

MINUTES

Members Present: M. Davis, M. Harper, E. King, C. Rittenhouse, J. Silander, and M. Soares, and W. Ouimet

Members Absent:

Alternates Present: J. Knighton

Alternates Absent:

Staff Present: J. Kaufman

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Soares called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Members present are M. Davis, M. Harper, E. King, C. Rittenhouse, J. Silander, M. Soares, and alternate J. Knighton.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rittenhouse MOVED, Davis seconded approval of the 21 September 2022 minutes as presented.

Motion PASSED 5-0-1.

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

A. No members of the public present

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Conservation Easement Monitoring

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. **W1625-1 Application of CPH Mansfield LLC, Applicant/Champagne Toystore, LLC, Owner for an Inland/Wetlands License for regulated activities associated with a mixed use (automotive sale & services, office and restaurants) at 106 Storrs Road (Assessor's Parcel ID# 38.109.38)**

Matthew Bruton, BL, Engineer for Applicant
Eric Davison, Wetland Scientist for Applicant
Steven Trinkaus, IWA and PZC Stormwater Technical consultant

James McManus, IWA Wetlands technical consultant
Jessica Bates

Matthew Bruton, BL, Engineer for Applicant, gave an overview of the existing conditions, then the proposed conditions, including a reduction by 8,000 sq ft of the existing Champagne Motors building, retention of the existing street entrance, an expansion of parking towards the east behind the building, a new mixed-use building with 3 components, a new street entrance to the new building, and sidewalks along 195/Storrs Rd that connects to all buildings.

Stormwater

For Champagne Motors, adding stormwater management features, including catch basins, separators, subsurface retention systems, and discharge to the existing wetland.

For the proposed mixed-use building, raise site to level that connects directly to Storrs Rd. Two systems, 1 discharging towards Storrs Rd and the other discharging to the rear of the property.

Utilities

Water, sanitary, gas, etc., are all available to serve the existing building. Proposed project will bring new utilities to the mixed-use development

Landscape Plan

Will address the entire property, not just the new development. Street trees, shrubs, interior landscape islands, perimeter landscaping, and rear landscaping for the proposed parking expansion. Will maintain existing vegetation at rear of lot and add a fence for safety and buffering.

Davison, Wetland Scientist, Soil Scientist, Wildlife Biologist. Delineated wetlands in March 2021. Wetland Functions and Values Evaluation in November 2021. Vernal Pool assessment in March 2022. Report includes delineation, functions and values, and vernal pool.

One continuous wetland system on the east edge of the property that extends to the north and east off the property. A pipe outlets near wetland flag 13 and is the only known discharge to the wetland. That source is believed to be road runoff.

There is a circular pond with an earthen berm on the south end of the pond, believed to be human-constructed. The earthen berm has been breached and the pond is now flow-through. The pond is permanently flooded and supports common and invasive aquatic species, including water cress. There is a large forest wetland that extends south and east to the Natchaug River; some of it appears to be old oxbows.

The Vernal Pool assessment indicated amphibians breed here, including green frog, which overwinter in water. Based on green frog presence, this pond holds water year-round.

There is a Vernal Pool off-site, approximately 600 feet from edge of site activity, with wood frog (a vernal pool indicator species).

Commission Questions

How much fill on the south end of the property, what is the grade increase?

- Topo goes from 178 down to 169 on the site. The new grade will be ~173 at the road and 171 at the proposed mix-use building.
- Proposing a retaining wall on the east side of the expanded parking lot, height of 8' behind Champagne building, and 5' to 8' abutting Staples, but on the downhill side

Substantial increase in impervious surface and a contorted traffic way for the proposed mix-use development. Also a substantial increase in parking beyond what exists for a car dealership. Any way to reduce the impervious surface, roads, and improve traffic flow?

- Goal of maintaining roadway is to connect the two properties while maintaining functionality between the buildings and of each building

What/who is the intended use of the expanded parking? It is within the upland review area and not connected by walkways to the mixed-use development

- The expanded parking will support Champagne Motors, their inventory to sell

Retaining wall around expanded parking, will there be plantings or a vegetative buffer?

- Yes, there will be a several foot to 10-foot vegetative area between the retaining wall, fence, and existing vegetation.

How much change (net) in parking for Champagne Motors compared to present?

- Existing spaces ~200. Proposed spaces ~75 for parking, 109 for storage, totaling 184 spaces

Why the connection between the two properties? It pushes the parking into the upland review area.

- The connection is desired, especially for staff and customers of Champagne to use the mixed-use development
- There is a retaining wall between the two buildings with height of 3 to 3.5 feet between the two drives

What will be the shrub and tress species? The grass species mixture was identified and appropriate. Will there be any alien or invasive species as listed on the CT Invasive Species site?

- There goal is to not introduce anything to the property. Sheet LL0 provides botanical names for trees and shrubs. They will double-check to make sure everything there is not listed

There are some better alternatives to what is listed for shrubs and trees

Will the lighting be dark sky compliant?

- Yes, upgraded site lighting will be full cutoff, dark sky compliant fixtures as identified in the Lighting schematic

Was greenscaping considered in site design?

