



City of Nashua
Conservation Commission
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NASHUA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

August 9, 2022

A. Call to order

A special meeting of the Nashua Conservation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 at 7:00 PM, 229 Main Street, City Hall in Room 208, and via Zoom virtual meeting.

B. Roll call

Members present: Sherry Dutzy, Chair
Megan Cook, Treasurer
Brandon Pierotti
Carol Sarno
Gloria McCarthy, Alt.
Dick Widhu, Alt.

Also in Attendance: Matt Sullivan, Community Dev. Dir.
Deb Chisholm, Waterways Manager

Chairman Dutzy said that Commissioner Porter has resigned from the Commission.

C. Approval of minutes

July 13, 2022 Site Walk - 40 Groton Rd

MOTION by Commissioner Cook to approve the minutes, as amended

SECONDED by Commissioner Sarno

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

July 22, 2022 Site Walk - Pennichuck Solar Array, Old Harris Rd

Minutes pending

D. Old Business

➤ **CMI Leasing Corp (Owner) Bishop Guertin High School (Applicant) Requesting preliminary consideration of proposal to construct athletic field complex with fields, tennis**

courts, locker room, and associated site improvements. Property is located at 40 Groton Road. Sheet D, Lot 7. R40 Zone. Ward 5.

Tom Zajac, Hayner/Swanson Inc.

Mr. Zajac introduced himself as the engineer for this project. With him is Linda Brodeur from Bishop Guertin High School and Wetland Scientist 8Brendan Quigley from Gove Environmental Services.

Mr. Zajac said they are requesting a favorable recommendation for wetland buffer impacts in order to construct an athletic facility onsite. He described the site walk and previous editions of the plan. Since that time, they have formalized their plan and application materials.

Mr. Zajac provided a detail description of the site, surrounding neighborhood, and site details. He described the wetland delineation and vernal pool locations on the plan. The site is used as an unofficial cut-through to the Dunstable Land Trust.

Mr. Zajac said they are proposing to construct an athletic field complex. He described access, field types, and scale of use. It is not the intent of this facility to serve as a new Stellos stadium; it is intended to be a practice area and will not have permanent grandstands.

Mr. Zajac described parking. There is a small septic system intended for restroom facilities, a locker room, and maintenance. There is no intent to have concessions. Public water will be extended into the site. He described stormwater management infrastructure.

Mr. Zajac said they tried to site everything away from the wetlands on the north and west portions of the site. This plan has zero direct wetland impacts and has 41,000-sqft of proposed buffer impacts. A lot of these wetland buffer impacts are related to the proposed pedestrian connectivity improvements along Groton Rd and the restoration and revegetation of existing buffer areas that are part of the gravel stockpile operation.

Mr. Zajac said one of the most exciting components of this project is the potential for connectivity to other natural

areas. This leads to Yudicky Park, the Nashua Rail Trail, and the Dunstable Land Trust, and they are seeking to provide that linkage. In talking with Planning and Engineering they believe they have created a plan that balances access with environmental impacts. This site was the subject of a 34-lot residential subdivision that contemplated a sidewalk along the entire frontage and units that were far more aggressive in wetland impacts.

Mr. Zajac described the Dunstable access and public parking lot at the northeastern portion of the site. They propose a new 10-ft wide trail which leads around the running track to the state line. They may work with the Dunstable Land Trust for further connection plans. The Trust has provided a letter of support for the initial use variance.

Mr. Zajac said Bishop Guertin's agreement has an aggressive timeline. They plan to be before the Zoning Board on August 23, and the Planning Board on September 15th.

Commissioner Cook asked how often both the soccer and lacrosse fields will be in use at the same time.

Mr. Zajac said it depends on the season and scheduling. BG intends to build this facility and would like to use it as much as possible.

Commissioner Cook asked if those seasons overlap.

Mr. Zajac said no. Fall is for soccer, football, and field hockey, and spring is lacrosse, tennis, and softball. That is when the facility is intended to be most used.

Commissioner Cook asked if they have JV and Varsity teams.

