

**Town of Mansfield  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
Meeting of 15 August 2007  
Conference B, Beck Building  
MINUTES**

*Members present:* Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki, Scott Lehmann, Rachel Rosen, Sherry Roy (alt), John Silander, Frank Trainor. *Members absent:* Quentin Kessel. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (staff).

1. The meeting was **called to order** by Acting Chair John Silander at 7:34p. The new alternate member Sherry Roy was introduced and authorized to vote in the absence of Kessel.

2. The **minutes** of the 18 July 07 meeting were approved as written.

3. **Aquifer mapping.** The Commission (CC) was informed that the Town must alter its zoning map to incorporate DEP's approved Aquifer Protection Area for the Willimantic River Well-field. It is not clear what (if any) role the CC has in this process.

4. **Old IWA referrals.** At its 18 July meeting the CC deferred comment on W1378, W1380, and W1381 until Lehmann could report on the 19 July IWA field trip to these properties. His notes (e-mailed to CC members on 21 July) are attached.

- a. **W1378 (Storrs Center Alliance)** Drzewiecki brought up Kessel's concern about who will maintain Storrs Downtown's storm-water management facilities. Meitzler noted that the Town has agreed to assume responsibility for maintaining roads in the development, which may cover some of these facilities. After some discussion, the CC unanimously agreed on the following comment (motion: Lehmann, Trainor):

Although small areas of wetlands would be lost, these areas are now degraded and the development as a whole would permit storm-water management that should improve the quality of the remaining wetlands. This assumes that storm-water facilities are properly maintained, and responsibility for doing so should be clearly assigned. The Commission notes that the proposal calls for developing a much smaller portion of the parcel than originally contemplated and acknowledges a good-faith effort by the developer to produce an environmentally sensitive plan.

- b. **W1380 (Pond Place, Hunting Lodge & Northwood Rds.)** Meitzler again reviewed the location of wetlands on the parcel and clarified drainage for the CC. The extension of Northwood Rd. is on a low divide; to the west, drainage is to Nelson Brook; to the east, into a brook crossing N. Eagleville Rd. After some discussion, the CC unanimously agreed on the following comment (motion: Drzewiecki, Trainor):

It is difficult to imagine that this project would not have a significant negative impact on wetlands, in view of the following:

- Almost the entire perimeter of the developed area is within 150 ft. of wetlands, some of it as close as 60 ft.
- All access roads pass through or close to wetlands: the road and fire lane from Hunting Lodge Rd. both involve significant wetland crossings, and the extension of Northwood Rd. would traverse a narrow neck between wetlands.
- A good deal of the runoff from paved parking areas would end up in wetlands, and it is not clear to the Commission whether the proposed pollution control measures (hydrodynamic separator, drainage swale) are adequate.
- No provision seems to be made for protecting the vernal pool that lies west of the extension of Northwood Rd, and probably within 100 ft. of it. (Calhoun & Klemens, *Best Development Practices: Conserving Pool-Breeding Amphibians in Residential and Commercial Developments in the Northeastern United States* recommends a conservation envelope of at least 100 ft. and measures to keep road runoff out of vernal pools.)

Overall, the proposed development seems too large for the parcel, given its extensive wetlands.

The Commission is also uneasy about hooking up another large user to the University water system. The recently approved Master Plan contains assurances that registered withdrawals from the University's well-fields are adequate to supply projected developments in addition to current users, yet the Commission notes that the University is even now urging users to conserve water.

- c. **W1381 (Stephens, S. Eagleville Rd.)** This proposal (revised after the IWA field trip to move the house closer to the area of occasional drainage from a culvert on S. Eagleville Rd.) was considered at the 06 August IWA meeting, so comment by the CC is no longer sought.

**5. New IWA referrals.** Lehmann visited these properties on the 15 August IWA field trip; his notes, distributed at the CC meeting, are attached.

- a. **W1382 (Wassmundt, Old Tpk. Rd.)** A 45 × 90 ft pond is proposed for in a shallow wooded vale drained by an intermittent stream (dry at present), which drains into the Fenton R. The CC unanimously agreed on the following comment (motion: Drzewiecki, Rosen):

The proposed project would have a significant impact on wetlands, inasmuch as one type of wetland would be converted into another with loss of trees and other vegetation, but it is not clear what the implications of this conversion might be.

