

Memo

TO: Conservation Commission Members
FROM: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner
DATE: December 3, 2020
SUBJ: December 9, 2020 Conservation Commission Meeting



105 Bartlett Street

This proposed project consists of two multi-family apartment buildings with basement level parking and one mixed use building with first floor office and upper story apartments. This project was most recently before the Commission at the November, 4 2020 meeting. The Conservation Commission postponed the project at that meeting to allow more time for review. A site walk is planned for Monday December 7th at 3pm at the site. Below are staff comments that were provided in advance of the November meeting.

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.* This project is located in an area along the North Mill Pond that has long gone without site maintenance and includes derelict structures gravel areas a large amount of trash and a great deal of invasive species. Given that this area has not been maintained and there are opportunities for site enhancement the land is reasonably suited to the proposed use.
- 2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* The location has been selected as it an unused railroad area which has not been maintained. The applicant sees this area as ready for redevelopment and has provided a feasible approach for that development and has been able to demonstrate a reduction of impacts in the 100' wetland buffer. Since the last meeting with the Conservation Commission one of the buildings has been pulled back from the highest observable tide line, parking has been removed and a more complete planting plan has been provided.
- 3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* Overall this plan reduces the derelict site conditions reduces the quantity of invasive species, and looks to enhance the area generally given its current condition. However, there is quite a large amount of impervious surface proposed which must be balanced with the site improvements and protection of water quality and buffer areas of the North Mill Pond. The site plan provided includes a landscape plan which shows conceptually how the buffer will be enhanced. It would be helpful if an existing conditions plan showed the extent of invasive species and degraded areas and then a wetland enhancement plan to show exactly what wetland and wetland buffer enhancements are proposed. The site does have the potential to reduce adverse impacts from what exists today and looks to be moving in that direction based on the current plans.
- 4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.* The proposed project will be impacting natural vegetation but there is quite a bit of invasive vegetation on the site. There will also be enhancements to those vegetated areas and

others along the pond. Invasive species along the bank are identified generally for removal. It is important that this removal does not undermine the shoreline or bank. A detailed invasive removal and bank protection plan would help better explain how the bank along the shoreline will be protected.

5. *The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.* The applicant has worked to enhance the site and overall impacts from the project. Impervious surfaces have been reduced with the underground parking and with this amended version of the plan, The applicant should again describe any contaminated soils and materials found in site investigations and what protections would be used to protect the public and the site during and after construction.
6. *Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.* The applicant provided a landscape plan which includes plantings around the proposed building and within the 100' tidal wetland buffer. The plan calls for removing invasive species along the shoreline. No planting is proposed in this area. However, if there are bank areas that need stabilization the landscape plans should address that with the addition of native plantings.

Recommendation: Staff believes this application represents a reduction in impacts to the tidal buffer zone and provides public access through a location that has been left derelict. Staff believes that the structural integrity of the bank can be addressed in the planting plan. With the addition of more details in the bank landscape planting plan staff recommends approval of this application.

32 Boss Avenue

This application is to remove diseased and damaged trees, to install a fence, a raingarden and to replace an existing driveway. The total square footage of disturbance in the wetland buffer 1755 square feet and a temporary disturbance of 545 square feet in the wetland.

1. *The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.* The entire property is located in the buffer of a wetland that is in a low area directly behind the home. The property owner has provided a letter from an arborist to remove the trees and is not expanding the amount of impervious surface in the buffer with the proposed improvements. The installation of the raingarden will help to reduce the impact from the driveway runoff. With these changes the application is reasonable in this location.
2. *There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* Given that nearly the entire property is within the wetland buffer there is no other location for the proposed improvements outside of the buffer. Some of the proposed work is to repair damage from a fallen tree which is specific to the proposed location.
3. *There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* The proposed improvements will not change the overall functional value of the wetland. In fact the proposed rain garden should reduce impacts to the wetland as a filter strip for the runoff from the driveway.
4. *Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.* The project is proposing to remove trees along the edge and within the wetland. While the proposed removal should not functionally impact the wetland there will be more light allowed into the wetland which could change the makeup of the wetland plant community in the wetland area.
5. *The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.* The proposed project should not cause adverse impacts to the wetland.
6. *Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.* The applicant is proposing to install wetland buffer plantings and a wetland seed mix which should enhance the wetland buffer area.

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of this amended project as proposed.