



City of Nashua
Conservation Commission
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EXPANDED MEETING SUMMARY

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NASHUA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

September 22, 2021

A. Call to order

A special meeting of the Nashua Conservation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, September 22, 2021 at 7:00PM in Room 208 in City Hall AND via Zoom virtual meeting.

B. Roll call

Not taken

Meeting Procedures

1. Access

This meeting is accessible in person in Room 208 in Nashua City Hall and via Zoom. Members of the public and representatives of the applicants have been urged to attend the meeting via Zoom, but they may attend in person at City Hall. Real time public comment can be addressed to the Board utilizing Zoom or in City Hall, Room 208.

2. Public Notice and Access

If anybody has a problem accessing the meeting, please call (603)589-3115, and they will help you connect.

3. Adjourning the Meeting

In the event that the public is unable to access the meeting via the methods above, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that the Commission will continue to take vote via roll call.

The Conservation Commission and Planning Department thank you for your understanding and patience during this difficult time.

C. Approval of minutes

None

D. Old Business

- ***City of Nashua (Owner) Nashua School District (Applicant) Requesting review of permanent wetland impacts for construction of road and recreational facility. Property is located at 36 Buckmeadow Road, "L" Cherrywood Drive, & "L" Chokeberry Lane. Sheet C, Lots 762, 2851, & 2859. Zoned R40/FUOD. Ward 9.***

Ald. Rick Dowd,

Ald. Dowd introduced himself as Chairman of the Joint Special School Building Committee. With him is Shawn Smith, Plant Operations Director, Jamie Oullette, and Sam Forgue. He said they have addressed all the changes they asked for, and met their expectations.

Sam Forgue, Project Engineer

Mr. Forgue provided an overview of the project and timeline of events. Preliminary review happened on July 6th, with a site visit on July 21st. The second meeting happened on August 3rd, when they got an unfavorable recommendation. They moved forward to the August 24th Zoning Board meeting; the Board members were uneasy about the Commission's decision, so they decided to take a step back and work out some of the issues with the Commission.

Mr. Forgue said they held a workshop meeting on September 1st, with a new concept design submitted on the 9th. He outlined the changes to the plan. They are providing a 50-ft buffer for potential vernal pool wetland areas. It increases impacts to Wetland 3 due to the road alignment, but it provides greater distancing from the preferred wetlands.

Mr. Forgue said they discussed flipping the track. They are proposing to shift the "tail" portion to minimize the impacts to wetland 9, and that seems to be successful. Commissioner Sarno suggested culverts for wildlife to navigate across the roadway; they are proposing a 36-inch box culvert for crossing at Wetland 1. They don't want to go with a massive tunnel, just to avoid students hanging out there. They are providing another box culvert for wildlife to cross from the isolated Wetland 3 to

Wetlands 2 and 4.

Mr. Forgue said the proposed changes to the plan results in a net reduction of pavement of approximately 4,000-sqft.

Mr. Oullette said they relocated the basketball court and removed the tennis court as well. Some of it did have to be relocated to maintain parking counts.

Ald. Dowd said they are willing to work with the Commission on plantings and hibernaculums as well.

Commissioner Sarno asked if the culverts are open bottom.

Mr. Forgue said they can either do open bottom or full concrete.

Commissioner Sarno said open bottoms create a more natural feeling area and make it more likely for wildlife to use it. She would be in favor of open bottoms.

Mr. Forgue said he thinks that can be accomplished.

Commissioner Sarno said they previously discussed having the wetland scientist return to evaluate potential vernal pools.

Ald. Dowd said they can schedule a wetland scientist to return at the appropriate time.

Commissioner Sarno asked if they can hire one who can differentiate salamander species by their egg masses.

Mr. Forgue asked what the scope would be for this investigation. The entire project, or specific vernal pools?

Commissioner Sarno said it would be Wetlands 2 and 4. Wetland 5 would be preferable as well.

Ald. Dowd said they can probably also tell them how hibernaculums are constructed.

[Unknown] asked if the wetland scientist who did the first study knew the difference between the salamander species.

Commissioner Sarno said he did not.

Mr. Forgue said they can reach out to another, and make that a

prerequisite.

Commissioner Sarno said the folks that did the Terrell Farm study did a good job. She gave them the NH Vernal Pool Documentation Form, and thinks it would be appropriate for the next scientist to use those procedures.

