

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 20 May 2009
Conference B, Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Joan Stevenson, Frank Trainor. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki. *Others present:* Alison Hilding, Stan Gormley, Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:35p by Chair Quentin Kessel.

2. **Public comment.** Alison Hilding voiced two concerns about test wells for the proposed Ponde Place project:

- a. Removal of groundwater during well-testing – and through water use by the proposed complex, should it be built – may cause chemicals from the old UConn landfill to migrate into this area, polluting additional residential wells along Hunting Lodge Rd.
- b. Wastewater generated by the project would be treated by UConn and diverted to the Willimantic River for discharge rather than recharging groundwater at the site, which may adversely affect the quantity and quality of groundwater at other wells in the area.

{The Commission discussed the test-wells at its April meeting and mentioned the potential for chemical migration in its comment on W1428. The diversion issue concerns the Ponde Place project itself and should be raised if and when that comes up for approval.}

3. The draft **minutes of the 15 April 09 meeting** were approved, with the insertion of “Additionally, subdivision regulations and special permit requirements contain provisions that might be strengthened to further protect stratified drift aquifers.” between sentences 4 and 5 of item 2.

4. **IWA business.**

- a. Lehmann participated in the **IWA field trip** on 12 May 09; his report is attached.
- b. **W1430 (Gormley, 853 Storrs Rd).** The applicant proposes to replace an existing above-ground swimming pool with a slightly larger in-ground pool at the same location. The site is at the edge of a fairly steep slope to a small intermittent stream, and Lehmann expressed concern about the potential for erosion during and after construction and recommended a retaining wall. Meitzler believes that a low wall of boulders along the stream would serve; material for it would no doubt be unearthed during excavation for the pool. The Commission agreed unanimously to the following **motion** (Stevenson, Lehmann): A retaining wall should be considered for the steep slope along the stream-course to prevent erosion and protect the pool.

- c. **W1430 (Block, 8 Hanks Hill Rd).** The applicant proposes to enlarge a tiny house close to Hanks Hill Rd. by extending it to the NE, parallel to the road, and to create 11 designated parking places along Hanks Hill Rd. The site is part of the old Weeks trailer park, recently upgraded by the applicant with 7 new manufactured duplexes. Lehmann noted that upgraded park has a lot of impermeable surface, which drains to wetlands. The Commission, wondering why so many parking places were proposed (the applicant notes that they are not needed for the existing units), unanimously agreed to the following **motion** (Lehmann, Trainor): To minimize additional impermeable surface and to screen the mobile-home park from the road, the Commission suggests replacing some of the proposed parking places along Hanks Hill Rd. with landscaping.

5. PZC 907 (Draft revisions to Zoning & Subdivision Regulations) A number of revisions to Zoning and Subdivision Regulations have been proposed; only those regarding farm animals and common driveways seem closely connected to the concerns of the Commission. The Commission's views on these proposals, as developed in discussion, are expressed in the following **motions**, which were passed unanimously:

- (i) **Agricultural Use Regulations: Farm animals** (Lehmann, Silander): The Commission recognizes the need for tightening regulation of agricultural practices. It welcomes provisions designed to protect wetlands and other water resources, in particular, sections 3(c), 3(e), and 3(g) and sections 4(c), 4(g), and 4(h) under "U. Agricultural Uses" (pp.3-5). The Commission views the proposed regulations as a work in progress and hopes that the PZC will be open to input on specifics from Mansfield residents and other Town Committees.
- (ii) **Subdivision Regulations: Common driveways** (Kessel, Lehmann): The Commission is concerned about misuse of common driveway provisions, which were supposed to promote cluster development, to enable developments that are not clustered and would not be feasible without these provisions (as when expensive roads on the yield plan supply frontage for additional houses, but are replaced by common driveways in reality). Accordingly, the Commission suggests that the common driveway provisions be tightened so that:
- A 3/4 vote of the PZC is required to approve a common driveway application for 3 to 5 houses (in 2(b), p.16, change "three (3)" to "two (2)" in both places).
 - In reviewing any request for a common driveway serving 3 to 5 houses, the PZC shall consider whether the arrangement will *significantly* reduce environmental impacts and *significantly* promote vehicular and pedestrian safety (in 2(b)(2) and 2(b)(3), p.16, replace "The degree to which" with "Whether" and insert "significantly" after "will").

6. Aquifer protection. Town Planner Greg Padick plans to attend the Commission's June meeting to discuss revising zoning regulations to give more protection to stratified drift aquifers. He is proposing fairly modest adjustments to current language. To

prepare for this discussion, Kessel urged Commission members to review regulations from Tolland and Ridgefield, copies of which were distributed.

7. EIE comment. The draft letter from the Council and PZC to the University regarding the two proposed academic buildings seems fine to those Commission members who read it.

8. The meeting **adjourned** at 9:30p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 17 June 09.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary
21 May 09; approved 17 June 09

Attachment: Report on 12 May 09 IWA field trip

IWA 1430 (Block property, 8 Hanks Hill Rd – close to 195). The proposal is to transform a tiny house close to Hanks Hill Rd into one that is merely small by constructing an addition parallel to the road. The land falls steeply from the road so that the existing house is one story in front and two in back; the addition would retain this configuration. The rest of the property is a recently upgraded mobile-home park: there are 6 new manufactured units on a level below the tiny house. Wetlands lie beyond them; there is a lot of impermeable surface (roofs, paved parking) that drains into them via a paved swale. (I must have missed the meeting at which the park upgrade was discussed, since I don't remember anything about it.) The proposed addition would probably contribute only marginally to runoff, since it would replace a steep slope with a roof.

IWA 1431 (Cormier-Gormley property, 853 Storrs Rd – half-way down Spring Hill). The proposal is to replace an above-ground swimming pool with a slightly larger in-ground pool. The existing pool stands at the edge of a short, steep drop to a small stream that drains a pond, flowing through a stone viaduct under a barn before emerging near the pool. This slope seems to me to need a retaining wall; at present, vegetation and a few rocks hold the soil. Since the pool site is very close to – and steeply uphill from – the stream, extra care should be taken with construction.

Scott Lehmann, 14 May 09