

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 20 July 2016
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

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

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:34p by Chair Quentin Kessel. In the absence of two members, Alternate Mary Harper was entitled to participate fully in the business of the meeting.

2. The **draft minutes** of the 15 June 2016 meeting were approved as written.

3. **IWA referrals.** {Lehmann participated in the IWA Field Trip to these sites earlier on 20 July.}

a. **W1570 (Funk & Little, 30 Center St).** The applicant seeks a permit for work already done within the regulated area: installation of a new geothermal heating/cooling system behind the house and replacement of a water line to the house from a well-house at the edge of Echo Lake. According to Kaufman's memo of 11 July, an inspection of the site on 13 May (pursuant to a query from a neighbor) revealed "approximately 15 cubic yards of soil ... stockpiled approximately 40 feet from the edge of Echo Lake and disturbed soil approximately 20 feet from the edge of the lake," apparently without any silt fencing in place to contain erosion. After some discussion, the Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Kessel, Silander) to comment as follows:

The Commission is disappointed to learn that a project involving stockpiling 15 cubic yards of fill within 40 feet of Echo Lake and work within 20 feet of the lake, both without proper erosion controls, has been carried out without the required wetlands permit. The Commission urges the Town to explore options for penalties to discourage flouting wetlands regulations.

b. **W1571 (Loukas, 46 Jonathan La).** An 18x36 in-ground swimming pool is proposed at the edge of the development envelope behind the house. The site slopes slightly east of north and parallel to the back of the house; it would need some leveling. Wetlands lie to the east, 83 feet across a flat area from the proposed pool. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Silander, Harper) that no significant wetlands impact is to be expected from this project as long as standard erosion controls are employed during construction.

c. **W1572 (Bobb, 840 Wormwood Hill Rd).** The applicant proposes to control invasive water chestnut in Leander Pond by mechanical harvesting, repeated annually (as needed) for the life of the permit. Harvested material would be piled on shore behind hay bales at two locations to dewater and then be moved for composting. A permeable curtain at the pond's outlet would prevent plant fragments from migrating downstream. A similar application for water chestnut removal in the Ashford portion of Leander Pond is being made to the Ashford IWA by Dennis Heffley. Kaufman indicated that approval would be conditioned on a satisfactory protocol for cleaning equipment, lest water chestnut fragments from Leander Pond be transported elsewhere (or invasives from elsewhere introduced to Leander Pond). Silander & Meitzler suggested piling harvested material away from the shore for dewatering to avoid nutrient loading of the pond as it decays. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Silander, Lehmann) to (1) commend the landowners for their

coordinated effort to deal with this invasive aquatic plant in an environmentally sensitive way and to (2) recommend stockpiling harvested material farther from shore to minimize the risk of nutrients leaching into the pond.

d. **W1753 (Sotzing, 144 Hillyndale Rd).** The applicant proposes to install a hot tub on the W side of his house. The land there slopes gradually and then more steeply to Eagleville Brook, 110 ft away to the north. The application claims at C(1)(b) that “little ground should [have to] be regraded”, but no details about the installation are provided. {C(3) mentions using “concrete”; Kaufman’s 15 July memo says the tub will be installed “on top of an 11'x11' wooden deck platform”; the filled weight of the tub, not including occupants, is given as 4,508 lbs.} Nonetheless, the Commission decided unanimously (**motion:** Silander, Facchinetti) that no significant impact on wetlands is to be expected from this project, provided appropriate measures are taken to prevent erosion during and after construction.

e. **W1558 (Mehrens, 214 Wormwood Hill Rd).** The applicant asks for a modification of an existing wetlands permit: instead of a shed, a 24'x36' garage is proposed for a site now used for parking just off the driveway. The back of the garage would be close to a rough stone wall, beyond which lie wetlands; however, the land at the proposed garage site slopes slightly away from the wall towards Wormwood Hill Rd. The Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Kessel, Harper) that the proposed modification is unlikely to have a significant wetlands impact, provided standard measures are taken to keep sediment out of the wetland.

4. Storrs Center oak. An e-mail to John Carrington (sender not identified) claims that the Storrs Center oak is dying and suggests that the cause is lack of water. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Kessel, Silander) to ask Kaufman to contact the Tree Warden and, should the tree is found to be in danger, to initiate steps to save it.

5. Proposed approach to updating multi-family zoning regulations. The Town’s zoning regulations need to be updated to implement its new Plan of Conservation and Development (PoCD). A memo dated 01 June from Linda Painter to the PZC proposes (p.7) that (1) multi-family zoning regulations be revised to collapse the four current types of multi-family districts into one “Compact Residential” (CR) district and that (2) the definition of ‘family’ be revised to allow more than 3 unrelated individuals to occupy a unit in a CR development. Regulations governing such developments would be designed to further the objectives of the PoCD – see pp.7-10 for an outline. Kaufman urged Commission members to study the memo and to comment on the suggested approach; if accepted by the PZC, it will be the framework for revising the zoning regulations governing multi-family developments ranging from student apartments to assisted-living facilities.

6. Storrs Lodges. The wetlands application (W1564) for Storrs Lodges will be resubmitted on 01 August. The public hearing will be on 06 September – and probably continued to October or beyond. Kaufman suggested inviting the Town’s consultant on W1564 to attend the Commission’s September meeting, and it was agreed to do so. She noted that the IWA lacks statutory authority to deny a wetlands permit on the ground that development would negatively impact wetland plants or animals, except where the wetland’s “physical characteristics” are altered (e.g., by sedimentation). That the Storrs Lodges development would reduce populations of wood frogs and salamanders that utilize the vernal pool by eliminating habitat in the area surrounding it is not a relevant consideration for the IWA. This kind of argument should be made to the PZC. Harper is concerned that storm-water infiltration basins proposed for the development will not function properly, given the soils on the property. Kaufman encouraged

her to address such questions to the consultant.

7. Conservation easement monitoring. Kaufman will advertise gatherings of more than one Commission member to monitor conservation easements as “meetings” of the Commission, which members of the public may attend.

8. Adjourned at 9:26p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 17 August 2016 – unless there is insufficient business.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 22 July 2016; approved 17 August 2016.