



CITY OF DOVER

DOVER CONSERVATION COMMISSION – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: First Floor Conference Room - 288 Central Avenue, Dover, NH
Meeting Date: Monday, February 13, 2023
Meeting Time: 5:30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Hunt (Chair), Steve Fellows (Vice Chair), Robert Atwood (Secretary), Amy Kramer-Perry, Kristen Murphy, Abigail Lyon, Bruce Batchelder (Alternate), Jake Geddes (Alternate)

Absent (Excused): None.

STAFF PRESENT: Jackson Kaspari – Resilience Manager

A. Kramer-Perry arrived at 5:38 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was convened at 5:30 PM.

2. CITIZENS' FORUM: No citizens were present to speak during the forum

3. APPROVAL OF THE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES – January 9, 2023

S. Fellows moved to approve the January 9, 2023 minutes with two minor corrections, A. Lyon seconded. Vote: 4 yes.

4. OLD BUSINESS: None

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- A.** City of Dover Conditional Use Permit for Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy, (Agent: VHB, Inc.), Assessor's Maps H and M, covering various lots within the existing utility transmission ROW, zoned IT and R-40, located east of Freshet Road at the Madbury town line and between west of Overlook Drive and east to Quaker Lane. Proposal is to perform maintenance work on the 307 Transmission Line involving a single utility structure replacement and optical ground wire replacement creating 2,796 square feet of wetland impact and combined 13,471 square feet of temporary impact to wetland buffers and the Conservation District.

Sherrie Trefry from VHB was present to explain the application. Sherrie walked the Commission through each specific temporary impact area and highlighted the corresponding required NHDES permits. The proposed work is part of a much larger project stretching through Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. All proposed impacts are temporary in nature. Matting will be deployed to limit impacts to wetland areas and the timing is such that the vegetation will have the opportunity to rebound during this growing season. The work pads are 100' by 100'. Erosion and sediment control will be placed in the appropriate areas. VHB is in charge of monitoring the ongoing work to ensure environmental compliance.

S. Fellows asked for clarification on the access point for the work near Freshet Rd.

A. Lyon moved to endorse the application. J. Aube seconded. Vote: 7 yes.

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- B.** City of Dover Conditional Use Permit for Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy, (Agent: VHB, Inc.), Assessor's Maps I, M and K covering various lots within the existing utility transmission ROW, zoned CWD, R-40, and R-12 from the Dover Substation off Cocheco Street to the Madbury town line. Proposal is to replace 14 wooden utility poles with weathered steel structures along the M183 Transmission Line creating 15,399 square feet of temporary wetland impact and 30,883 square feet of temporary impact to wetland buffers and the Conservation District.

Sherrie Trefry from VHB was present to explain the application. Sherrie walked the Commission through each specific temporary impact area and highlighted the corresponding required NHDES permits. The same process will be followed as was mentioned for the last agenda item.

J. Aube moved to endorse the application. K. Murphy seconded. Vote: 7 yes.

- C.** NHDES Major Impact Wetland Permit Application for Saddle Trail Drive Home Owners Association (Agent: Ambit Engineering, Inc.) Assessor's Map N Lot 8-1, zoned R-40, located at off Saddle Trail Drive. Proposal is to construct a tidal docking structure consisting of a 4' x 24' accessway, a 4' x 165' fixed wood pier, a 3' x 50' gangway and an 8' x 75' float, totaling 96 square feet of permanent impact to the previously developed Tidal Buffer Zone and 1,410 square feet of permanent impact to tidal wetlands.

Steve Riker from Ambit Engineering, Inc. was present to explain the application. The HOA is seeking to use the set aside lot as part of the subdivision to provide tidal docking access for the members of the HOA. Demonstrated least impacting alternative by showing the extent of the salt marsh on the plan and how the proposed tidal docking structure is oriented to reduce impacts to the salt marsh. Portions of the structure will be prefabricated off site and lowered into place with a crane bar. All of the required coastal assessment info was provided in the application package.

S. Fellows: If you were to remove another section of the gangway to move it further from the channel is the issue that the structure would now be resting on the ground at low tide?

S. Riker: The intent is to provide enough depth at the face of the float so that it stays off the mud and provides sufficient access.

S. Fellows: Could you explain why the previously developed qualifier is being used in this case? What has been done on the shore side?

S. Riker: Nothing has been done. The previously developed category is applied if the two abutting properties are developed.

S. Fellows: How will homeowners access the dock?

S. Riker: On foot via a foot path.

J. Aube: Can you clarify that this is the least impacting alternative because the amount of surface area that is covering the identified salt marsh area?

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S. Riker: Yes, that is the case.

Discussion ensued regarding the amount of slips.

A. Kramer-Perry: What are the piles made of and how deep do they go?

S. Riker: The piles are made of CCA treated wood and are driven until refusal. There is a SDS sheet included with the application package.

K. Murphy asked about the other HOA owned parcel closer to Fresh Creek and why access wasn't proposed there.

S. Riker: There is a very small channel in Fresh Creek during low tide which would cause the structure to have to rest on the mud flat. It's not deep enough.

J. Geddes: Do you know what scenario or temperature was used for the sea level rise projections?

S. Riker: I used the UNH based coastal vulnerability assessment. Structures are placed into risk categories which result in an elevation number, in this case 2.9 feet. That gets added to the mean high-water value.

A. Lyon clarified that tidal docking structures are tolerant to risk categories.

Discussion ensued regarding how the Commission should make a recommendation regarding the application.

S. Fellows moved to endorse the application noting that the Commission strongly encourages NHDES to consider the common HOA dock before granting future individual docking permits for private lots within the HOA. K Murphy seconded. Vote: 7 yes.

6. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

A. Review of Correspondence Received from NH Department of Environmental Services

J. Kaspari explained that a potential wetlands violation was investigated on the local level but found no need to enforce action regarding the complaint. A complaint was also filed with NHDES. This correspondence confirms that NHDES also did not find an enforceable violation confirming our local assessment of the matter.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Update from Forest Management Subcommittee

S. Fellows: In terms of the management plan for the parcels near the Tolend Landfill, the lumber market isn't in the state to allow the city to move quickly on a harvest. John Storer was present to discuss plans for the downtown street trees. Community Services has funding set aside for some plantings but has held off due to the aquifer levels as new plantings require significant watering. If the aquifer levels are sufficient in the spring, the goal will be to fill empty tree boxes in the Central Business District.

There was also a discussion on micro-forests.

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J. Kaspari explained the Miyawaki method of planting. The selection of dense plantings can allow the forest to reach maturity in around 30 years which is greatly accelerated from the standard 100 plus year timeframe in a standard forest environment. Yulia Rothenberg had raised the idea of working with the SAU to have students get involved with planting one of these forests on school property.

There could be an opportunity for people in the community to plant pocket forests for credits if a stormwater utility is implemented. It requires about six parking spaces worth of area to be viable.

Some discussion ensued on this topic.

8. ADJOURNMENT

S. Fellows motioned to adjourn. A. Lyon seconded. Vote: 7 yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.