- b. **W1383 (Bobb, Separatist & N. Eagleville Rds.)** A 7-lot subdivision is proposed: 3 houses on a common driveway from N. Eagleville Rd., 3 houses on

a common driveway from Separatist Rd., 1 house on an individual driveway from Separatist Rd. The common driveway from Separatist crosses a wetland; the house and septic system of lot 6 on this driveway are within 150 ft. of wetlands, as are the development envelopes of the other houses accessed from Separatist Rd. After some discussion, the CC assembled its reactions into the following comment (motion: Dahn, Drzewiecki), which was unanimously approved:

The “yield plan” for this subdivision calls for road access across wetlands to back lots along the route of the common driveway from Separatist Rd. Such a road would have a significant wetland impact. This impact could be avoided by accessing back lots from North Eagleville Rd., albeit at the price of “yielding” fewer lots. Several lots in the “yield plan” have development envelopes close to Eagleville Brook and other wetland areas. The proposed plan inherits these defects.

The Commission recommends that any development approved for this parcel include conservation easements along Eagleville Brook and the other watercourse.

- c. **W1384 (Town of Mansfield, Hunting Lodge Rd. bike-path)** The proposal is to extend the existing 8 ft. bike-path along the west side of Hunting Lodge Rd. from Carriage House Apts. to N. Eagleville Rd. Much of the route is within 150 ft of wetlands, but nearly all lie on the east side of the road, draining to the west. Save for a culvert near N. Eagleville, the only wetland impact would be just south of Carriage House Apartments, where the path would graze the edge of a wetland and a small amount of filling would be required. The CC unanimously agreed on the following comment (motion: Lehmann, Trainor):

The wetlands impact of this project should be modest, as long as standard erosion controls are employed during construction. It is not clear that there are alternatives to the proposed routing just south of Carriage House Apartments which would avoid this impact.

- d. **W1385 (Dewart, Mulberry Rd.)** The proposal is for a 4-lot subdivision, two houses on each branch of a common driveway that divides just off Mulberry Rd., so that there is just one cut. The east branch comes within about 85 ft. of a wetland, though at this point the driveway is on a bench above it. The following comment (motion: Lehmann, Drzewiecki) was approved by all still present save Dahn (who abstained to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest):

This development should have minimal impact on wetlands, as long as standard erosion controls are used during construction. The Commission is pleased with the environmental sensitivity shown by the proposal: specimen trees are to be preserved, an easement will protect the wooded frontage along Mulberry Rd., the open space dedication is adjacent to land that will be sold to the Town for conservation).

## **6. Adjourned** at 9:44p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary  
16 August 07  
Approved: 19 September 07

Attachments: Notes on 19 Jul 07 & 15 Aug 07 IWA Field Trips

### Attachment 1: Notes on 19 Jul 07 IWA Field Trip (Lehmann)

IWA 1379 (Wilson, Browns Rd). I didn't see anything to suggest revising the comment (= no significant impact as far as we could tell) we agreed to at our 18 July meeting. The proposed house-site straddles a divide between Browns Rd. and a heavily vegetated drainage beyond a stone wall to the north.

IWA 1381 (Stephens, S. Eagleville Rd). The "drainage swale" from S. Eagleville to the east of the proposed building site is just a shallow broad U-shaped depression in the woods running down to the pond. There is no wetland vegetation in it until quite near the pond. Probably rarely carries any water.

IWA 1378 (Storrs Downtown). Filter basins are designed to purify and smooth out storm-water flows into the wetlands; they are now flash events, as water carrying sediment and pollutants pours off roads and parking lots. The general health of wetlands adjacent to the development will be improved. The underground treatment reservoir below the Post Office will require a temporary disturbance of the adjacent wetland; the site will be re-vegetated. The facility will correct degradation of the wetland associated with uncontrolled drainage of sand, silt, and oil directly into it.

The road around the south side of the Post Office will clip a bit of the wetland behind the building, but the loss will be small, especially since it is now degraded (as indicated by invasion by phragmites, multiflora rose, and bittersweet). The other wetland loss is behind Phil's, where the uppermost portion of a large wetland is now functioning as a sediment trap for sand and silt from nearby parking lots. This is a bigger loss in terms of area, but the wetland is now severely compromised. Moreover, its sacrifice will permit a development that is large enough to finance the wetland-enhancement features of the current plan.

