



Memo

TO: Conservation Commission Members
FROM: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner
DATE: November 3, 2021
SUBJ: November 10, 2021 Conservation Commission Meeting

137 Northwest Street

This is an amended application which previously came before the Commission on September 8, 2021. The proposal is to subdivide the property currently with a single family home into two lots with a new home proposed on the new proposed second lot. The proposed new home is partially within the 100' tidal buffer zone of the North Mill Pond. In addition to the new home the applicant is proposing to remove an existing gravel turn around and install a new paved parking apron for City vehicles to turn around. This new turnaround and the City pump station are all within a new easement. In addition, there is a plan to upgrade the stormwater outfall to protect against erosion. Since this application was last before the Commission the applicant has been able to remove 184 square feet of building and new impervious surface reducing the impacts of the building from 1,633 square feet to 1,449 square feet. There was a small increase in temporary impacts and a slight increase in gravel to be removed.

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 project to remove a large gravel area from the buffer and create a paved turnaround will result in a net reduction in impervious surface and a more efficient use of tidal buffer space to service a municipal pump station. The repair of the outfall pipe is similarly appropriate work within the buffer as it is necessary to prevent impacts to the North Mill Pond. The creation of a single family home lot was done with a portion of the house in the wetland buffer. The applicant has reduced the size of the home to create a smaller impact in the buffer. It should be noted that a significant amount of the impervious surface in the buffer is from the proposed turn around for City vehicles to access the pump station and for other vehicles to turn around on this street.
2. *There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* The proposal is to construct a new single family home. The applicant has stated that they cannot build a house of a realistic size outside of the buffer.
3. *There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* The pump station and gravel turnaround area are existing impacts in the tidal buffer zone. The removal of the gravel turnaround will be a net improvement to this site. If the proposed turnaround is designed in such a way as to infiltrate stormwater with porous pavers or other technique this will reduce any new impervious surface running directly into a catch basin at the new turn around. Additionally, the house or more of the house could be moved outside of the buffer zone to reduce impervious surface in the buffer.

The applicant has changed the landscape plan where 2,310 square feet of proposed lawn has been converted to wetland buffer vegetation.

4. *Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.*
There is vegetation in the area proposed for the new home which will be removed according to the plan and the applicant has proposed new buffer plantings.
5. *The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.*
The applicant has made efforts to reduce the impact by reducing the size of the house and installing buffer plantings.
6. *Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.*
The plan shows a new area of wetland buffer plantings of 2,310 square feet which will provide enhancement to the buffer over the existing gravel turn around and previously proposed lawn area.

Recommendation: Staff believed the applicant has provided significant reductions in the buffer but recommends that the applicant work to provide additional modifications to the plan to further reduce impacts in the buffer.