

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

Conference Room "A"

3:30 p.m.

June 8, 2005

Members Present: Chairman, Charles Cormier; Vice-Chairman, Steve Miller; Members, Brian Wazlaw; Allison Tanner; Eva Powers; Don Green and Alternates, Barbara McMillan and Skye Maher

Members Excused: J. Lyn Walters

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

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

I. STATE WETLANDS BUREAU PERMIT APPLICATION

**a) Charlotte Fardelmann
325 Little Harbor Road Subdivision**

There was not anyone to present, work had already been completed to repair a sea wall. Chairman Cormier thought it was a legitimate project and pretty straightforward. He noted that it was a seawall that had deteriorated and needed work so the applicant repaired it and did not know that they needed a permit. He thought it was an honest mistake and thought it was an improvement.

Vice Chairman Miller did not like voting on something that had already been done.

Chairman Cormier did agree with the Vice Chairman but thought the project was pretty benign.

Mr. Britz noted that the repairs were done in kind.

Ms. Tanner asked if the Board needed to vote.

Mr. Britz said it was not necessary that NHDES would wait the statutory 40 day delay and then approve it.

Mr. Green moved to approve and Ms. Tanner seconded.

Chairman Cormier asked the Board for all those in favor. The Board then voted on the motion to recommended approval of the permit application and the motion passed with a 6-1 vote with Vice Chairman Miller voting in the opposition.

**b) Seacoast Newspapers
111 New Hampshire Avenue**

Paul Briand, the director of operations and project manager for Seacoast Newspapers spoke on behalf of the application. He stated that they want to combine their two facilities into one. They wish to build on the leased parcel, 111 New Hampshire Avenue located in Pease. He stated that currently they are located in downtown Portsmouth and the other on Portsmouth Ave. in Stratham. He said that they have outgrown their current facilities and desire to build a single facility. He pointed out that when they looked for properties they decided they wanted to stay in Portsmouth and that the proposed site was most suitable for what they were trying to achieve. He brought with him a few representatives to speak on behalf of the application and turned it over to Jeff Clifford from Altus engineers who was their civil engineer.

Mr. Clifford explained that the site is a 10-acre parcel in Pease on 111 New Hampshire Avenue and pointed out the surrounding properties. He went over the site plan and pointed out that Pease would retain ownership of the parcel. He explained that there are some adjacent wetlands on the site and part of the old baseball field is wetlands. He noted that the site slopes from left to right, about 1% grade and there is a manmade channel with a series of culverts that drain the water into the wetlands mostly in engineered channels. He said that they need to manage the stormwater and from their discussions with TAC, it was decided that there needed to be a better system to settle out solids, what they proposed was similar to what is being done at the Stormwater Technology Project at UNH, and the technology would provide about 80% TSS removed. They seek about 250 square feet of impact on the wetlands where they propose to beef up an existing culvert.

Mr. Green asked if the 250 feet of impact would be on the buffer itself or on the wetlands.

Mr. Clifford answered in the wetland itself.

Mr. Clifford stated as part of the discussions with TAC, they were asked to perform mitigation. They propose to put in a series of stone check basins to slow the water down.

Chairman Cormier asked Mr. Clifford on the colored diagram where the edge of wet was.

He pointed out the edge for the higher value wetlands. He further pointed out the other edge of wet location for the field at the rear of the property.

Mike Parsont of NH Soil Consultants took over the presentation and explained to the Board that he performed the delineation of the wetland site, function and value assessment of the wetlands and completed the permit applications. He went over the site plan and showed the Board the wetland system area, which was depicted with a green shading. He stated that the wetland system has extremely low functional value, minimal flood flow or storage, retention, and no wildlife. The other wetlands area, red maple sensitive fern swamp, that has straight channels that go through it that convey the water straight through in a fast and erosive manner. They plan to slow it down with three check dams in order to prevent the undercut of the trees which would eventually fall down. That was their proposed mitigation and the only impact is the change in the culvert, which presently needs to be replaced. They would put in a similar culvert, which would be a concrete structure and a wet pond for detention.

Mr. Green asked what direction the general flow of the water was.

Mr. Parsont answered left to right into the culvert, which would result in only 250 square feet of impact to that site for replacing the culvert.

Ms. Tanner asked if they would remove the paved walkway.

Mr. Parsont answered yes.

Ms. Tanner asked how the stones for the check dams would be transported in.

Mr. Parsont answered that they would go in there at a low flow period and a dry time of year.

Ms. Tanner asked how much paving would be added to the site.

Mr. Parsont stated he did not know the area, so Mr. Clifford answered that it would be approximately 60,000 sq. feet, a little over an acre.

Mr. Wazlaw wanted to know how many feet they would be from the wetland.

Mr. Parsont answered that under Pease Draft Rules, there is no buffer on the first wetland and the other would be a 50-foot buffer. He stated that they would be adding vegetation and shrubs to the site (i.e. meadowsweet, hawthorne and nannyberry) to create a native buffer for the maple wetland area.

Mr. Green stated that he had learned that the brook had a lot of contaminants from the former Pease Airforce and asked if there had been any tests run on the soil.

Mr. Briand noted that there was a Phase I and Phase II performed, and there is nothing that impacts that property.

Ms. Maria Stohl of the Pease Development Agency stated that the airforce did remove sediments from that site.

In reference to the wetland setbacks, Ms. McMillan asked if Mr. Britz participated in all of this on some level.

