

Town of Stafford
Inland Wetlands Commission
Special Meeting
January 19, 2022 – 7:00 PM
Remote Meeting via Zoom

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TOWN CLERK

Members Present: John D. Wilson, Acting Chair
 Kurt Mordasky
 Hickory Lake
 Dr. David Mordasky, Alternate

Also Present: David Perkins, ZEO
 Keegan Martin, applicant
 Rick Zulick, Certified Forester/Soil Scientist
 with Datum Engineering and Surveying, LLC

Public Hearing:

Application for wetland crossing and new structures at 24 Spencer Road East.

John Wilson opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m., establishing a quorum with John Wilson, Acting Chair; Kurt Mordasky, Hickory Lake, and seating alternate member Dr. David Mordasky.

David Perkins used the screen sharing option on Zoom to show the various photos and documents for the public hearing. He said Spencer Road East is located off Hampden Road, which is an unimproved road. There is an easement along the State property that allows the State to have access to the forest. David Perkins showed the two proposed wetlands crossings and location of the proposed structures. He delineated the wetlands and showed where the upland review area is located.

David Perkins said he had previously given Keegan Martin permission to go in and clear the relatively flat lot. However, there are piles of stumps and logs some of which are in the wetlands. The pictures show the limit of disturbance. His concern is that the wetlands will go into the pipe there and he wants it to flow through gently and come out the other side. David Perkins said he and John Wilson walked the property about 1-1/2 months ago and he thinks the engineering is fine, but there is debris and wood in the wetlands and he does not want the wetlands to be disturbed more.

Rick Zulick, a certified soil scientist hired by Keegan Martin, prepared a plan. He said if you go to the end of Hampden Road and then left on Spencer, there is a gate with access to the boy scout camp. He said the first wetlands crossing will require about 40 yards of gravel and will displace about 100 feet of wetlands soil. The second crossing will require about 60 yards of gravel and will displace about 800 feet of wetlands soil.

Rick Zulick said he is recommending placing stabilizing fabric under the driveway and to use an excavator. He said riprap, which would be approximately six feet by five feet should be installed by hand. Rick said the wetlands primarily consist of a Ridgebury poorly drained soil. He reviewed the findings in his October 27, 2021 report. He found the wetland areas to be a functioning wetland ecosystem.

Rick Zulick recommended installation of geotextile silt fence and/or hay bales down gradient of the proposed activity associated with the proposed house, barn and crossings. He also recommended establishing a vegetated buffer for any wetland areas adjacent to future activities that might jeopardize the existing functions and values of the wetland. The buffer should consist of native species that will establish quickly and create a permanent protective ground cover. He said the road they are utilizing is an existing agricultural road and the second crossing is at the end of the existing road.

John Wilson asked how the debris in the wetlands would be removed. Rick Zulick said he didn't see any debris in the westernmost wetland area. David Perkins said there is debris along the road and he showed on the map the other areas where debris is located. He noted Rick had put wetlands tags on some debris when he was at the site.

Keegan Martin suggested that an excavator could be used to remove the debris. David Perkins said it would be best to do that now while the ground is hard and before things get wetter and softer. David Perkins said they may want to get the crossing done so they can get back in there. He said, if they do so, they need to address it more gingerly than how they had in the beginning. Keegan Martin asked if it was okay to disturb the area so long as they avoid making any big ruts. Rick Zulick stressed that any removal in the area where the riprap will be placed must be done by hand. David Perkins said anything done in the wetlands off the road needs to be done by hand. Rick Zulick said they usually use excavators to put in bits of gravel and they will need an excavator to do some portion of the crossing.

David Perkins said they should get up there in the winter while the ground is frozen and get the logs out and up on dry ground. John Wilson noted there is a good deal of debris and he would want to see that cleared up first while the ground is frozen. He said the material left in the flagged wetland area needs to be removed.

Dr. David Mordasky asked how much of the material needs to be pulled out. Should they dig out the stumps? Or is it better just to remove the material on top? Where should they take it to? And will that create concerns that Keegan Martin may end up with a wet basement. David Perkins noted that the area where the house is proposed to be located won't be wet. He outlined the direction where the water drains.

