

**REGULAR MEETING  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
1 JUNKINS AVENUE  
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CAHMBERS**

**4:00 P.M.**

**November 13, 2024**

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Samantha Collins, Vice Chair Barbara McMillan; Members: Alice Carey, Stewart Sheppard, Brian Gibb, Lynn Vaccaro, Alternate: Talia Spurduto

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jessica Blasko

**ALSO PRESENT:** Kate Homet; Environmental Planner

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. September 11, 2024 and October 9, 2024

[6:03] S. Sheppard made a motion to approve both sets of minutes as presented. L. Vaccaro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**II. STATE WETLAND BUREAU APPLICATIONS (OLD BUSINESS)**

1. Dredge and Fill - Major Impact  
1 Peirce Island Road  
Pease Development Authority c/o Portsmouth Fish Co Op  
Assessor Map 208 Lot 1A

[6:26] Chair Collins announced that nobody was there to present this application and that the Commission could not postpone this again so a motion for recommendation was needed. Chair Collins stated that she thought the Commission should submit a recommendation so that they could include the stipulations and concerns previously mentioned on this application.

[8:24] B. Gibb noted that there was a concern brought up at the previous meeting about the water side of the site having runoff impacts. A discussion continued about buffering this area, the stormwater impacts, the size of the new building, the new proposed surfaces, fertilizer notes, habitat areas, etc.

[17:07] L. Vaccaro noted that she was comfortable recommending approval of the application.

Chair Collins mentioned the importance of the notes and conditions that they would recommend.

[17:51] S. Sheppard made a motion to recommend approval of the application to NHDES with the following conditions:

1. Applicant should include a stormwater management plan.
2. Fertilizer use is discouraged within the wetland buffer. Please consider revising Note 11 on Sheet CS101.

L. Vaccaro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Dredge and Fill - Minor Impact  
333 Borthwick Avenue  
HCA Health Services of NH  
Assessor Map 240 Lot 2-1

[19:34] Brendan Walden of Gove Environmental Services came to represent this project. Mr. Walden gave a brief overview of the existing drainage issue, the proposed project, and an overview of the site walk from the week prior.

[22:52] Chair Collins stated that they had previously discussed that they would use this meeting to also have a work session for the same project under a City wetland permit. The City permit will be submitted at a future date. They would discuss the NHDES permit application first and then go into the work session after.

[25:40] A discussion of the project started as commissioners asked about the new roadway material, what service lines would be buried under the swale, the existing port-a-potty, the existing and proposed velocity of the swale, proposed riprap for the banks of the culvert, any proposed revegetation, proposed fertilizer use in the plan notes, the use of jute matting, potential upstream and downstream impacts on the overall drainage area, the possible stabilization types, the existing invasive species (cattails and phragmites) and plans for any proposed plantings.

[44:58] L. Vaccaro made a motion to recommend approval of the application to NHDES with the following stipulations:

1. The use of fertilizer is prohibited within this jurisdictional wetland and wetland buffer. Please note this on plans.
2. Jute mats should be made of biodegradable materials and not plastics.
3. Applicant should more clearly label sections with proposed riprap. Current plans do not clearly depict where riprap is to be located.
4. Applicant should include a plan for invasive species management on the proposed disturbance area.

5. Applicant should provide more clearly defined hydrologic impact calculations for the stream and adjacent prime wetland.

S. Sheppard seconded the motion. A discussion continued about the stipulations and details of the proposal, as well as a possible amendment to the NHDES permit if the forthcoming City WCUP requires changes. The motion passed unanimously.

[56:45] The work session for the forthcoming WCUP began with a discussion on all of the stipulations from the NHDES recommendation and the details needed on updated plans, invasive species, planting information, a landscaping plan, wildlife passage specs, wetland boundary placards, flow contributions, etc. Commission members expressed concern for the flow of the watershed and requested more information on proposed flow impacts in the area.

### **III. STATE WETLAND BUREAU APPLICATIONS (NEW BUSINESS)**

1. Dredge and Fill – Minor Impact  
Whidden Street  
City of Portsmouth

[1:13:18] Marc Batchelder and Tyler Reese from the City of Portsmouth Department of Public Works came to present this application for a drainage improvement project on Whidden Street. Mr. Batchelder explained the history of previous work on Whidden Street, the current overflow conditions of the catch basin located at the end of the street, the impact it is creating on abutting properties, and the proposed drainage system change that should redirect water further away from nearby homes.

[1:16:55] S. Sheppard noted that the original infrastructure had been built for storm events that likely have been surpassed by today's standards and he would like to see future projects similar to this one focus on sponge effects for stormwater control instead of channelization. Mr. Batchelder noted that for this project, the project site is so narrow that this could not be made possible on Whidden Street with its current layout but he agreed that a more sponge-effect course of action is being planned for other future projects and is very effective. He also noted that switching from the current proposal to something more to the effect of what S. Sheppard suggested could increase the project cost significantly.

[1:20:13] A discussion continued about the different options for rerouting the water and the pros and cons considered by the project team. Commission members and presenters also discussed the underground stormwater system in that area of the City and how this project could be related to CSO events.

[1:29:25] Vice Chair McMillan confirmed that grass would be replanted in the areas of disturbance and then asked for more information about the erosion control measures such as a silt fence by the water during construction and silt soxx on site. Vice Chair McMillan recommended that the applicant switch out the silt fencing for the silt soxx down by the water as she believed them to be more effective than the fence. Mr. Batchelder noted that those were standard practices for City projects and he could specify a specific type of silt soxx when the

project is put to bid. The silt soxx will be called out specifically on the plan. Additionally, she noted that there was a note on fertilizer use on Sheet C-300 that should be removed and Mr. Batchelder confirmed that he could remove it and that they have been working on getting a specific type of loam that does not require use of fertilizer to establish plantings.

[1:32:52] Chris Daniell, the owner of 50 Whidden Street and a direct abutter to the project, came to speak on behalf of the proposed improvements. He noted the past struggles with drainage seen on the street and commended Public Works and Mr. Batchelder for doing a great job improving the drainage over the years. He also noted how difficult it is to do a lot of landscaping or parking on Whidden Street because it is so narrow, which limits the ability to improve a lot of the drainage impacts.

[1:36:30] Vice Chair McMillan made a motion to recommend approval of the application NHDES with the following recommendations:

1. The use of fertilizer is prohibited within this jurisdictional wetland and wetland buffer. Please note this on plans and remove all current references to the use of fertilizer.
2. Applicant should use silt soxx where possible instead of silt fencing.

B. Gibb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

[1:37:33] Chair Collins noted that the Commission has an opening for an alternate member and she encouraged current members to reach out and see if anyone is interested in serving in such a position. Vice Chair McMillan brought up an opportunity to sit on a committee for the NHDOT Route 1 pedestrian/cyclist path project.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.