- Alternative ways of treating stormwater were explored, but LID features would extend into the upland review area and they wanted to minimize disturbance in the URA.

Please explain the stormwater features

- Existing conditions have a couple catch basins along a west-east line on the northern part of the property. The majority of lot sheet flows to the wetland. No treatment, no detention, no storm-water quality features for existing conditions.

- Proposed conditions include additional catch basins that direct stormwater to separators, and detention and infiltration systems. All designed up to 100-year event.

Did the analysis include the water coming from off-site to the west?

- Yes

Are there recommendations, conditions, or regulations for interconnecting with the state's stormwater infrastructure? How does it work that their system connects to yours?

- There will be a review process

What are the functions and values of the adjacent wetland?

- Flood-flow alteration is a principal function
- Sediment and toxin removal and attenuation

James McManus, Reviewed wetlands report for the Town

The wetland boundary line is disturbed with fill piles, invasive species

What is the percent change in impervious cover? How much fill will go into the upland review area?

- Increase in impervious area from 50% to 62.5%, so 12.5% increase in impervious area
- Per the application, 4455 cubic yards of materials for the site, of which 3740 cubic yards being deposited in the upland review area.

Steven Trinkaus, Reviewed stormwater on behalf of the Town

The Applicant addressed many concerns. Some outstanding points:

1. A phasing plan is needed given grading, new parking construction, and new building construction
2. Two standards for reduction of post-development peak rate of 2-year storm. The Applicant did meet one of the standards but not the most stringent one.
3. Per Appendix A of the report:
 - a. Relocate outlet pipe to be angled toward the wetland
 - b. Relocate outlet pipe to discharge at base of retaining wall
 - c. Add wet swale with wetland plugs to provide nutrient removal between wall and limit of disturbance. The flatter the better, the wetter the better, to improve water quality.
4. PVC paver grids with topsoil and grass, with an underdrain system, might be an option for the eastern-most expanded parking lot. Not really a good option for the other expanded parking – it should be paved to maintain structural integrity for vehicles.

Can we hear from the wetland scientists about the recommendation for a wet swale?

- Davison – intrigued with the idea of nutrient removal. Would like some clarity as to why there is a large discrepancy between the estimates of removal. If it is as large as calculated by Trinkaus, it would be worth it despite being in the URA. With this type of development, will nitrogen and phosphorous be that high?
- McManus – it's a personal preference. He prefers above-ground facilities over infiltration largely because above ground is what nature does. Sun and plants do good work. Wetlands do too. The swale would be a win for the project.
- Trinkaus – the loads were calculated on 1 inch of rain. Major source is atmospheric deposition. Removal efficiencies are for stand-alone systems. When you put practices in series, e.g., catch basins that go to separators, this is still an active area of research in LID.

Monitoring wells – where are they and will they be maintained?

- Phase I wells will be discontinued as allowed. Phase II wells will be maintained if required.

Rittenhouse MOVED and Soares seconded that based on the information presented at this meeting, the project is proposed to reduce peak flow on the site, add stormwater management features, pre-treatment for suspended solids, floatables, trash, and oils, and may generally improve water quality provided appropriate measures are taken during construction and removed when construction is complete. Yet, the activities will have a direct impact on the upland review area due to the large volume and extent of fill. We appreciate the reviewers and the applicant working to resolve the issues raised.

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

- Concern for the amount of Upland Review Area that is utilized for the project area, including 3740 cubic yards of fill,
- Concern for the high percentage of impervious surface and increase from 50% to 62.5% impervious surface on site, totaling ~38,000 sq ft,
- To consider removing, reducing in size, or moving westward the eastern-most expanded parking, which would reduce the amount of fill within the upland review area and the amount of impervious surface; or alternatively to use PVC paver grids with topsoil and grass, with an underdrain system, for the eastern-most expanded parking lot,
- To consider alternative site designs that remove or relocate the connection between the commercial and industrial uses of the property, which may facilitate moving the eastern-most parking lot,
- To add a walkway to allow foot traffic between the buildings in addition to the sidewalk,
- To encourage the use of native species and discourage the use of hybrids, varieties, and non-native species,
- To add a wet swale along the retaining wall and ideally within the existing limit of disturbance to improve nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorous) removal,
- To conduct infiltration tests in the areas of proposed sub-surface infiltration systems,
- To maintain existing monitoring wells if required,
- To consider baseline measurements, sampling, and analysis of water quality at the current discharge point, which facilitates assessing changes in wetland function and values after construction is complete.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

B. 2023 Meeting Schedule

Rittenhouse MOVED and Davis seconded to adopt the 2023 Meeting Schedule as presented, with the exception of the January meeting, which will be moved to Tuesday, January 10, 2023.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

A. Soares mentioned that Fuss & O'Neill is launching a nature-based solutions workgroup

7. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Inland Wetlands Agency Monthly Business Report 2022-11-21-2023

B. Development Activity

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

8. FUTURE MEETINGS

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission is scheduled for December 21, 2022.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted:



Chadwick Rittenhouse
Secretary