

Memo



TO: Conservation Commission Members
FROM: Kate Homet, Associate Environmental Planner
CC: Peter Britz, Planning & Sustainability Director
DATE: March 8, 2024
SUBJ: March 13, 2024 Conservation Commission Meeting

**110 Aldrich Road
Edward R. Reynolds, Owner
Assessor Map 153, Lot 3**

This application is requesting a Wetland Conditional Use Permit for the construction of a 768 s.f. detached, two car garage with an accessory dwelling unit on the second floor. Approximately 522 s.f. will be impacting the 100 ft wetland buffer as a permanent impervious impact, with the edge of the proposed garage located approximately 76 ft from the wetland resource. To mitigate the impacts to the wetland buffer, the applicant is proposing to remove 144 s.f. of impervious asphalt from the buffer, and an additional 590 s.f. of asphalt from outside the buffer, to be converted to pervious pavers for the driveway. The applicant is also proposing the addition of plastic reinforced grass area to lead from the proposed garage bays to the existing driveway area.

1. The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.

The majority of the proposed construction will take place within the 100' buffer, mostly within the last 25' of the wetland buffer. This will introduce impervious surface to the buffer which will have impacts on stormwater runoff. Applicant should address plans for roof drainage off the garage and how it will be treated and infiltrated into the ground before making its way into the wetland.

2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.

This property is in Zone SRB, which requires at least a 30' front setback for structures. The applicant could move the garage further outside the buffer and closer to the street, as it currently is proposed for 42' from the front lot line.

3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.

While the applicant is proposing to introduce approximately 768 s.f. of new impervious within the buffer, they are planning to offset that with the removal of the 734 s.f. impervious driveway, of which 144 s.f. are within the buffer. To improve the quality of the buffer and adjacent wetland, the applicant should also incorporate plantings in the 25' vegetative buffer and consider a stone drip edge along the garage to control stormwater infiltration.

4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.

The existing site appears to consist of lawn. The loss of lawn should be mitigated with the installation of plantings to further enhance the wetland buffer and encourage infiltration of stormwater into the ground.

5. The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.

While this proposal aims to mitigate impervious impacts with the installation of pervious pavers, the applicant needs to demonstrate the design of impervious pavers and commitment to maintain pavers to ensure their permeability over time. Additionally, the applicant could move this garage further away from the resource and should demonstrate feasibility for this, if applicable.

6. Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.

While the vegetated buffer strip (first 25' of the wetland buffer) is not being directly impacted by construction in this proposal, the applicant should consider additional plantings in this area to further protect and enhance the quality of the wetland resource.

Recommendation: Staff recommends postponement of this application with the recommendation that the following items are addressed:

1. In accordance with Section 10.1018.40 of the Zoning Ordinance, applicant shall install permanent wetland boundary markers. We suggest that these markers are placed along the 25' vegetative buffer at intervals of every 50 feet. These must be installed prior to the start of any construction. These can be purchased through the City of Portsmouth Planning and Sustainability Department.
2. Please include layout in the plans and more information about proposed drainage of stormwater from the new structure. Ideally, runoff should be slowed for proper filtration through vegetation before reaching the wetland resource. Additionally, a stone drip edge could be applied here for infiltration purposes.
3. Please consider moving this structure further away from the wetland and closer to the front of the property. If not feasible, please explain why.
4. Please include a cross-section detail of the pervious pavers for the driveway. This should include at least 6-8" of permeable substrate beneath the pavers for drainage.
5. Please include a maintenance plan for the permeable pavers (for example, regular sweeping, repairs after major storms, etc.).
6. Please consider the addition of native wetland buffer plantings on the property, especially within the 25' vegetated 'no-cut' buffer.
7. Applicant shall remove all debris/trash from the wetland and 25' vegetative buffer, including the wood decking/pallet structure.
8. Applicant must show all proposed driveway areas on site plan layout – including area with proposed plastic pervious pavers.
9. Applicant must include details of the plastic reinforced grass driveway layout, and how it will encourage permeability.