The residential portion of the development will occupy a low ledgy ridge that extends NE from behind the Partnership office. The end of the ridge will be open space; it has some attractive ledge and erratics. Beyond is the famed vernal pool, now dry, which lies in its own small watershed. Dr. Klemens urged that any trails in the designated open space area be routed to keep people away from the pool, lest it be compromised.

IWA 1380 (Ponde Place, Hunting Lodge Rd.) The area proposed for development does not have a lot of relief; the higher ground on which the buildings would be sited is not much higher than the wetlands that occupy most of the rest. There is a vernal pool, now dry, that is not very far – perhaps 70 ft. – off the proposed extension of Northwood Rd. into the complex, which follows an old roadway between two wetland areas (they

may have been joined before the road was graded in). The access road from Hunting Lodge Rd. will cross an extensive wetland along the path of an old woods road across a narrow rock causeway, now overgrown with fern. This crossing cannot avoid having a significant wetland impact. A required fire lane will also cross the same wetland from Hunting Lodge Rd. farther to the northwest; it had begun to rain, so we did not bushwack over there to see its location.

This was not the time to ask about the details of storm-water management; I will try to look over the Wetlands Report before the August meeting. This project does not appear to invest in wetlands protection to the extent that the Storrs Downtown project does, but the proposed development is less dense and may not require Storrs Center's more elaborate measures.

#### Attachment 2: Notes on 15 Aug 07 IWA Field Trip (Lehmann)

W1382 (Wassmundt pond, Old Tpk Rd). A 45 ft by 90 ft pond is proposed along a small intermittent stream course in a wooded strip between open fields. No water flowing now. Is there enough run-off to maintain a pond?

W1383 (RAAR Development Corp., Separatist & N. Eagleville Rds). Seven houses are proposed: 3 accessed by common driveway from N. Eagleville, 1 by driveway from Separatist Rd., 3 by common driveway from Separatist Rd. The common driveway from Separatist Rd. crosses a wetland; the septic system and house of lot #6 off this driveway are within 150 ft of wetlands. The development envelopes (within which trees can be cut, lawns put in, etc.) of some lots extend quite close to wetlands. My understanding of the subdivision regulations is that common driveways are permitted only if a standard subdivision plan (with a town road) would (1) pass wetlands review and (2) "yield" the same number of lots. The "yield plan" for this parcel replaces the common driveway from Separatist with a road across the same wetland. The developer is obviously trying to squeeze the maximum number of lots out of the parcel. A "yield plan" that accessed back lots from N. Eagleville would avoid crossing the wetland but would reduce the number of lots.

W1384 (Hunting Lodge Rd bike path). The proposed extension of the 8 ft paved bike-path along Hunting Lodge Rd from Carriage House Apartments to N. Eagleville Rd. is routed along the west side of the road to minimize wetland impact. The edge of the path will graze a wetland just S. of Carriage House Apartments (about where the fire road to the proposed Ponde Place development would exit onto Hunting Lodge); required fill would extend several additional feet into the wetland area at this point. This is the only wetland area, though there is a culvert farther along on Hunting Lodge.

W1385 (Dowart property, Mulberry Rd). The proposal is for a 4 lot development off Mulberry Rd -- two houses on each branch of a common driveway that divides just off Mulberry (so that there is just one cut). The driveway to lot #4 is about 85 ft from wetlands (on the other side of a low stone wall, a small portion of which would be realigned to accommodate the driveway). I believe there is no other construction within 150 ft of wetlands. Mr. Dowart's plan for the development appears to be carefully

designed to preserve the woodland character of the site. Fewer lots are proposed than frontage requirements permit, and he intends to sell a large (60 acres) adjoining parcel to the Town for open space (the sale is to some extent contingent upon approval of a development such as this). A conservation easement will protect the woods along Mulberry Rd. Specimen trees in the development area have been identified and will, he hopes, be protected with covenants. He wondered if the PZC could require a conservation bond, to help protect trees during construction (apparently, a builder cut a large tree that was supposed to be saved on a prior development project, and Mr. Dowart is still trying to recover compensation). Greg Padick thinks that the PZC may not have legal authority to do this; a better way might be for the PZC to include as many trees as feasible in dedicated open space (Town ownership would also discourage cutting *after* the construction phase).