Mr. Britz clarified that they delineated all of the wetlands on Pease and after a study, came up with a set of setbacks and according to that study, the area to the north has no setback and the east has 50-foot setback. He stated that the State does not require a setback from wetland areas. He further noted that check dams were more of a result of Pre-TAC in ways they could mitigate the impacts and thus, they proposed check dams to address that.

Ms. McMillan asked if there were actually three culverts and if they would be taking out the other two.

Mr. Clifford answered yes and noted that one of the things that happened that they thought wasn't helping the brook was that everything was going into the channels and the wetland wasn't getting any benefit due to water that was going in there and the water table was probably depressed in that area because of the cut channels. He further stated by doing the check dam work, it will raise the water table a little bit and will provide some more recharge of the wetland.

Ms. McMillan asked about the proposed lighting plan.

Mr. Clifford answered that there is lighting currently in place that will be removed and replaced.

Ms. McMillan reiterated Mr. Clifford's comments about the wetland not being high value and asked if it were possible to minimize the lighting because she noted that it is a wildlife corridor since she visited the site and saw some coyote tracks.

Mr. Green asked about the drainage and how it would drain on the site.

Mr. Clifford said they would be capturing all of the water that is going off of the paved surfaces that would go into the forebay of the detention basin and then into the wet pond.

Ms. Maher asked what the maintenance requirements were for the wet pond.

Mr. Clifford stated that one of the reasons to put the forebay in the wet pond is to capture larger sediments and the way it is sized is if you look at the volume that was required for the wet pond you take one percent of the volume per year of cleaning out the forebay, so typically they use ten years and so you make it ten percent of the volume of the wet pond. Essentially, it would be cleaned out every ten years and they may never have to cleanout the wet pond.

Vice Chairman Miller asked Mr. Clifford to clarify the size of the parcel.

Mr. Clifford answered that the building and the parking lot are about 3 acres each in addition to the two wetland areas of the same acreage, which results in a total of approximately 10 acres.

Vice Chairman Miller suggested that they be careful with using pesticides and fertilizer on the lawn since the site now is all grass and whatever is put on the lawn would go directly into the wetlands.

Mr. Briand said that they would do all the landscaping themselves and it is not their intention to use a lot of chemicals on the lawn.

Vice Chairman Miller suggested using some alternative kind of fertilizer or pesticides to keep the lawn green.

Ms. Powers asked Vice Chairman Miller if he meant to substitute a different type of ground cover.

Vice Chairman Miller said particularly for this site and its wetlands, you really don't want to use pesticides on the lawn because that will go in to the wetlands.

Chairman Cormier asked if it would be mowed like a golf course, a fine area and a rough area.

Mr. Briand answered yes, that the wetland area would be left like a golf course, a "rough" area.

Mr. Green wondered what effect would the cut have on the annual water table.

Mr. Clifford answered that they would demonstrate that their pre and post development peak of water runoff. He stated that the soils on the site are very fine grained, so hydrologically it would be considered C soil. He said that the differential between the pre and post is less on that site. He further stated that cutting down for the wet pond, they are not lowering the water table.

Vice Chairman Miller asked about whether their proposed check damn was similar to those at Grafton Ditch. He thought what was proposed was an enhancement.

Mr. Clifford answered that he is not familiar with Grafton Ditch, but noted that check dams at first are more permeable eventually they get less permeable and the water and the silt behind it will build up slowly which is important which will elevate the water table to a more natural level.

Chairman Cormier asked if the main function of the wet pond was retention, mitigation, if it has wetland value or all of the above.

Mr. Clifford said all of the above.

Ms. Tanner asked what the total depth would be.

Mr. Clifford answered about 6 feet.

Ms. McMillan asked if there was a way to avoid the fence and put signs up instead.

Mr. Briand stated that they will ask the insurance company whether a fence is required.

Ms. Maher asked about the vegetation mix for the wet pond whether it was approved by TAC.

Mr. Clifford answered yes and that they added even more plantings, which included the three species noted earlier by Mr. Parsont.

Chairman Cormier asked if there were any more questions for the applicant.

Seeing none, Chairman Cormier asked for a motion.

Mr. Wazlaw moved for a favorable recommendation and Ms. Tanner seconded.

Chairman Cormier asked the Board for all those in favor. The Board then voted on the motion to recommended approval of the permit application and the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES - Meeting of May 11, 2005

Steve made the change on page 9 of the May 11, 2005 minutes to read, "approved for the buffer project with Moose Plate funding."

Let the record reflect that those changes have been made to the May 11, 2005 minutes.

Ms. Tanner moved to approve the May 11, 2005 minutes and Ms. McMillan seconded.

Chairman Cormier asked the Board for all those in favor and the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Britz reiterated the recommendations made at the meeting on the Seacoast Newspapers' permit application to the Board to incorporate into his memo to the Planning Board.

Mr. Britz informed the Board that August 25, 2005 is the tentative date scheduled for all four boards to meet at the PDA in order to watch the presentation of Gove on the wetland delineation and setback process at Pease.

Mr. Britz reminded the Board about the memo sent out notifying the Board of the work session on the griffin property with TAC and the Planning Board to be held on June 16, 2005.

Mr. Britz also informed the Board that Packard Development, LLC dropped off an amended application for the proposed site on Route 33 in Greenland and the contents were located in Christina's office if the Board would like to view the material.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission members, at 4:45 p.m. a motion was made and seconded to adjourn to the next scheduled meeting on July 13, 2005 in Conference Room "A" and the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christina V. Staples
CC Secretary

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