Mr. Zajac said yes.

Chairman Dutzy asked for clarification on the buffer impacts.

Mr. Zajac indicated a table summarizing each area on the plan and what impacts are proposed. He summarized the impacts related to a pedestrian way along Groton Rd, stormwater management, and buffer restoration.

Commissioner Sarno said the public trail and parking is great. She has concerns about the expansion of the shoulder along

Groton Road because of impacts to wetlands and vernal pools. Spotted salamanders are crossing the road, and more pavement jeopardizes them. She asked if the fence is designed to keep people out.

Mr. Zajac said yes.

Commissioner Sarno said she is concerned with wildlife's ability to navigate the site. There is wildlife friendly fencing that has a gap underneath.

Mr. Zajac said that is something they would have to speak with the applicant about. Some of the fence is integral.

Mr. Quigley said that is something Fish and Game would want to see if it was proposed between two habitats. By keeping turtles outside of the development area and making them use the habitat outside of the fence, he suspects it might be a greater benefit. If they get into the fields and parking lots, there is nothing there for them but peril. It's better if they are shunted to suitable habitat.

Commissioner Sarno said she doesn't see crossing the field as peril.

Mr. Zajac said it's something they can explore with the AoT permit and Fish and Game. He asked that if Fish and Game says no and wants a barrier, that they could proceed. Their concern is security.

Commissioner Sarno said they noted Japanese Knotweed onsite during the site walk. She would like to stipulate that it be removed prior to construction.

Mr. Quigley said if it's in the area of disturbances, it makes sense to take care of it.

Commissioner Sarno said even if it isn't she would like to see it removed from the site. One of their mandates is to remove invasives from site.

Chairman Dutzy said they can request mitigation. It's not something they want to let go.

Mr. Zajac said there isn't an issue with that. His concern is direct impact to the wetlands.

Mr. Quigley said it can be done with some less effective techniques. They wouldn't go into a wetland with an excavator. It would involve cutting and herbicide.

Mr. Zajac said they have a 47-acre site. If that is something the Commission would like to see they can include it, but he would hope it's limited to buffer areas they are already impacting or areas adjacent to wetlands.

Chairman Dutzy said they can propose that as a stipulation.

Mr. Quigley said there is a lot of woody invasive. That isn't desirable, but it's more manageable. He recommends targeting the Japanese Knotweed. The autumn olive and buckthorn can be taken care of fairly easily.

Commissioner Sarno said that is agreeable. Are there two building onsite?

Mr. Zajac said there is a maintenance and locker room, and there is likely to be a small shed or storage area. The septic would be located adjacent to it. He said the shoulder impact is a balance between minimizing impacts and protecting the wetland buffers, and promoting the pedestrian connectivity. There are options that have far more impact, and the Planning Board most likely will require them to construct something along this frontage.

Commissioner Sarno said that wasn't part of the original plan. She hopes the pedestrian connection will be eliminated.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if they are using dark-sky friendly lighting.

Mr. Zajac said yes. It will be playfield lighting associated with the fields, and typical lighting. They are working with a firm renowned for play field lighting, and they have submitted a lighting plan for the Planning Board.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if they will be off at night.

Mr. Zajac said yes. They are working hard to see what operating hours surrounding facilities have. 10PM is the typical cutoff.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if this is for practice only.

Mr. Zajac said there would be games. He described parking. He thinks they have a good amount of parking and are designing for the times when the full facility is being used.

Chairman Dutzy said BG has been amenable to working with a firm on lighting. She recently attended a webinar on wildlife connectivity. Groton Road has fragmented wildlife habitat. Could they consider a tunnel for salamanders?

Mr. Quigley said he has had a couple of projects with tunnels across the site. He has never been involved with something that would involve putting a tunnel across a major road. It's well beyond the scope here. He doesn't see a lot of opportunity or benefit here. Most of the area being utilized is not friendly habitat for many critters. He is not convinced that it is worth making a connection. He thinks it would be a benefit that the secondary access is not being developed further.

