

**REGULAR MEETING
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
Conference Room A**

3:30 p.m.

January 9, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Alanson Sturgis; Members Charles Cormier, Carlton McNeil, Allison Tanner, J. Lyn Walters, Brian Wazlaw;
Alternates Donald Green and Steven Miller

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

ABSENCE EXCUSED: Clotilde Straus

Chairman Sturgis called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. McNeil made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 12, 2001, Conservation Committee meeting. Ms. Tanner seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**II. WETLANDS BUREAU PERMIT APPLICATION, BACK CHANNEL
PISCATAQUA RIVER**

Chairman Sturgis briefed the Commission on the wetlands application of Peter and Lee Vandermark, of 86 Ridges Court to build a 4' X 30' pier with ramp and float off the Back Channel of the Piscataqua River. It is on tidewater and conforms to the Corps of Engineers requirements of one-to-one ratio of elevation above wet marsh grass. It is similar to other piers in that area and there is no obstruction to navigation.

Mr. Walters asked the question if there were mud flats at low tide. Chairman Sturgis explained the float would rest on skids so it will be off the mud at low tide and there will be pilings to secure the float.

Mr. Walters made a motion to recommend approval to the New Hampshire Wetlands Bureau. The motion was seconded and voted all in favor.

III. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS

A. Kevin Ravenelle for Lafayette Road

Speaking on behalf of the applicant, Attorney Bernie Pelech stated that this site had previously been recommended favorably to the Planning Board for a Conditional Use Permit. Although granted in 1998 for a proposed Dunkin Donuts, this project never went forward. The applicant is now proposing to build a 60' X 40' car wash facility with related paving and parking within an Inland Wetlands Protection District. Attorney Pelech stated the applicant would like to keep the same edge of pavement that was previously proposed.

A Commission member asked how the wastewater would be treated at this site. Attorney Pelech responded that this car wash facility would be the first one in Portsmouth to rely on recycled water, and it would be a 60% saving in municipal water. The wastewater would go into the municipal sewer system.

Mr. McNeil stated the previous approved Conditional Use Permit would have a vortex storm water treatment system. Attorney Pelech replied that the same vortex storm water treatment system would be used in the same location. Mr. McNeil asked if there had been approval for the type of edge of pavement. Attorney Pelech stated there is a 6" curb that runs along the edge of the parking lot and everything would be diverted to the vortex.

Mr. McNeil stated that the applicant is conforming to the previous approved plan, and Chairman Sturgis concurred that it is an identical plan with the stormwater runoff being the same.

Mr. McNeill made a motion to recommend approval to the Planning Board; Mr. Walters seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

B. Portsmouth High School for 50 Andrew Jarvis Drive

Mr. Peter Torrey, the Business Administrator for the school department, introduced Bradlee Mesquita from Appledore Engineering to speak on behalf of the applicant. The proposal calls for the impacting of the buffer zone with some new paving, the installation of utilities in existing paved areas and to use part of the buffer zone for a staging area. Mr. Mesquita presented the Commission with diagrams of existing and proposed plans for the High School and how it impacts the buffer zone.

Chairman Sturgis asked what the impact would be to the buffer zone to the area on the lower right as a staging area. Mr. Mesquita replied that the area would be used as the lay down area for stockpiling materials and a double barrier of silt fences would be installed around the area.

Ms. Tanner asked about the location of the tennis courts, and Mr. Mesquita replied that the existing four tennis courts would be utilized in the back of the building.

Mr. Green stated he does not like to see wetland setback area paved and is more interested in preserving green space around the building. Mr. Green suggested a parking garage to house cars, but realizes it would be costly to taxpayers. Mr. Torrey stated a conscious effort had been made in all points of design to minimize any additional impact.

Ms. Tanners stated she was concerned with construction projects where silt fences, hay bales and construction materials are left behind.

Mr. Walters made a motion to recommend approval to the Planning Board with the following stipulation: 1) to install silt fence around entire site and interior material storage areas and that the silt fences be removed upon completion of the project. Mr. Cormier seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Raymond Ramsey for Kearsage Way

Mr. Wazlaw made a motion to remove this application from the table; Mr. McNeil seconded it.

Mr. Patrick Seekamp of Seekamp Environmental Consulting spoke on behalf of the applicant, Raymond Ramsey. Mr. Ramsey is seeking a Conditional Use Permit for the treatment of stormwater runoff associated with the proposed construction of a 100 room hotel which would involve the placement of a V-notch weir and some stone riprap in an existing drainage swale within an Inland Wetlands Protection District. Mr. Seekamp presented findings of a Functions and Value Assessment for the wetland area and concluded that the detention area would replace most of the functions of the existing system. Mr. Seekamp stated the detention area was not placed in the upland area in order to preserve upland habitat values as well as to preserve the sound buffering effects provided by the trees in this upland area.

Chairman Sturgis pointed out that the two documents presented by Mr. Seekamp should have come in with the original application, and it has taken an appreciable amount of time to go over this material which the Commission should have had two weeks ago.

Mr. McNeil asked about the function of the temporary stone check dams. Mr. Seekamp replied that during construction there is potential for erosion, and it is a way to slow the water down so the soil can recover and vegetation be established.

Ms. Tanner said it was her understanding that there would be 7,200 sq.ft. dredged and approximately 3200 sq. ft that would be filled and asked the question how many feet of the buffer would be disturbed.

Chairman Sturgis stated that this application before the Commission to the Wetlands Bureau concerns only the construction of the drainage swale and treatment swale as the project involves working in a jurisdictional wetland.

Mr. Britz referred to Michael Comeau's report and asked about the decision making in not using the upland area for the storm water retention and using the wetland area. Mr. Chagnon responded that the project is adjacent to a residential neighborhood and a highway, and by putting all the treatment in the upland would cause undue harm to the residential abutters.

Mr. Sturgis stated that this area is not a high-grade wetland and the upland buffer is more valuable as it is.

Mr. McNeil made a motion to recommend approval to the Planning Board with the following stipulation: 1) that the upland tree buffer remain undisturbed. Mr. Cormier seconded the motion. In favor of the motion were Chairman Sturgis, Members Cormier, McNeil, Walters, and Wazlaw. Opposed were Member Tanner and Alternate Green. Motion passed.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. The Conservation Commission agreed to give Cindy Hayden, Director of Community Development, a Letter of Support to apply for a \$50,000 Coastal Zone Management grant to build stone dust paths across areas of erosion on Peirce Island.
- B. Chairman Sturgis presented the Conservation Commission with letters from the following:
 - a. New England Wildflower Society in Framingham, MA regarding a volunteer program
 - b. University of New Hampshire Extension Service regarding a training program for the Natural Resource Volunteer Program which will take place at the Urban Forestry Center
- C. Chairman Sturgis informed the Commission about an organization called Save our Groundwater in Barrington, NH, which is concerned about a bottling plant that is proposing to take 400,000+ gallons of water a day to export. Chairman Sturgis stated this could affect our wells and the Madbury Reservoir.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. with the next meeting scheduled for February 13, 2002, at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Terry L. Provencher
Planning Department Secretary