

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Present: Mitch Wacksman, Chair, Chris DeVries, Bruce Moore, Jim Tasse.

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Minutes. The minutes of July 13, 2021 were approved 4-0.
2. Planning Board review. The Conservation Committee agreed to take item 5 out of order due to the members of the public in attendance for that item.

Chair Wacksman recognized Philip Mathieu, CELT, who presented a Resource Protection Permit for trail improvements in Robinson Woods III. Chair Wacksman confirmed the bridge will be 6' wide and boardwalks 4' wide. Mr. DeVries felt the application was complete and the other committee members agreed.

The committee voted 4-0 to recommend that the CELT application for a Resource Protection Permit for trail improvements in Robinson Woods III is complete.

The committee noted that the applicant has asked for expedited review so that an eagle scout candidate can start the project in 2 weeks.

The committee voted 4-0 to recommend that the CELT application a Resource Protection Permit for trail improvements in Robinson Woods III be approved.

The Chair opened the meeting to public comment on the Carr Woods application.

Jim Katsiaficas, representing the Johannsons - He commented that the information submitted on classifying RP1 and RP2 wetlands calculated percentage of obligate vegetation rather than area that included obligate wetland species. It is an erroneous calculation. He referenced the August 9th letter from the Johannsons regarding the wetland area exceeding 1 acre, the HISS map, and that test pit 4 was dug at 2' - 4' and not 48" as represented. He also questioned if the amount of bedrock calculated is complete and that could impact the open space requirement calculation.

Andre Duchette, representing Sheila Wellehan - The wetland information is incomplete. There should be a peer review of the wetland report. Has the report been updated appropriately? Open space is supposed to be in large blocks to the greatest extent and an earlier plan did that but the current plan has a longer road and more impervious surface.

Andrew Tabor, 33 Littlejohn Rd - He questioned the completeness of the application when the southwest corner boundary line is in dispute. It has not been addressed by the applicant.

Lise Pratt, 32 Wood Rd - The bedrock mapping has not been changed to accurately depict the exposed ledge behind her house. Please do a site walk and verify that the amount is accurate.

Ben Morrill, 981 Shore Rd - He has submitted letters and photos and supports a peer review of the wetlands study as the extent of wetlands is underrepresented. He noted the comparison Road A/Road B alignment plan. When you consider all the disturbed area, which road alignment has the least wetland alterations?

Jim Fisher, representing Carr Woods, presented on completeness of the application. It is unfortunate that there are lawyers at this stage for a "relatively simple" project. They provided 1' contours, a High Intensity Soils Study (HISS), and wetland analysis. You can obtain a peer review but our wetland expert, Chris Coppi, is a licensed soil scientist, wetland scientist and former DEP staffer. The original plan took a conservative approach to estimate ledge and that's why they did not change the plans after completing the HISS study.

Mr. Tasse stated that he read the letters and noted the presence of obligate wetland plants. Mr. Fisher responded that the wetland mapping noted specific obligate plants, but not sufficient to merit RP1 designation.

Mr. DeVries asked about the conservative estimation of ledge. Is that standard practice? Shouldn't you reflect what is on the site? Mr. Fisher said that there is enough land for the size of the development. Mr. DeVries asked how a more accurate ledge calculation would impact the open space. Mr. Fisher said it would increase the density.

Mr. Tasse asked about the road relocation. Mr. Fisher said the wetland closest to Shore Rd is a low value wetland created from detritus from the construction of Plaisted Park. Wetland B has more natural soils. Mr. Tasse asked if the test pits were dug to specifications? Mr. Fisher said that is up to the soil scientist. They were dug 6-8 weeks ago and there could have been erosion back into the hole. He signed the report. Chair Wacksman noted that the consultant's license is on the line when he stamps a report.

Mr. Wacksman asked about the contested land. Mr. Fisher described strips of land that had been created with overdeeding and better technology to locate property lines. The contested land was not used in any calculations. The developer is also willing to provide any easement to the town for a sidewalk.

Sheila Wellehan, 24 Rocky Hill Rd - The developer is using Open Space Zoning provisions which encourage donation of open space to the town and that is not happening with this project. There is a public benefit to address climate change when open space is preserved.

Mr. Tasse questioned the disputed area and asked why land to be preserved was not proposed to be donated? Mr. Fisher said that there is no reason for the public to be there.

Mr. Wacksman noted the ordinance does not require donation so we can't do that.

In response to a question, Ms. O'Meara explained how the Net Residential Acreage definition is used to calculate density.

Mr. Tasse asked about Wetland D. Mr. Fisher said the neighbors say it is a 1.04 acre wetland. Mr. Coppi, the applicant's consultant (he summarized his credentials) measured under 1 acre. Ms. O'Meara asked the applicant to add to the wetland mapping the portions of the wetland off the property for the next submission.

Mr. Tasse made a motion to recommend to the Planning Board that the application is complete. The motion was seconded by Mr. Moore and passed 4-0.

Mr. Tasse empathized with the abutters and wished the development would do more to deed open space to the town.

3. Greenbelt Management.

Robinson Woods II. Under the heading of easement monitoring, Mr. Tasse reported to Mr. Mathieu that on the Robinson Woods II trail to the boardwalk, located at the old trail and T, a jumpline has been carved out which is dangerous and should be removed. Mr. Mathieu asked for recommendations and Mr. Tasse suggested dragging logs onto the top and bottom and perhaps adding signage and rope.

Outer Loop Boardwalk project. Committee members discussed cutting up the existing boardwalk. A sign should be installed at the far end of the boardwalk replacement and then lumber can be carried to that point, working back. The committee will look at beginning cutting on August 17th. [This was cancelled after the site visit with the MCC team leaders.]

In preparation for the project, the Conservation Committee will hold its next meeting on **September 9th**.

Town Farm Trail improvements. Committee members are pleased with the boardwalk installed by Eagle Scout candidate Jake Goodwin and wanted to know when Scout Jake Liess will be installing his section. Ms. O'Meara will check with him.

Trail Permitting Update. Ms. O'Meara reported that Town Engineer represented the Town at the Planning Board, where the Resource Protection Permit was granted. We have also been notified that the DEP permits are imminent.

Tower trail relocation. Chair Wacksman reported that he met with the town's contractor Skip Murray to field locate the trail. It will be great and trail users won't see the fence.

Great Pond Boat Racks. Ms. O'Meara reported on the committee's policy that boat rack slots be in use by July 4th. Six slots had not been used and the permit holders contacted. Two permits were then reissued.

Gazette. Information to be included in the Gazette should feature the Outer Loop Boardwalk project, as well as a thank you for the Town Farm Boardwalk improvement. A call should also be made for the bench removed from the trail to be returned.

Other. Mr. Tasse noted the signs on town property adjacent to Glenden Rd. This trail access is a tragic loss and costly to replace.

4. Next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 9th. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.