Commissioner Pierotti said he will recuse himself from the vote, as he is a graduate of Bishop Guertin.

MOTION by Chairman Dutzy to favorably recommend the application with the following stipulations:

1. Wetland buffer markers shall be placed around all wetland buffers in accordance with § 190-116, Wetland Buffer Monumentation.
2. Best management practices regarding fencing to maximize wildlife habitat shall be used.
3. Removal of knotweed in the vernal pool area designated as 'AA' and in other impacted buffers adjacent to wetlands.

SECONDED by Commissioner Widhu

MOTION CARRIED 4-1 (Sarno opposed)

E. New Business

None

F. NCC Correspondence & Communications

None

G. Commissioners Discussion

1. Roby Park

Ms. Denise Muccioli of 6 Midhurst Rd participated in a lengthy discussion regarding wildlife management and wetland impacts in city parks.

2. NRI Co-occurrence Discussion

Mr. Sullivan provided a general update on the NRPC mapping. He has provided the scope and timeline given by the NRPC. Co-occurrence mapping is the exercise of taking resource priorities to find target areas for conservation. In order to do that they need to create a hierarchy of priority ranking. A discussion of the ranking items ensued.

3. 35 Groton Road Septic Equitable Waiver Request

Mr. Sullivan summarized the equitable waiver request for the Terrell Farm and the 125-ft setback for septic systems, approved at the August 9, 2022 Zoning Board meeting. The 49 Buckmeadow Rd project is fully compliant with this setback.

4. Beaver Management at Hassels Brook Easement

Waterways Manager Deb Chisholm led a detailed discussion in regards to drafting a beaver management plan.

5. Update on 111-113 Lock St

Chairman Dutzy said the original stipulation was for a fence along the embankment to the river. Four of the units are completed, and there is no fencing.

Mr. Sullivan said they can follow-up. Their main point of leverage is building permit or certificate of occupancy

6. Forest Management Plan

Chairman Dutzy asked the Commission to review the Hudson plan and decide if this is something they want for Nashua.

7. Joyce Park Management Plan

Commissioner Cook provided an update on her changes to the draft plan. Chairman Dutzy said she will review it. Mr. Sullivan said when they are ready to submit to the Board of Aldermen, he will assist.

8. Pennichuck Revegetation Plan

Chairman Dutzy provided an update of the site walk at the Old Harris Rd reseeding efforts. She said she will check to make sure they are reseeding both impact areas.

9. Subcommittee Reports

Trails and Land Management:

- Commissioner Sarno said there is a trail on the Terrell Homestead site, and resident Robert Hartt maintains the trail. He has a number of concerns related to nearby developments impacting his property and provided them to the Commission. Mr. Sullivan said most of them are not within the purview of the Commission. Repairs to fencing would be what the Commission is able to assist with.

MOTION by Chairman Dutzy to approve the purchase of fence materials, not to exceed \$200.

SECONDED by Commissioner Sarno

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

- Commissioner Sarno said she inspected the Mine Falls line relocation and has concerns that invasive removal for knotweed is not being followed.
- Commissioner Sarno provided an update in regards to knotweed removal from the Buckmeadow Conservation Area. The first cut for bittersweet removal has been performed.

Public Engagement Committee:

Commissioner Cook volunteered to start a subcommittee specifically to encourage and manage public involvement in conservation areas.

MOTION by Chairman Dutzy to change the Digital Marketing subcommittee to Public Engagement, to be led by Commissioner Cook

SECONDED by Commissioner Widhu

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

10. Wetlands Evaluation for Salmon Brook

Commissioner Cook said she has shared a copy of her report to the Google drive. In a future meeting she would be willing to discuss her findings.

H. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Sarno at 8:52 PM

SECONDED by Commissioner Cook

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING DURING REGULAR OFFICE HOURS OR CAN BE ACCESSED ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE. DIGITAL COPY OF AUDIO OF THE MEETING MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON 48 HOURS ADVANCED NOTICE AND PAYMENT OF THE FEE.

Prepared by: Kate Poirier