

Hopedale Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2022

Call to Order: 6 pm by Becca Solomon
Meeting held virtually via Zoom.

Attendees on Zoom:

Becca Solomon, Dave Guglielmi, Marcia Matthews.

D. Sesona; Tim Watson; Kevin Mellen; Karen Keegan; Nilton Machado; Gerald Gallo; Lucas Machado; Steve Goldstein; Colleen Stone; Heather Lewis.

Notice of Intent

208 South Main Street

Karen Keegan, Allen Engineering for the Mellens.

They have a 1946 cesspool. No room for septic system. They have a twenty-foot sewer easement per town of Milford. They want to hook in the sewer into the Milford system 35 feet off the back of a sewer manhole. They're adding two more manholes. Grading and connection are within the buffer zone.

Proposed wattles will be staked to 100-foot buffer. Two trees must come down.

Dave commented that the existing sewer cover is painted orange. "Very steep drop-off." They need some fill brought in.

Becca stipulated a condition for clean fill.

Dave added, "Consistent with the soil within that area." The easement in Hopedale was granted to Milford years ago. Where the sewer line is going to go is at the border of the property. "I don't see how you install that without taking the trees down and the root system." He added a condition that they replant two trees elsewhere on the site. He stipulated no activity within the first 25 feet of the buffer zone. "When do you remove existing cesspool original with the house?"

Karen Keegan said she didn't know.

Dave replied, "You need clearance to remove it. Someone may need to inspect it. And who inspects the footing into the pipe, and trenchwork?"

Karen Keegan replied, "Hopedale Water and Sewer, DPW, and Highway Dept.?"

Dave said when he walked through the property into the swamp area, he saw an uncovered manhole.

Becca added, "On the Milford side."

Dave said, "Within the easement area." He summarized, "This is a worthwhile project."

Becca set a condition for mulch socks.

Dave moved to close the public hearing.

The Board of Health will be notified of the cesspool.

Order of Conditions to include stabilization; straw wattles replaced with mulch socks; clean fill; two trees replanted on a suitable area within the buffer zone. An as-built plan and engineer's letter certifying that the Order of Conditions has been met.

Nilton Machado of Bridge Street suggested a native tree, sapling in size. Dave said a three-inch tree with a root-ball would be best. Karen Keegan agreed to a two- to three-inch tree. "Maples are easy to buy and replant." Dave pointed out that the trees being removed are 10" and 12" diameter. Karen Keegan remarked that the slope is a leaf dump. "We have to get bids out."

Kevin Mellen spoke on behalf of Sandra Mellen, applicant. "We're revising the list of vendors. Applicant agrees. Becca closed the public hearing. Will mail OOC.

Notice of Intent

75 Plain Street

The applicant requested the hearing be continued. They are making changes to the plan resulting from comments. The hearing was rescheduled to next meeting due to request of applicant.

Lucas Machado wished to speak. Becca said the commission could not continue the public hearing without allowing the public to comment.

Lucas Machado, abutter, said he plotted his own parcel. "The site is largely dormant, has developed in an undisturbed manner." He asked for mitigation for net zero impact. "Anything larger than 200,000 square feet is a mega-warehouse. The parking lot is an impervious surface." He lives across the Mill River, and is concerned about water filtering through the sandy area when erosion is controlled by filtration. "The rain we had in 2021 caused flooding. Are there any vernal pools in the area?"

Becca replied that there is no natural heritage habitat on the property and no vernal pools.

Lucas Machado once again asked for mitigation to give back and reverse some of the harm and disruption to wildlife habitats.

The Mill River resource area falls under the Mass. Wetland Protection Act. A vegetated wetland buffer zone is 100 feet, and a resource area is 200 feet. The project is not within the 200-foot riverfront, but loading bays and truck parking are a concern to the abutters.

Dave reiterated that there is no development within the jurisdictional area.

Becca said potential vernal pools were not certified by National Heritage.

Colleen Stone of Ben's Way asked what the commission has jurisdiction over, since the development on this site will be outside the 200-foot buffer zone. She was concerned whether the development would create run-off or if it slopes down. "The Mill River runs down the back of my property, and we have floods and beaver activity. The banks have become flooded. Many trees have died and fallen. Our property is raised up, but 600,000 square feet is like taking the Wrentham Outlets and putting it in Hopedale."

Becca replied, "The project is subject to a stormwater management plan. I would refrain from commenting till we have revised plans that would improve conditions. If any plan causes negative impact to a resource area, we will step in. We cannot deny a permit because of what may happen down the line."

Colleen Stone said, "Help me understand the special permit they're requesting."

Becca said, "Our jurisdiction is if there is significant alteration to a resource area."

Dave said, "That's before the DEA. Groundwater is Water and Sewer commission, Zoning, and potentially Planning."

Heather Lewis of Ben's Way asked if the buffer zone applied to the parking area. "I'm concerned about the parking lot."

Becca replied, "Some sections of it are."

Heather Lewis asked whether a project of this size is subject to groundwater protection.

Becca said, "Because it is commercial, they are subject to it no matter what size."

Dave moved to continue the public hearing at the request of the applicant. The motion passed unanimously, and the hearing was continued until next regular meeting February 15 at 6 pm.

Committee Business

Meeting minutes of June 15; July 20; September 28; and October 19, 2021 were accepted unanimously. The meeting of August, 2021 was canceled due to no quorum. The minutes of December 21, 2021 were accepted with changes.

Correspondence

Discussion of correspondence was continued until next regular meeting Feb. 15.

Discussion

Regarding standardization of special conditions.

Dave said a lot of conditions are included in the Wetlands Protection Act. "I found other conditions to get the relevant town boards in the process. This commission has been very active with the Municipal Vulnerability Project and the Blackstone Valley Watershed Association. We must take into consideration climate change with regard to future projects. Examine how we do business. Codes, procedures, get ready for the future. Adapting local bylaws to state and federal regulations. How are we designing buildings? Drainage projects. How will these buildings be heated and cooled? Energy."

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm. Next meeting is February 15, 2022 at 6 pm.

Agenda will be posted per standard posting requirements. Agenda will include call-in/Zoom meeting information.