



Memo

TO: Conservation Commission Members
FROM: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner
Kate Homet, Associate Environmental Planner
DATE: May 5, 2023
SUBJ: May 10, 2023 Conservation Commission Meeting

Site Address
0 Ocean Road
E194 & U181 Structure Replacement Project
Eversource
(LU-23-60)

This is a utility structure replacement project with work throughout the Portsmouth transmission corridor between Gosling Road to Echo Avenue and between Borthwick Avenue and the Ocean Road Substation. The Site crosses through residential, industrial and commercial properties, as well as wooded areas and wetlands. Work in the right of way is proposed in palustrine scrub-shrub and palustrine emergent wetland systems, including the Great Bog. Additionally, there will be temporary impacts to the Pickering Brook tributary and within the 100-foot wetland buffer. In total, the proposed project requires approximately 208,734 sq. ft. of temporary wetland impact for the placement of timber matting and structure replacements. There will be approximately 3,310 sq. ft. of temporary impact to Pickering Brook in order to span the stream with timber matting. The project also proposes 78,642 sq. ft. of temporary buffer impact in uplands for clearing and grading to gain access to structures.

According to *Article 10 Section 10.1017.650* the applicant must satisfy the following conditions for approval of this utility project.

1. *The proposed project is in the public interest.*

The project is necessary maintain existing corridor powerlines with upgraded support poles.

2. *Design, construction, and maintenance methods will utilize best management practices to minimize any detrimental impact of such use upon the wetland and will include restoration of the site as nearly as possible to its original grade condition and vegetated state.*

The applicant has stated that the work will be conducted in accordance with NHDES Best Management Practices Manual for Utilities in and Adjacent to Wetlands and Waterbodies (NH DNCR 2019). Prior to placement of timber mats the applicant has stated they will inspect the mats to ensure cleanliness and will clean them off with each reuse. Wooden timber matting will be used to minimize the disturbance of wetlands and sensitive areas and once removed, the areas will be restored and stabilized with seed and mulch. Any areas of soil disturbance will be stabilized with seed and straw mulch. Additional proposed BMPs include silt fences, straw wattles/bales, and the use of water bars.

3. *No alternative feasible route exists which does not cross or alter a wetland or have a less detrimental impact on a wetland.*

The applicant has chosen the only routes available to access the replacement poles, but the applicant has selected access designed to utilize existing historical access routes where possible to minimize impacts.

4. *Alterations of natural vegetation or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.*

Generally, the vegetation is expected to return to its original configuration after the timber mats are removed. After removal, if erosion has occurred the areas will be restored with seed and mulch. However, there will be some vegetation removed exactly where the structure replacement is proposed to occur.

Recommendation: Staff believes the applicant has provided a work plan which is best suited to the nature of the work required to maintain the utility lines in this corridor and recommends this application be approved as proposed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Site Address
365 Little Harbor Road
Charles Doleac, Owner

A wetland restoration program created by Marc Jacobs, a certified soil & wetland scientist, has been approved by the NH Department of Environmental Services for the property at 365 Little Harbor Road. This plan was created in response to unpermitted impacts to a jurisdictional shoreland area which resulted in a clearing of vegetation along the slope of the shore. The property owner is planning to work with a licensed pesticide applicator to remove invasive species on the property and they plan on replanting the area with similar shrubs and tree species that existed in the area prior to removal. Given the applicant has received approval for this restoration plan and the result will be not change to terrain or no new structures on the site, just a revegetated site, staff recommends the City allow the restoration to proceed with no additional permitting from the City.