



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Community Development Department
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Memo

TO: Conservation Commission Members
FROM: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner 
DATE: March 6, 2018
SUBJ: March 14, 2018 Conservation Commission Meeting

175 Gosport Road

This application is to construct a new parking area, patio expansion, deck expansion, removal of existing driveway area in the 100 foot inland wetland buffer with an associated swale. In addition, this application proposes a replacement retaining wall with materials changed from timber to stone, a replacement dock and pier and an area grading at the termination of a stormwater swale in the 100 foot tidal buffer zone. There are also impacts shown within the 250' state shoreland buffer which are not part of this application.

According to *Article 10 Section 10.1017.50* the applicant must satisfy the following conditions for approval of this project.

- 1. The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.* The proposed parking area located within the 100 foot inland wetland buffer zone is sloped away from the freshwater wetland area. The grading plan clearly shows the water making its way off this area into a constructed swale to help move the stormwater away from the parking area providing treatment of this water before it reaches the tidal buffer zone. From a stormwater standpoint this is a reasonable approach for the expanded parking area. There is no information provided about the freshwater wetland. Given the loss of buffer function from a habitat standpoint it would be helpful if there were some buffer plantings proposed to offset the size of the new parking area within the buffer.
- 2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* With regard to the replacement of the dock and retaining wall these are existing features being replaced. Regarding the parking it is not clear if there are other places where the additional parking can be provided without impact to the inland wetland buffer.
- 3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* The grading proposed for the parking area has been designed to reduce stormwater impacts to the freshwater wetland and the addition of the swale will also reduce impacts to the tidal wetland areas. The loss of buffer area near the freshwater wetland could be offset with additional buffer plantings.
- 4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.* The location where the expanded parking is proposed is within an area that is currently paved. While there will be some new pavement there is currently an area of pavement existing and additional pavement will be removed from the area just outside of the 100' inland wetland buffer to create this new parking area.
- 5. The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.* The applicants has taken steps to reduce the impact in the buffer. The design of

the parking area and associated swale will help reduce the stormwater impacts from the new project. The applicant should consider additional wetland buffer plantings bordering the freshwater wetland and pond area to enhance the buffer function of this area.

6. *Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.* There is no information provided about how the area near the freshwater wetland will be replanted. It would be helpful if there were a planting plan for this area showing the existing vegetation and any proposed plantings.

Recommendation: The application shows an impact of 6,120 square feet of impact in the inland wetland buffer. Of this impact some is existing structure and pavement. The applicant has provided an effective means of treating stormwater from this inland wetland work. It is not clear with the information provided how the buffer to the freshwater wetland will be replanted after construction. Staff recommends the applicant provide a planting plan for this area showing enhancements to the freshwater wetland resource. The tidal buffer impacts are to provide a replacement retaining wall should include only temporary impacts to the 100' tidal buffer zone. Impacts from the proposed dock are not reviewed as part of this application.

If the application is able to provide a planting plan showing enhancements to the inland wetland buffer areas adequate to offset the impacts proposed in this area staff believes a recommendation for approval is appropriate.

212 Walker Bungalow

The Conservation Commission previously reviewed this application at its January 10th meeting. Since that time the applicant has stated that a large portion of the existing residence that was proposed to remain will need to be demolished. While the structure is proposed for demolition the applicant is going to reuse the existing foundation of that structure. The design of the house has kept the same footprint area, the same stormwater treatment programs as proposed. The only change is that the main portion of the existing house is being removed. Given the site will function in the same way the impacts for this project are the same as those of the original project.

At the January 10th meeting the Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of this application for Wetland Conditional Use Approval to the Planning Board with the following stipulations:

1. The applicant will include an organic lawn maintenance plan with the overall property Maintenance plan and will file this plan with the Rockingham County Registry of Deeds.
2. The applicant will not mow the proposed wetland buffer planting area.
3. The applicant will provide the same number of native trees in the 100' wetland buffer as the number removed for this project.
4. The applicant will update the site plan and maintenance plan to insure that the mulch proposed for the raingarden is limited to the minimum amount necessary.
5. The applicant will provide a planting plan for the raingarden and stormwater swale.
6. The applicant will provide a plan showing the impact in the inland wetland buffer for the proposed septic system.

Recommendation: Given that this project will result in the same impacts in the inland and tidal buffer zones staff recommends approval with the same stipulations as those listed above from the January 10, 2018 meeting.

Hover Drive Drainage Improvements

This is a City road improvement project to reduce recurring drainage issues along Hoover Drive where it turns into F.W. Hartford Drive. These improvements will reduce flooding impacts in this area and improve conveyance of stormwater from the roadway.

1. *The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.* The wetland area is a man-made drainage ditch which provides a path for stormwater from the roadway. This project this is the most appropriate location to better size the stormwater infrastructure.
2. *There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* Using the existing stormwater flow path and infrastructure is the most appropriate location for this project.
3. *There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* This is a drainage improvement project. While there are wetlands which have formed due to the supply of road runoff this project this is an area where stormwater has been conveyed since the construction of this roadway. This project is proposed to reduce wetland impacts as it will limit siltation and erosion from existing runoff patterns.
4. *Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.* The project has limited the impact to the area of the culvert outlet but will have a 300 foot temporary wetland impact to construct the new culvert outlet and headwall.
5. *The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.* The construction is the minimum necessary to improve the drainage in this area.
6. *Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.* Any disturbed areas will be reseeded upon project completion.

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval as presented.