

Town of Mansfield  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
Meeting of 15 June 2016  
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building  
**MINUTES**

*Members present:* Aline Booth (Alt.), Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, Mary Harper (Alt.), Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Michael Soares. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn, Grant Meitzler. *Others present:* Jennifer Kaufman (Wetlands Agent), Thomas Ainsworth (W1569), Alison Hilding (W1564).

**1.** The meeting was **called to order** at 7:33p by Chair Quentin Kessel. Mary Harper has been appointed to the Commission as an Alternate Member. She and Booth were designated voting members for this meeting.

**2.** The **draft minutes** of the 18 May 2016 meeting were approved after (a) correction of “July 6th” to “June 6th” in the penultimate sentence of item 5c and (b) addition of item 8, “Conservation Easement Monitoring,” the text of which Kessel distributed.

**3. IWA referrals.**

a. **W1569 (Ainsworth, Woodland Rd).** The applicant proposes to construct a single-family house on a non-conforming 1-acre lot of record on Woodland Rd. This lot slopes down from the road to an extensive wetland (approximately 115 ft from and 20 ft below the elevation of Woodland Rd, judging by the map). All work would be in the regulated area. Approximately 400 cubic yards of fill would be needed near the road to provide a level site for the house and drive; the new contours indicate that the slope to wetlands from the house would steepen. The house would be about 65 ft (and its reserve septic system about 44 ft) from the wetland at its closest point. The house could not be moved significantly farther from the wetland without placing it too close to the road (setback is now only 26 ft). After some discussion, the Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Silander, Harper) to advise the IWA that:

There is a potential for a significant negative wetlands impact from this project, given its proximity to wetlands and the large volume of fill proposed. Particular care must be taken during and after construction to stabilize the steeper slope of the fill, utilizing shrubs, walls, or the like. Seeding this slope with lawn grass is not sufficient.

b. **W1568 (Susca, 131 Gurleyville Rd).** The applicant proposes to add a 10x16 ft shed on concrete piers to the back of his garage, on a level site approximately 50 ft up a gentle slope from wetlands. Following speculation about what the shed might be used for, the Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Booth, Facchinetti) to comment that:

While no significant impact on wetlands is to be expected from constructing the shed itself, the property owner should be cautioned that storage of fuels or chemicals there in significant amounts could pose such a risk, were they to leak into the environment.

**4. Conservation easement monitoring.** As noted in item 8 of the minutes for last month’s meeting, the Town Attorney has advised that any Commission activity – including monitoring conservation easements – involving more than one member constitutes a meeting requiring public notice. Kaufman suggested that Commission members who aren’t comfortable monitoring easements alone could go with a friend. Soares indicated that he has made similar

site visits by himself and will monitor the conservation easement on the Favretti property solo. Kessel will let Kaufman know when his “meeting” with Faccinetti to monitor the Elise Rd easement will occur. Ditto for Silander’s “meeting” with Lehmann to monitor the Silver Falls easement.

**5. Storrs Lodges.** Alison Hilding, who has formed Mansfield Environmental Trust, LLC, to intervene in IWA deliberations on W1564, distributed materials to the Commission, including (1) Verified Petition to Intervene dated 16 May 2016 and (2) Report dated 6 June 2016 by Michael W. Klemens, LLC, on the proposed Storrs Lodges development. She is concerned that over-development of the site (47 apartment buildings for 692 residents on 45 acres) will (a) compromise water quality in Cedar Swamp and Eagleville Brooks and (b) destroy habitat of wood frogs and other animals that utilize one vernal pool (and possibly others) on the site.

Ms. Hilding urged the Commission to review, in addition to (1) and (2), the following reports: (3) *Best development practices: conserving pool-breeding amphibians in residential and commercial developments in the northeastern United States* (Calhoun & Klemens, 2002), (4) *Ponde Place Residential Apartment Community* (Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team, April 2009), and (5) *Willimantic River Watershed Summary: Willimantic River, Eagleville Brook, and Cedar Swamp Brook* (Willimantic River Watershed TMDL, September 2012). These (and other) documents are (or will be) posted on the Town website at

<http://www.mansfieldct.gov/content/1904/1932/14344.aspx>

Kessel suggested that whatever comment the Commission decides to make on W1564 take the general form “The Commission has reviewed the material listed below and finds that ... . Of particular importance are these considerations/issues/points ... .” Commission members should read through the available material before the July meeting with an eye for particulars that should inform – and be cited in support of – its position.

Kaufman expects that the public hearing on W1564 will be opened on 20 June and that the applicants will ask that it be immediately adjourned to 18 July (because the IWA does not yet have all the information it needs to render a decision, which would be grounds for denying the application). If the real hearing begins on 18 July, it will probably be continued to 1 August and perhaps beyond. After some discussion the Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Soares, Kessel) to ask that it be given sufficient time to review and comment on the application:

Due to the large amount of information being provided by the applicant, the Town’s consultant, and the intervener, the Commission asks that the IWA request extensions of the public hearing on W1564 to a date beyond the Commission’s meeting of 17 August so that the Commission has sufficient time to review this material and comment on the application.

**6. Adjourned** at 9:07p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 20 July 2016.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 17 June 2016; approved 20 July 2016.