Hickory Lake asked what they planned to do with the debris. Keegan Martin said they will take the stumps offsite and the wood will go to a logger. He said he plans to burn the small brush. Hickory Lake asked if it made sense to get a truck and use machinery to reach in for the debris. John Wilson said it made sense if they did it now while the ground is frozen. He said he didn't think they could do the crossing with the debris in there.

David Perkins said he had advised Keegan Martin not to go into the wetland area, but his work extended into there, so there may now be some non-native soils in there. Rick Zulick noted the area was not flagged by the prior soil scientist and he (Rick) had flagged it after the fact. There was general agreement that they will need to address the cleanup at the same time they build the crossings.

David Perkins said his other concern is what might happen as the property becomes more developed, such as adding a lawn and if pesticides are used. There could end up being more incursion into the

wetlands. He expressed concern about the long term impact on the wetlands and was looking for suggestions about how to keep this from occurring.

Keegan Martin said he had no plans to have a farm with cattle or horses. He does not plan to develop the land beyond planting grass outside the wetlands boundary. He has no plans to use pesticides.

Dr. David Mordasky noted he was briefly offline, but said he agreed with Hickory Lake that they should put in the road first and then figure out what to do with the wetlands. He asked Rick Zulick how he would approach it. Rick Zulick recommended getting the two crossings in place to provide full access to the property. He said a lot of the debris can be removed by hand, but some will require an excavator. He said he would not want to see any stumping done and some wood may need to be cut with a chainsaw to tidy things up. He suggested having David Perkins monitor the work. John Wilson agreed.

David Perkins said when he sees proposed barns, he anticipates agricultural uses and asked what the plan was for the barn. Keegan Martin said he plans to use it to store his tractor and possibly have some chickens and goats. He is not planning to have any cattle or horses or to be walking through the wetlands.

David Perkins noted the limit of disturbance line by the engineer and that a stockpile area is within that line. He said he would want to see placards and markers in certain designated areas so as to inform homeowners that wetlands exist there. If there is an approval, then afterward they can work on where they should go.

AGENDA

- 1. Call to order.**
- 2. Establish a quorum**
- 3. Review and approve minutes of 12/15/21**
- 4. Review and take possible action on application for wetland crossing and new structures at 24 Spencer Road East**
- 5. Adjournment**

- 1. Call to order.**

The Special Meeting immediately followed the public hearing at about 7:45 p.m.

- 2. Establish a quorum.**

The meeting continued with the same quorum established for the public hearing.

- 3. Review and approve minutes of 12/15/21.**

It was noted in the minutes that Kurt Mordasky was incorrectly referred to as Keith Mordasky. Dr. David Mordasky made a motion to accept the minutes of December 15, 2021 as amended, seconded by Kurt Mordasky. All were in favor. Motion carried.

4. Review and take possible action on application for wetland crossing and new structures at 24 Spencer Road East.

Dr. David Mordasky made a motion, seconded by Hickory Lake to proceed with the building of the road with two culvert crossings while cleaning the wetlands without further disturbance. The work must be done under the supervision of the Zoning Enforcement Officer and the guidance of the applicant's engineer. Wetlands must also be marked with permanent signage.

The Commission discussed the motion. Keegan Martin pointed out that putting in the road with the culverts is an expensive process and he wanted to make sure his application would be approved first. David Perkins noted this is the Inland Wetlands Commission, so he would get a permit from him with the approved motion stated on it.

Hickory Lake asked if they need to address in the motion that the house and barn are in the upland review area. David Perkins suggested they add to the motion approval of the proposed house and barn as presented on the site plan dated July 20, 2021.

Hickory Lake amended the motion above to add the Inland Wetland Commission's approval of the proposed house and barn as presented on the site plan dated July 20, 2021. Dr. David Mordasky seconded the amendment. A vote was taken on the full motion and all were in favor. Motion carried.

David Perkins noted he will issue the permit after the required 15-day waiting period.

The Commission discussed some lessons learned from the application. It was noted that the original soil scientist did not flag the crossings as wetlands. David Perkins noted it is best to get a site plan first. John Wilson said he felt if they follow through on what was discussed this evening, everything should work out well.

5. Adjournment

Dr. David Mordasky made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kurt Mordasky. All were in favor. Motion carried. The January 19, 2022 meeting of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Annie Gentile
Recording Secretary