

**MINUTES
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONFERENCE ROOM "A"**

3:30 P.M.

NOVEMBER 14, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Steve Miller; Vice Chairman Mary Ann Blanchard;
Members Barbara McMillan, Elissa Hill Stone, Peter
Vandermark, Alternate Paul Ambrose

MEMBERS ABSENT: Allison Tanner, Rich DiPentima; Alternate Shelley Saunders

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

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I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of minutes – September 12, 2012

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

II. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS

1. 77 South Street
Craig Welch and Stefany Shaheen, owners
Assessor Map 102, Lot 48

Mr. John Chagnon of Ambit Engineering, Inc., Ms. Sarah Hourihane of DeStefano Architects, and Mr. Craig Welch, property owner were present to speak to the application.

Mr. Chagnon stated that the property was on the corner of South Street and Johnson Court on the South Mill Pond. He said that there was currently a parking area at the back of the property. The owners were looking to construct a garage for parking. He said they were showing the Commission two options for accessing the garage.

Mr. Chagnon guided the Commission through the submitted plans. He said they were proposing a rain garden to catch runoff from the street.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked what the square footage was of the proposed driveway and deck. Mr. Chagnon said it was about 290 square feet.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked where the snow was currently placed in the winter months. Mr. Welch said that Johnson Court was a City street so most of the snow was pushed towards the end of the street toward the pond.

Mr. Vandermark asked about the existing paved parking area and wondered if it was used by the homeowners. Mr. Welch stated they did not know why the parking area was placed so far away from the house. Mr. Vandermark wondered why some of it was going to be left instead of removing it entirely. Mr. Welch pointed out that parking was at a premium in the South End so they wanted to retain a couple spaces.

Ms. McMillan asked how many parking spaces would there be with the proposed plan. Mr. Welch said they had as many as six spaces but thought the plan would be reduced by two or three spaces.

There was detailed discussion about the calculations of the site.

Chairman Miller asked for detail concerning the rain garden. Mr. Chagnon pointed out the details on page D1 of the submitted plans. Chairman Miller stated that the plans were difficult to read because of their small size. Ms. Stone asked if the soil in that area would be removed for off site disposal. Mr. Chagnon said most likely.

Ms. Stone asked if there would be gutters on the new addition that would be going onto the porous pavement. Ms. Hourihane said that they had not gotten that far in the design but they would work with Mr. Chagnon to address the run off. Vice Chairman Blanchard thought that was really important.

Mr. Welch confirmed that all of the asphalt would be removed and replaced with a pervious surface.

Chairman Miller asked when they thought they might start this process. Mr. Welch stated that they were looking to late spring or early summer to start the work.

Chairman Miller said that he appreciated the porous pavement and the rain garden but that he wished that he had more information about the balance of what was there now and what was proposed in order to evaluate the water quality. He added that he would like to see some plantings to soften the edges and to help with water quality. He said he was looking for an improvement.

There was discussion about moving the rain garden to a different location, possibly along the road to spare a large tree. Mr. Chagnon commented that the area would get more snow pack. Chairman Miller suggested that the plantings could be designed to take the snow.

Ms. McMillan wondered if there could be a deed restriction with regards to the rain garden so that it could not be taken out by a new owner of the property.

Mr. Welch pointed out that the plan was going before the Historic District Commission for a work session later that evening. They were planning to present both options to the Commission so if the plan changed from what was approved by the Conservation Commission, they would have to come back. He thought it might make sense to postpone the application until after the HDC reviews it.

Ms. McMillan made a motion to postpone the application to the December 12, 2012 meeting for further review. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vandermark. The motion passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

III. STATE WETLANDS BUREAU PERMIT APPLICATIONS

- A. Minimum Impact Expedited Application
77 South Street
Craig Welch and Stefany Shaheen, owners
Assessor Map 102, Lot 48

This item was also postponed to the December 12, 2012 meeting for further review.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

1. North Mill Pond City property

Mr. Britz passed out a map to the Commissioners highlighting a piece of City owned property. He explained that the City was given the parcel as part of the Mill Pond Way development. Currently the Department of Public Works mows it annually. He pointed out that Dave Burdick and the City schoolchildren did some restoration work on the shoreline not too long ago. Mr. Britz said that the grassy area could be improved to provide wetland buffer function and a natural habitat. He told the Commission that he received a phone from a neighbor offering to mow it more often so it would look nice but Mr. Britz felt he should run the offer past the Commission. He said that he thought they could claim a portion of the buffer and do some plantings. He also thought they might be able to secure some funds from somewhere and have volunteers do the work.

Chairman Miller stated that he was familiar with the area and the restoration project. He liked the idea of doing some plantings, enhancing the buffer and reducing the mowing as much as possible. He thought the Mill Pond advocates would be happy to help with the labor.

Vice Chairman Blanchard added that the Portsmouth Garden Club was looking for a project to fund and might be willing to help. She felt it would take some time to develop a landscape plan. Chairman Miller suggested native species that were low maintenance. He added that he liked the idea of a little bit of lawn

Mr. Britz said that he would draw up a plan and bring it back to the Commission for their review.

Mr. Vandermark said that this would be a good opportunity to use this parcel as an example of the current regulations. Ms. McMillan agreed that it would be a good demonstration site and that added that putting up a sign explaining the project would be helpful also.

Chairman Miller stated that he thought it might be a good site for stormwater demonstration or a rain garden.

Mr. Britz said that he would talk with Vice Chairman Blanchard about funds and talk with DPW about the storm water situation. Then a plan could be sketched out. Chairman Miller said that he would talk with the advocates as well.

In additional business, Chairman Miller welcomed new member Paul Ambrose to the Conservation Commission. He will serve as the second alternate.

Also, Vice Chairman Blanchard suggested that a note of thanks be sent to the City attorney and staff for their assistance in facilitation the acquisition of the island in Sagamore Creek. Chairman Miller thought that was a good idea.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 5:00 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
Conservation Commission Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Conservation Commission meeting on December 12, 2012.