




# CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

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## Memo

TO: Conservation Commission Members  
FROM: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner   
DATE: October 7, 2016  
SUBJ: October 12, 2016 Conservation Commission Meeting

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### 150 Route One Bypass

This application is to demolish the building currently on the site and rebuild it into a 30 unit multifamily residential building. The application proposes to reduce the amount of impervious surface on the site. Through the use of an underbuilding parking structure the parking on the site which is currently 82 spaces will be reduced to 17 exterior spaces and 44 interior spaces.

According to *Article 10 Section 10.1017.50* the applicant must satisfy the following conditions for approval of this project.

- 1. The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.* The applicant has received approval from the Board of adjustment for the multifamily use at the proposed density. The area of impervious surface on the site is proposed to be reduced from 10,860 square feet to 10,335 square feet. Given the reduction in impervious surface and the reduction of intensity of use in the buffer allowing for reestablishment of the 25' no cut buffer the applicant has taken steps to reduce the intensity of use on the site. Concerns have been raised over the potential to impact the groundwater elevation which could affect the wetland areas on the site. The applicant has addressed this concern and other concerns related to surface water and groundwater on the site in the enclosed study from Stone Hill Environmental. Given the findings in the report staff believes the land with the development proposed is suited to the activities and alterations proposed.
- 2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* This is a site redevelopment project and the proposed work is within the existing developed footprint on the site. As such, the proposed alternative is reasonable for the proposed activities.
- 3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* The applicant is providing a greater setback to the wetland at the rear of the site and reducing impervious surface on the site. The applicant is also adding a full foundation to the proposed building for parking. While this provides a reduction in impervious surface the foundation drain will be moving groundwater through the site in a different manner than occurs today. Given this issue has been studied and a report provided staff believes, based on this study, that no adverse impact will be created to the wetlands at the rear of the site.
- 4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.* This application proposes to increase the buffer to the wetland at the rear of the property to allow for development of a vegetated 25' buffer.

5. *The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.* Overall the reductions in impervious surface on the site should provide a reduction in impacts to the wetland at the rear of the site. The applicant has a landscape plan which provides additional plantings on the developed portion of the site which should help buffer the proposed parking area from the wetland at the rear of the site.

**Conclusion:** Staff recommends approval of the project as proposed.

### 56 Lois Street

This application is for an extension to Lois Street, driveway, and construction of a single family residence almost completely within the wetland buffer. In order to construct the home proposed in this application the applicant must receive subdivision approval for the project and then construct the extension of Lois Street to City specifications with provisions for vehicle turn around at the end of the street.

According to *Article 10 Section 10.1017.50* the applicant must satisfy the following conditions for approval of this project.

1. *The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.* This site is not suited to the proposed activity or alteration, the entire area proposed for development is located within the wetland buffer. The application proposes to impact 32,742 square feet of wetland buffer in an otherwise undisturbed area. This area borders a well established wetland at the rear of the site. This wetland is part of the headwaters to Sagamore which flows adjacent to the Southeastern property boundary.
2. *There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* This project requires subdivision approval to allow for development of the proposed single family home and street extension. Given the amount of wetlands and lack of access to the Site from an existing City street this is not a feasible or reasonable site for the proposed development.
3. *There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* The construction of the roadway and house in the site would greatly diminish the wetland buffer area and create a barrier for wildlife movement in the area. The Public Undeveloped Lands Assessment identified a wildlife corridor adjacent to site 63 in that study which originates near this site. Extending the roadway and building a single family residence would provide a barrier to the open space corridor currently in this area which would allow passage of wildlife between this property and the large tract of undeveloped land along Greenleaf Avenue.
4. *Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.* The applicant's construction goals require the removal of a great deal of vegetation in this area. It appears that the applicant believes that the removal of vegetation proposed is what is necessary to accomplish the construction goals for this project and they have taken steps to reduce impact through the use of low impact development techniques and buffer plantings.
5. *The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.* Given the amount of impact necessary to develop this property the proposal to subdivide this property with the goal of constructing a new single family home in this area is not the alternative with the least impact.

**Conclusion:** Staff recommends denial of the project as proposed.

## 100 Campus Drive

The Foundation for Seacoast Health is requesting Conditional Use Approval to pave an existing gravel sidewalk that extends from the facility to a satellite parking lot.

According to *Article 10 Section 10.1017.50* the applicant must satisfy the following conditions for approval of this project.

1. *The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.* The exiting sidewalk is gravel and traverses both wetland buffer and wetland areas. When the original sidewalk was built no accommodation was made to allow the water to move under the path or treat stormwater runoff. This proposal will improve the situation through the installation of two new culverts in the wetland crossing areas and drainage swales to contain the stormwater before it enters the wetlands.
2. *There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.* This application is proposing to replace an existing sidewalk with a paved sidewalk which is narrower than the existing. This is the most feasible location given there is a sidewalk/path there today.
3. *There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.* The proposal should provide a small benefit to the wetlands on this property with the treatment of stormwater and the proposed culverts which will allow better connection of the wetland surface water.
4. *Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.* There is no cutting of vegetation proposed with this project.
5. *The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.* Overall this project should result in a net improvement of the site.

**Conclusion:** Staff recommends approval of the project with the following three stipulations.

- 1) The applicant shall provide a construction detail on the stormwater treatment swales
- 2) The applicant shall provide a winter maintenance plan the uses no sodium chloride or the minimum necessary amount of sodium chloride on this path.
- 3) The applicant shall provide a construction detail on the proposed culverts including providing for an installation where the culverts are imbedded into the ground at least two inches under the soil so there is a natural bottom in the culvert to allow enhanced passage for amphibians and reptiles.