the statute authorizing Conservation Commissions is coming up so the NH Association of Conservation Commissions wanted to do an article featuring really good and “middle of the road” Conservation Commissions. We were identified as a “really good” one so I, Cindy and Dave sat down with Nic Coates from NHACC and he asked us a series of questions. We also had a photo op on Saturday which was good. I think it’s scheduled for the spring Forest Notes.

C. Robertson: What’s interesting is they had a list of what makes a Conservation Commission good and we did really well on all the components, except the marketing and promotion, so when the article comes out we can promote it.

S. Couture: It’s nice to know we do good work. I want to ask about meeting times. Is 4:00pm a good meeting time regularly? What do we think?

Discussion of 4:00pm versus 6:00pm meeting time relative to individual schedules.

Consensus is to meet regularly at 4:00pm from now on.

Non-Public

T. Lizotte motioned to enter non-public session at 5:25pm. Seconded by C. Robertson. Motion passed.

NH RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.

C. Robertson motioned to exit non-public session at 5:30pm. Seconded by T. Lizotte. Motion passed.

S. Couture: The Parks and Rec Advisory Board voted to support our request. Leo said it’s a lot of money so he is going back to the Board next Tuesday to make sure.

T. Lizotte: I’ll find out on Wednesday what the deal is.

S. Couture: Is anyone willing to go to the Parks and Rec Advisory Board next week? If not, I can go.

T. Lizotte motioned to adjourn at 5:42pm. Seconded by C. Robertson. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cronin

Assistant Planner/Conservation Commission Staff Support