

**Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 16 April 2008
Conference B, Beck Building
MINUTES**

Members present: Robert Dahn, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Joan Stevenson (Alt.). *Members absent:* Peter Drzewiecki, Rachel Rosen, Frank Trainor. *Others present:* Matt Maynard (Towne Engineering) & Charles Insalaco (Quiet Meadow Subdivision); Mark Peterson (Gardner & Peterson Associates) & Ray Crossen (Windwood Acres Subdivision); Grant Meitzler (Mansfield Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:30p by Chair Quentin Kessel. In the absence of three members, Stevenson participated as a full member of the Commission.

2. The draft **minutes of the 19 March 08 meeting** were approved as amended: Stevenson abstained from voting regarding W1395.

3. **Quiet Meadow Re-subdivision Plan (LaGuardia, IWA 1393/PZC 1108-2)**. Mr. Maynard indicated that the application has been revised in accord with the Commissions recommendation 2b; the new map shows conservation easements on the steep slopes of the glacial terrace.

Kessel distributed notes from a 3/30 field trip and the 4/15 meeting of the Open Space Preservation Committee; the Committee wants a buffer between the development and Chapin Pond to minimize the possibility of nutrient flows into the pond. He noted that Ken Metzler, a wetlands specialist at DEP, has been asked to assess potential impacts on Chapin Pond. Since the pond surface is 20+ feet higher than Chapin Brook, Meitzler believes that seepage from development on the terrace between them would most likely drain to the water table, following its gradient to Chapin Brook and away from the Pond. Dahn suggested that protection of the pond might be enhanced by moving the septic systems on lots 2 & 3 farther from it. Mr. Maynard thought this might be possible; the proposed systems are located where the test holes were dug, but all test holes dug on the property produced quite similar results. Kessel and Stevenson suggested that protection might be further enhanced by an open space subdivision in which lots 2 and 3 were put into open space and the same number of houses clustered on smaller lots. Mr. Insalaco doubted that such a plan would be economically feasible for the developer.

The Commission agreed to add two comments to those made at its 19 March 08 meeting:

1. The Commission is pleased that the applicant now proposes protecting the steep slopes of the terrace with conservation easements, as the Commission previously suggested (3/19/08 comment 2b). However, the Commission notes that the issue of potential impact on Chapin Pond (3/19/08 comment 2c) is still unresolved; it hopes that a study now underway at DEP will clarify the situation and suggests that the applicant

consider locating septic systems on lots 2 and 3 farther from the pond. (**Motion:** Lehmann, Silander; approved unanimously.)

2. The Commission suggests that the PZC consider requiring an Open Space Subdivision with the same number of lots, in which the present lots 2 and 3 become open space and eight houses are clustered at the northern end of the terrace. (**Motion:** Stevenson, Kessel – Kessel, Lehmann, Stevenson voting *for*, Dahn *against*, Silander *abstaining*.)

Mr. Maynard & Mr. Insalaco left the meeting.

There was general agreement that it would be desirable if applicants could meet informally with the Commission and other relevant Town bodies to discuss options for development before a lot of money was invested in developing site plans. Such a system is used in Rhode Island.

4. W 1397 & PZC 1229-2: Windwood Acres Subdivision (Crossen, Route 195 between Baxter & Cedar Swamp Rds) Mr. Peterson presented the subdivision plan. The property consists of approximately 67 acres, 26 of which would be deeded to the Town as open space. Extensive wetlands limit development potential. If wetlands are not crossed, there is room for just three lots on Rte 195. Instead, the applicant proposes six lots, accessed by two common driveways from Rte 195 (the east driveway accesses lots 12, 14, & 15; the west driveway, lots , 16 & 17). The driveways would run side by side from Rte 195 between lots 12 and 13, merge to cross a narrow wetland (small seasonal (?) stream in vale) over culverts, and then divide, the western driveway crossing another narrow wetland (smaller seasonal stream in flat area) over culverts to lots 16 & 17. Houses on lots 12 & 13 would be largely screened from Rte 195 by a low rise. Mr. Crossen plans a 'green' development; lots are large to permit gardens and geothermal heating/cooling systems.

The open space dedication is adjacent to another 26 acres of Town open space with public access by trail from Baxter Rd. Mr. Crossen noted that the upland area of the open space dedication could be transformed into an attractive meadow if a USDA program for restoring native grasses is refunded.

Lehmann participated in the IWA field trip to this property earlier in the day, but did not have time to prepare a written report for this meeting. He noted that the land was thoroughly logged perhaps 10 years ago, leaving a network of logging tracks and few trees of any value; the small stream to be crossed by the merged driveways drains a large brushy wetland with standing water that lies largely off the property. The vale in which the stream flows is relatively undisturbed at present, and slopes here would require contouring. A possible alternative to the driveways is a Town road from Rte 195 across lot 13 along an existing logging road across the same wetland in a flat area below the proposed crossing; common driveways to lots 16 & 17 and to lots 14 & 15 would connect to this road. The wetland is broader here, however, and a road would be wider than the merged driveways.

The Commission agreed (**motion:** Lehmann, Silander; approved unanimously) on the following points in commenting to IWA.

1) The Commission commends the applicant for the dedication of significant open space adjacent to existing Town open space.

2) The Commission notes that extensive wetlands limit development to three houses along Rte 195, unless wetland crossings are permitted. The crossings proposed have a potential for significant impact on wetlands, particularly the one involving the merged driveways, which would require contouring. The Commission suggests that the IWA investigate the impact of crossing this wetland to the west, where an old logging road now crosses it.

Mr. Peterson & Mr. Crossen left the meeting.

5. W 1395 & PZC 1269: Green, Wormwood Hill & Knowlton Hill Rds.. The original proposal has been modified somewhat, according to Meitzler, but the Commission has not received this material.

The Commission agreed (**motion:** Silander, Kessel; all in favor save Stevenson, who abstained) to request that the time period for review be extended, if necessary, to give the Commission an opportunity to comment on any modifications.

6. Gas line clearing. In response to an e-mail inquiry from Lehmann about why extensive logging along the right-of-way of the gas line that crosses Davis Rd. was being conducted without apparent regard for damage to wetlands, Meitzler reported that a) the clearing is being done to permit aerial surveys, b) gas lines are regulated at the federal level so neither the Town nor the State has any jurisdiction, and c) telephone calls to the pipeline company had finally reached someone who promised some remediation.

7. Adjourned at 9:35p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary
18 April 08
Approved 21 May 08