

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 20 August 2014
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Aline Booth (Alt.), Robert Dahn, Scott Lehmann, Michael Soares. *Members absent:* Joan Buck (Alt.), Peter Drzewiecki, Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, John Silander. *Others present:* Jennifer Kaufman (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:31p by Dahn. Alternate Booth was designated a voting member for this meeting.

2. The draft **minutes** of the 16 July 2014 meeting were approved as written.

3. **IWA referral: W1533 (Lessenger, Monticello La).** The applicant proposes to build a single-family residence on a parcel on the south side of Monticello Lane identified as “Lot 19.” According to Kaufman, “Lot 19” combines three lots in an old subdivision. It was offered to the Town and to the landowner to the east; both declined. Nearly all of this parcel is wetland, save for an area at its northeast corner, where the land slopes from Monticello Lane down to wetland. The proposed house would be built here, at the minimum side setback from the eastern property line, on a peninsula of some 800 cubic yards of fill above the wetland. The house would be 28 ft from and 6 ft above wetlands at its closest point – an average slope of 12 degrees; fill would be graded to within 10 ft of wetlands. The septic system would be located between the house and road, 61 ft from wetlands at its closest point. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Booth, Dahn) to warn that:

This project has the potential for a significant negative impact on wetlands. 800 cubic yards of fill, imported to provide a level site for the house, would be graded to slope fairly steeply down to within 10 ft of wetlands. It is difficult to see how “silt fencing ... installed down gradient of proposed activity and maintained until area has been stabilized” (Part C.4) could insure that an extreme weather event does not wash a large volume of fill into the wetland before (or after) stabilization.

4. **Acquisition of Sawmill Brook Parcel.** Willard Stearns & Sons, Inc. has offered to sell a rectangular 9.5-acre wooded parcel north of Jacobs Hill Road to the Town for \$20K (splitting the difference between appraisals of \$9.5K and \$30K). The parcel is surrounded on three sides by Town open space. Its acquisition would enlarge and improve the configuration of protected land in this area. If the parcel is not acquired by the Town, it is conceivable that a private owner could develop it by securing a right-of-way across Town open space from Jacobs Hill Road. The Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Dahn, Soares) to support the Open Space Preservation Committee’s recommendation that the Town acquire this property and furthermore to urge that it be protected with a permanent conservation easement held by a third party (such as Joshua’s Trust).

5. **Conservation easement monitoring.** Kaufman is looking into getting a work-study student from UConn to help develop a plan and protocol for monitoring Town-held conservation easements – protected lands need to be visited and their condition noted on some regular schedule, boundaries need to be marked, landowners and neighbors need to be made aware of easements and informed about what may and may not be done on land protected by them.

6. Mansfield/CWC Water Planning/Advisory Council. Soares attended the first meeting of this group in July. It will meet quarterly.

7. 4 Corners Water & Sewer Project. Information sessions on this project are now being held at various locations, and a public hearing is scheduled for 6:00p on 22 August in the Council Chambers. A referendum question on bonding for the project will presumably appear on the ballot in November. In Kaufman's view, viable economic development in the 4 corners area requires water and sewer connections. Booth agreed, adding that this gateway area should be attractive to commercial developers once groundwater problems are set aside by sewerage, so that Town could expect to recover its share of the cost from increased tax revenue.

8. Tree removal/trimming on Dog Lane & Gurleyville Road. Soares is concerned that CL&P's plan for removing or trimming trees that threaten utility lines along Dog Lane and Gurleyville Road is too aggressive. Trees close to Dog Lane help slow traffic and make this road safer for pedestrians; they should not be removed if healthy.

7. Adjourned at 8:25p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 17 September.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 22 August 2014; approved 17 September 2014.