Commissioner Sarno asked about pervious pavement.

Mr. Sullivan said from a maintenance perspective there are issues with plowing. The stormwater design is intended to keep all stormwater onsite.

Commissioner Sarno asked what year storm they could accommodate.

Mr. Forgue said they can contain a 50-year storm. They are also planning emergency spillways for 100-year storms.

Commissioner Porter asked to what extent are the planned outdoor activities required by law, versus recommended guidelines.

Ald. Dowd said physical education is part of the school curriculum, and comes from the state Board of Education requirements. He visits Pennichuck and Fairgrounds regularly and the fields are used every day until well after 4PM. It is a requirement that you have to take at least 1-year of physical education.

Commissioner Pierotti asked about the lighting, and whether it would be downward cast.

Mr. Forgue said yes.

Ald. Dowd said they have been doing it around the city for a while now. All light will be downward facing.

Commissioner Pierotti asked if it would be lit 24/7.

Ald. Dowd said only for security reasons. Some of them are motion sensored. It's just enough for security.

Commissioner Pierotti asked what has been done to maximize ground covers and minimize grass cover.

Ald. Dowd said that is something they want to work with the Commission on. If they plant grass they have to irrigate it and

mow it, which costs money. They want to minimize the grass they have to maintain.

A discussion of grass types and landscaping ensued.

Commissioner Sarno asked about amphibian friendly curbing.

Ald. Dowd said they are going to do that, and have done it at the other schools.

Chairman read two pieces of correspondence into the record:

Anton Pugachevsky, 3 Jamaica Ln
Kimberly Foster, 38 Pinebrook Rd

Chairman Dutzy said they have read and recognized their concerns. She said the Commission understands all concerns submitted, but does not have the authority to stop this project.

Commissioner Porter said asked if the decision to heat the school with fossil fuels instead of geothermal was a life cycle cost.

Chairman Dutzy said Harriman is welcome to respond, but that is outside of the Commission's purview-

Commissioner Porter interrupted and said it is not. He thinks the environmental impacts of major city projects are in their purview.

Mr. Forgue said there was a life cycle cost analysis for geothermal, natural gas, high efficiency boilers, and solar. The decision was made through the joint special school committee. There have been decisions since then to also include solar panels.

Commissioner Porter said he understands that cost comparison was based on the upfront cost. Does that not reflect the total life cycle of 30 years?

Mr. Forgue said it showed the life cycle of 20 or 30 years.

Mr. Sullivan led a discussion regarding proposed stipulations.

MOTION by Commissioner McCarthy to favorably recommend the proposal with the following stipulations:

1. The applicant shall install open-bottomed culverts at both proposed roadway crossings to allow for wildlife and aquatic organism passage.
2. In the appropriate reporting period of 2022, the applicant shall provide follow-up wetlands/vernal pool reports for Wetlands #'s 2, 4, and 5 completed by a Certified Wetlands Scientist in accordance with the NH Vernal Pool Documentation Form standard for review by the Conservation Commission.
3. The applicant shall work cooperatively with the Conservation Commission to construct hibernaculum (s) adjacent to wetland and vernal pool areas for wildlife habitat protection.
4. The applicant shall hold a consultation meeting with the Conservation Commission and the project landscape architect to discuss the proposed site vegetation, planting, and seeding plan prior to the issuance of a building permit.

SECONDED by Commissioner Pierotti

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Chairman Dutzy thanked the applicants for taking the time look at this carefully. She is excited to make this a location where they can blend urbanization and maintain habitat.

Ald. Dowd said he would be willing to sponsor amendments to the Wetland ordinance. He has found that proposals not recommended by the Commission won't go very far.

Chairman Dutzy said she would be happy to attend the Zoning Board meeting.

Ald. Dowd asked if Commissioner Porter had received clarification on access to the Old Harris Rd solar farm.

Commissioner Porter said yes.

Chairman Dutzy said this has been a good team effort. The whole goal is to work together and make this be a good situation for all involved. She is looking forward to implementing different kinds of landscaping. There are a lot of opportunities there.

E. Commissioners Discussion

- Commissioner Dick Gillespie has resigned.

J. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Sarno at [Unknown]

SECONDED by Commissioner McCarthy

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