

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

January 25, 2016

7:30 PM – Meeting Room D – Madison Town Campus

Members Present: Chairman Heather Crawford, Christine Bouchard, George McManus, Kealoha Freidenburg, and Richard Gedney.

Members Absent: Joan O’Neill and Clyde Burkhardt.

Others Present: Thomas A. Stevens, John Cunningham.

1) Meeting called to order: At approximately 7:30 pm, Chairman Crawford called the meeting to order.

2) Call for additional agenda items: None.

3) Application Review: IWA 15-19. 68 Sterling Park Drive. Map 37, Lot 49. Owner: Cold Spring Properties, LLC. Applicant: James Colville. Regulated Activity Permit for construction of a driveway, culvert, underground utilities, water service, septic system, and grading within the wetland review area.

Thomas A. Stevens, professional engineer and land surveyor, presented the application (15-19). Based on comments and requirements set forth in previous meetings (by IWA and Conservation Commission), Stevens detailed the changes in the plan since last presented:

- Placement of plaques has been extended all the way along the wetland to the road (vs only by the septic).
- A landscaping plan has been created (to be presented by John Cunningham).
- The septic reserve area has been moved south of the primary system (away from wetland).
- Footing drain water, roof water, and upper portion of driveway will all flow to a subsurface infiltrator, which will hold first inch of rainfall.
- Detailed changes in installation of water line:
 - Trench will be 42” in depth (vs 60”).
 - 3ft separation distance from utilities (vs 5ft).
 - Staging area for construction of water line will be at the house site.
- Increased detail in construction sequence, which includes inspections by IWO at various points.

John Cunningham, owner of TEC Landscape Design, presented the landscape plan for application 15-19. The proposal includes the following:

- Remove invasives within select areas along the wetland side of the driveway (5-6ft). This would include removing the rootmass, filling, and reseeded with meadow mix (non-maintained).
 - On both sides of driveway, there are existing rocks, which will be left untouched, to maintain stabilization. There will be no activity/disturbance beyond those rocks.
 - The area from the house to the existing tow of slope (toward wetland) will be lawn.
 - The area from the tow of the existing slope to the woodland edge will be a “non-maintained meadow”. This area can be mowed/maintained annually to prevent the growth of woody material. Rocks will be placed between the lawn and the meadow, to act as a barrier for the non-maintenance area.
 - East side of driveway (away from wetland) will be left as woodland.
- R. Gedney asked how the invasive removal process is done, and if there is any treatment to keep the invasives from returning. Cunningham explained that he proposes to use a mini-excavator (same as will be used for trenches) to remove the plant and rootmass (16-18” depth). This proposal does not involve the use of chemical treatment. As long as the meadow-mix is maintained annually, invasives should be kept at bay. If needed, a handheld tool can be used to selectively remove any invasive material.
 - Kealoha asked how this will all be enforced once the land is sold. Stevens stated that the realtor will have the approved plans and explain the restrictions. The realtor will also explain the process for doing any work not included in the approvals; they will be directed to IWO Kuchta with questions. Any work outside the approved plans will have to come before the Conservation Commission and IWA for a full review, not a Section 13 approval.
 - H. Crawford asked where the material will be held as the trenches are dug. Stevens stated that it will be kept at the “staging area” at the house site. There will only be 20ft of trench exposed at any given time.
 - R. Gedney received confirmation that the silt fence will not be removed until IWO Kuchta approves.
 - H. Crawford expressed satisfaction with the changes in the footing drain, septic, plaques, and rock barriers.
 - There was some discussion about how the driveway might be plowed.

Motion: G. McManus moved to authorize Chair Crawford to write a letter to IWA and P&Z regarding application 15-19, stating that the Commission feels the revised proposal has responded satisfactorily to the Commission’s comments and concerns, and that the adverse impacts of the project appear to have been minimized. K. Freidenburg seconded.

Vote: all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

4) Project/Issue Updates

Residential Lighting:

- H. Crawford reported that she has been in contact with Leo Smith, of the Dark Sky Institute, and also with Dave Anderson; a joint meeting on the issue may occur during the regular April Planning and Zoning meeting. Details and finalization is still underway.
- H. Crawford reported that she has received an email from Sanna Stanley, concerned resident; Sanna has applied for a grant from the Greater New Haven Foundation to do a public outreach activity on the value of the night sky (she will find out in 4-5 months whether or not they will receive the grant). Sanna wants to be involved with the Bauer Park Festival next fall.
- R. Gedney commented that motion-activated lights can be too sensitive—wind can trigger them. H. Crawford stated that the best way to mitigate that type of situation would be to have light fixtures pointed downward or in such a way so as light does not trespass beyond the property boundary. R. Gedney stated that people need to be made aware of the different situations that impact neighbors and what can be done. H. Crawford noted this concern and stated that she would see if Leo Smith might address it.

Boundary Documentation: H. Crawford reported that because some boundary markers are located on private property, J. O'Neill is drafting a letter, to be signed by Crawford and Dave Anderson, notifying homeowners about the project and asking permission to be on their property to access said boundary markers.

Public Education/Outreach for 2016:

- H. Crawford reported that the Town is interested in reinstating “Green-up Clean-up,” with a tentative date of April 23rd, 2016. H. Crawford suggested they incorporate invasive species education/awareness into this Town-wide initiative.
- Crawford received a call from the Garden Club requesting a climate change presentation, April 20th.
- Crawford stated some ideas for continued outreach including invasive species/bamboo, plastics awareness, and lawn care.
- R. Gedney stated that, in the past, on opening day of trout season, they (with Trout Unlimited) have asked Sweitzer to put out a dumpster on Route 80 for fishermen to dispose of waste, instead of on the ground; he suggested they do this again this year. He said in the past this was tied in with Madison Green-up Clean-up.
- There was some discussion about “beach-sweeps” and ocean pollution awareness.
- There was some discussion about promoting milkweed for the Monarch butterflies.

Identification of potential Commission members: No update. Commission seems satisfied with current list.

5) Discussion of budget for current year and next year's proposed budget.

Current Year. H. Crawford's ideas for spending between now and June: handouts, plants, plastic bags for residents to dispose of invasives, Conservation Commission ID hats ("Madison Conservation Commission"). R. Gedney suggested that if Leo Smith does not charge a fee for his presentation, they should consider getting him a token of their appreciation (ex: restaurant gift certificate).

Motion: K. Freidenburg moved that they (Commission members) begin looking for options in terms of ordering the official hats. G. McManus seconded.

Vote: all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

Next Year. No discussion.

6) Approval of minutes:

- November 23, 2015

The minutes were reviewed and the following amendments were made: 1) the third sentence under the first bullet of item #8 should read: "*One* way to protect this wetland..." (not "The only way..."); 2) the last sentence under the first bullet of item #8 should begin "*There* is" (not "The is..."); 3) under "Boundary Documentation" of item# 13, the correct spelling of "Garven Estate" and "Milberne" are flagged as uncertain and will be researched for clarification.

Motion: G. McManus moved to approve the minutes of November 23, 2015 as amended. K. Freidenburg seconded.

Vote: all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

7) Adjournment: At 8:48 pm, K. Freidenburg moved for adjournment; G. McManus seconded.

Vote: all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Shauna Dowd

*amendments to these minutes will be noted in future minutes.