

MINUTES

Members Present:	M. Davis, M. Harper, E. King, C. Rittenhouse, and J. Silander
Members Absent:	M. Soares, W. Ouimet
Alternates Present:	J. Knighton
Alternates Absent:	C. Witharana
Staff Present:	M. Stankov

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

King called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present are M. Davis, M. Harper, E. King, C. Rittenhouse, and J. Silander, and alternate Knighton. Alternate Knighton is seated for absent member Soares.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Davis MOVED, King seconded approval of the April 19, 2023 minutes as presented.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Harper, as member of the public, has submitted a written comment as an abutter to 555 Turnpike, and verbally expressed concerns about the proposed project.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of 541 Middle Turnpike Multi-family Housing Application W1631

Evan Simen(?), Attorney, On behalf of Benchmark Cascade.

Michael Charles, regional developer out of western MA. "Missing Middle and Cottage Style Housing" is the goal for this development.

CC Question: rental or for sale? Answer: Rental. Low income? Answer: Some, but they are not low-income developers.

Eric Davison, Wetland Scientist for the applicant, introduced the water resources.

CC Question: Class A headwater stream, classified by DEEP, and seeps. The 555 parcel and meadow area on 541 have non-calcareous fen characteristics indicative of a stratified drift

aquifer, yet stratified drift aquifer was not mentioned at all in the application despite that it is one of the most endangered in CT. Answer: section 2.1 addresses this but does not specifically say the importance as designated by DEEP.

Jeff Fitzgerald, Bohler. The property has a utility easement by Eversource and a sewer easement by the Town. The applicant proposes a 17-acre open space easement, which together with 3 acres on 555, constitutes a 20-acre open space easement to the Town.

Stormwater management achieves a reduction in peak flows and no increase in volume off the site. In 541 this is achieved with infiltration basins in series and an attenuation basin. In 555 porous pavement is proposed in parking areas to allow stormwater infiltration, and chamber with isolator row for water quality, infiltration, and attenuation. A rain garden serving the roof on 555.

CC Question: The powerline right of way constrains the design? Answer: correct, no buildings or structures.

CC Question: The statement "The water quality will be improved" is not true without actually knowing what the water quality is now.

CC Question: In the geo-technical report – Excess groundwater was encountered, which is typical of stratified drift aquifer.

CC Question: The illustrated 25' and 50' URA indicate the applications are not consistent with Town of Mansfield performance standards. Those standards state: "Wherever feasible buffers of undisturbed natural vegetation of 50' or more shall be maintained along all watercourses and wetlands". Answer: We've done this before...?

CC Question: for 555, is there a wetland on the abutting that would have a wetland review area to consider? Answer: no.

Tom Ryder (Wetland Scientist), LandTech, on behalf of Town.

541 comments: Tributary to Cedar Swamp, which passes through a culvert, is not shown on the plans. How will the pedestrian trail be maintained? Wetland flags 43-47 have population of phragmites growing adjacent – indicative of a wetland that may have been filled. A clarification of soil conditions and determination of how it is upland is warranted. No wetland impact assessment was provided. An evaluation of impacts should be documented. The larger wetland system is different from the headwater system, and as such should have separation in the text/table. The zoning regs article 6R regarding 50' vegetative buffer...this application will have to go in front of the Zoning board eventually. The issue is raised now so applicant is aware. The applicant is encouraged to state why the narrow buffers and basketball court adjacent to wetland edge are justified.

555 comments: no impact assessment was provided for 555. Why are narrow buffers justified? The northern portion of 555 is still wooded with buffer intact. The proposed parking lot removes all wooded vegetation within the URA of this property.

Andy Soumelidis (Engineer), LandTech, on behalf of Town.

541 comments: highlighted concerns regarding stormwater infrastructure, steep slopes, discharge into wetlands via emergency spillways, grading proximate to the wetland, and berms/weirs. Some additional and more technical observations, including modeling for proposed and existing conditions.

CC Question: The culvert appears new and has rye grass planting. Was the culvert replaced without a permit? Town: not in the past 3 months. Need to check on this but generally speaking, replacing like with like may be considered maintenance.

Recess by request of the applicant.

Resume at 8:24 pm.

CC asked about the basketball court being included in the conservation easement. Answer: The applicant is ok with removing the basketball court.

