

**DRAFT Peterborough Conservation Commission minutes  
September 15, 2022, 7 p.m., Peterborough Town House**

Present: Swift Corwin, Matt Lundsted, John Patterson, Bob Strong, Francie Von Mertens; Dick McNamara, Lise Venning

For the Stone Barn: Paul Harrington, Eldon Munson, developer, Peter LaRoche, project construction, Jeff Kevan, TF Moran, project engineer;

**Stone Barn Special Exception relating to density / ConCom comment for ZBA**

John Patterson asked for introductions. Francie Von Mertens then explained that the purview of the Conservation Commission was focused on wetland crossings at this early stage and that the Commission would be commenting in more detail at the site plan review stage before the Planning Board. At that time the wetlands delineation will be updated and stormwater treatment detailed.

Jeff Kevan walked the group through the plans involving three properties. In addition to the separate 3-acre workforce housing project (12 units), the remaining 33.5 acres would include 33 units in or attached to the stone barn, and 34 new units or "cottages." Twenty-five would be located on the sloped easterly portion of the property. All would be defined as elderly housing (one occupant must be 55 or older), thereby requiring a special exception from the Zoning Board that would determine density following town code 245-43: Special exception for elderly housing.

To address stormwater issues, Mr. Kevan mentioned rain gardens (small bio retention basins) close to the runoff source, and the need to meet Alteration of Terrain standards. He said that given trend towards greater rainfall intensity, there are requirements to engineer recharge (infiltration) locally before stormwater builds momentum.

Mr. Munson said the 25 cottages on the easterly hillside likely would be a later phase.

Von Mertens said the group would discuss and draft comment to the ZBA but it appeared it would be limited to the three wetland crossings, and the ConCom would have more comment and a site visit during the Planning Board CUP process by which time the wetland delineations would be renewed.

She read the special exception criteria #2 relating to natural resources. She mentioned that density would not appear to impact the three wetland crossings, located where they had been approved previously. Mr. Kevan said he thought the density "isn't that different" from what was proposed and approved before.

John Patterson asked if there were plans to clear trees given the likely possibility of views of Mr. Monadnock. Mr. Kevan said maintaining as much undisturbed soil and vegetation as possible to stabilize soil would be important. He didn't know how much natural vegetation would remain. He imagined there would be some selective view clearing.

Von Mertens said they would draft comment for the October 3 ZBA meeting and send a copy to Mr. Munson.

After the Stone Barn team left, ConCom members discussed density as likely being greater than what was previously approved, and whether to mention that, but limited their comment to the wetland crossings and treatment of runoff before it enters the wetlands, not yet shown on plans.

### **Conservation Easement monitoring**

Robert Wood (Woody) was contracted to monitor up to six easements annually the last three years. The group discussed how many to contract this year.

Bob Strong said he would do the three Monahon easements as their abutter, and John Patterson will do Daloz.

The importance of annual monitoring was stressed to avoid infractions that could be costly to the town.

Swift Corwin offered a motion:

"Move to approve hiring Woody to monitor easements not to exceed \$10,000."

There was a general sense that costs would come in well under that amount. (Matt Lundsted second.) The motion passed unanimously.

Dick McNamara said that the Hillsborough ConCom would set a weekend date, and ConCom members available at that time would walk the easement. Filing the report often is the challenge, as it is with the Peterborough volunteer monitors.

### **Fremont-Monahon trail link, and new trail on Fremont land**

For the stream crossing, Corwin said that Lew Shelley looked at the crossing area and has located the locust planking needed. Price to come for a 36" wide bridging.

Corwin will look into whether a wetland permit is needed.

Bob Strong said the loop-trail route he flagged passes several features mentioned in Tom Wessels' Reading the Forested Landscape.

An interpretive guide was mentioned as a possibility. Bob will send his photos around of the various features, or show them at the next meeting. He said it would be great to have Tom Wessels do a guided walk to interpret the various features.

### **Hemlock Looper infestation**

Corwin said the caterpillar infestation covered a wide area of the Fremont forest, hitting the understory hemlocks that are unlikely to survive complete loss of needles. He said deciduous trees can survive loss of leaves but not conifers. He mentioned a heightened fire danger.

### **Minutes**

July 21 and 28 minutes were approved

### **New Member**

Dick McNamara, who has attended past ConCom meetings and served on the Hillsborough ConCom before moving to town, said he'd like to put his name in as an alternate member—news enthusiastically received by the group. Von Mertens will relay a recommendation to the Select Board

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