

DRAFT MINUTES
CITY OF NASHUA
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
July 30, 2020

The site walk was called to order at 5:30 by Sherry Dutzy, Chair

Roll call by: Sherry Dutzy, Chair

Present:

Commissioners: Sherry Dutzy, Gene Porter, Richard Gillespie, Brandon Pierotti, Carol Sarno

Staff present: None

Others Present: Don Ware, Pennichuck COO, Tom Zajac, Hayner/Swanson, Inc., Clay Mitchell, Atty. NE Solar Garden, Michael Redding, NE Solar Garden (GSSG NH, LLC)

THE FOLLOWING SITE WALK MUST ONLY DISCUSS THE PROPERTY LISTED. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND INFORMATIONAL WALK WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE OWNER AND/OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE. DISCUSSION CONCERNING BUFFER IMPACTS AND ANY RELATED TOPICS ON THE SUBJECT PROPERTY WILL BE COVERED. THE WALK SHOULD THEN ADJOURN WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OF CONSERVATION BUSINESS. ALL DECISIONS WILL BE MADE AT AN UPCOMING MEETING AND POSTED ON THE AGENDA ACCORDINGLY. SITE WALK NOTES /MINUTES WILL BE APPROVED AT THAT TIME. DRAFT MINUTES NEED TO BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE WALK.

➤ **Old Harris Road Nashua, NH**

GSSG NH, LLC DBA NE Solar Garden and Hayner-Swanson Inc. came before the Nashua Conservation Commission (NCC) requesting advisory feedback on minor road/utility improvements along Old Harris Road and tree clearing within a portion of the Conservation Zone for a proposed solar array project. It was later determined through an opinion by the city attorney's office that the NCC should have had more of an advisory role and that a forest management plan should have been presented. In view of this the ZBA tabled a decision on the matter until a site walk could be arranged to determine the effect that tree cutting would have on the watershed and habitat. Prior to the site walk it was learned that Pennichuck had developed a forest management plan that was presented to the NCC in 2013. The plan covers 2014-2024. Staff is currently trying to locate both an electronic and hard copy of this plan.

Prior to the walk beginning, the NCC was given a history of the area and the project by those in attendance from Pennichuck, GSSG and HSI. Attendees then walked about 50% of the site where trees were to be cut in the conservation zone. Some large pines had been previously marked since a planned cut was to occur 2 years ago. When Pennichuck decided to move forward with a plan to lease the land for a solar array, the cut was folded into this project, now before us.

The terrain is fairly flat with periodic large pine trees, numerous saplings and an abundance of dead trees and branches. Mr. Ware noted that water sheds should not contain hardwoods since the chemicals in dead leaves combine with water treatment chemicals to cause problems. The conservation zone was clearly marked and it was easy to discern where the panels would end and cutting begin.

Tree cutting is west and north of the panels. Some cuts will be done to increase solar but most will be done to prevent damage of the solar panels due to falling trees. Stumps will be left in place and

the understory will be allowed to grow to a height of 10 -20 feet. Per Mr. Ware, research has shown that the net positive effect in carbon uptake is 300:1. They also believe that the understory will provide improved habitat for wildlife.

The question was asked about the effect of the tree cutting on groundwater. It was stated that there would be no negative effects. A check of the Natural Heritage Bureau database was completed and there are no endangered species found. The bald eagle nest is outside the effected area and will not be in danger.

Motion to adjourn at 6:55 PM by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Porter.
Motion carried.

Sherry Dutzy, Chair

Date 8/3/2020