Ryder: suggestion to combine the pollinator habitat with plantings in the mowed area to obtain a wet meadow.

Rittenhouse MOVED and King seconded that based on the information presented at this meeting, the 541 project is proposed to reduce peak flow on the site, add stormwater management features, and may generally maintain or improve water quality provided appropriate measures are taken during construction and removed when construction is complete. Yet, the activities are not consistent with the Town of Mansfield performance standards. Those standards state: "Wherever feasible buffers of undisturbed natural vegetation of 50' or more shall be maintained along all watercourses and wetlands" and as such will have a direct impact on the 25', 50', and 150' upland review area due to the change in grade and increase in impervious and pervious surfaces, including buildings and parking lots. We appreciate the LANDTECH reviewers and the applicant working to resolve the issues raised by LANDTECH.

The Conservation Commission recommends the following for consideration by the Inland Wetland Agency:

- Concern for the amount of 25', 50', and 150' Upland Review Area that are utilized for the project area,
- Concern for the installation of impervious surface and structures within 25' and 50' URA,
- To consider removing the basketball court and replacing with vegetative buffer to the adjacent wetland,
- To encourage the use of native species and discourage the use of hybrids, varieties, and non-native species in all plantings,
- To convert the mowed area between the basketball court and 555 to a wet meadow,
- To consider baseline measurements, sampling, and analysis of water quality, which facilitates assessing changes in wetland function and values after construction is complete,
- To consider additional geotechnical testing regarding the perched water table and potential for a stratified drift aquifer,
- To consider adding detail regarding the description of and distinction between the wetlands,
- To consider LID practices 2-8 on the Town LID checklist to compensate for the increase in impervious surfaces,

- To recognize the conservation easement as of high value to Cedar Brook watershed.

Motion PASSED 6-0-0

B. Review of 555 Middle Turnpike Mixed Use Multi-family/Commercial Application W1632

Rittenhouse MOVED and Silander seconded that based on the information presented at this meeting, the 555 project is proposed to reduce peak flow on the site, add stormwater management features, and may generally maintain or improve water quality provided appropriate measures are taken during construction and removed when construction is complete. Yet, the activities are not consistent with the Town of Mansfield performance standards. Those standards state: "Wherever feasible buffers of undisturbed natural vegetation of 50' or more shall be maintained along all watercourses and wetlands" and as such will have a direct impact on the 25', 50', and 150' upland review area due to the change in grade and increase in impervious and pervious surfaces, including buildings and parking lots. We appreciate the LANDTECH reviewers and the applicant working to resolve the issues raised by LANDTECH.

The Conservation Commission recommends the following for consideration by the Inland Wetland Agency:

- Concern for the amount of 25', 50', and 150' Upland Review Area that are utilized for the project area,
- Concern for the installation of impervious and pervious surfaces and structures within the 25', 50', and 150' URA,
- Concern for removal of the vegetative buffer and replacement with pervious surfaces,
- To consider adding detail regarding the description of and distinction between the wetlands, including a wetland function assessment,
- To encourage the use of native species and discourage the use of hybrids, varieties, and non-native species in all plantings,
- To consider additional geotechnical testing regarding the potential of a perched water table and/or potential for a stratified drift aquifer,
- To consider LID practices 2-8 on the Town LID checklist to compensate for the increase in impervious surfaces,
- To consider baseline measurements, sampling, and analysis of water quality, which facilitates assessing changes in wetland function and values after construction is complete,
- To recognize the conservation easement as of high value to Cedar Brook watershed.

Motion PASSED 5-0-0 with Harper recused.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Conservation Easement Monitoring

- i. Report from 5/6/23 Lorraine Drive**
- ii. Future monitoring locations**

B. Streambelt Zoning – Strategies and the Case for Riparian Corridor Protections

6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

A. None

7. COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were noted:

A. Staff Report

Check out the [Mansfield Planning Department webpage](#) for information on development activity in Mansfield.

Also check out [MansfieldTomorrow.org](#) for the planning initiatives in Town, including the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan, and information to participate.

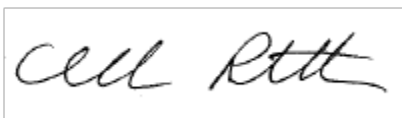
FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission is scheduled for June 21, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:



Chadwick Rittenhouse
Secretary