

**Town of Bedford
Conservation Commission Minutes
March 23, 2021**

A meeting of the Bedford Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 via the Zoom meeting platform.

Present: Maggie Wachs, Chair, Stephanie Jones, Dave Chiappetta, Bob MacPherson, William Carter, Stephen Clough, Patricia Grogan, Beth Evarts, Rebecca Hebert, (Planning Director) and Karin Elmer, (Planner I).

Absent: Gregory Schain and Denise Ricciardi (Town Council Alternate).

7:00 PM Call to Order

Ms. Wachs called the Bedford Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Members of the Commission introduced themselves via roll call and all indicated they were alone in the room during this online meeting.

Ms. Wachs welcomed everyone to the Bedford Conservation Commission meeting and appointed David Chiappetta to be a voting member tonight. Ms. Wachs read the mission statement:

The mission of the Bedford, New Hampshire Conservation Commission is to protect, preserve and conserve the town's natural resources and open space land for the common good. This includes stewardship and management of conservation land, protecting wetlands and vernal pools, and the planning and acquisition of land for conservation purposes. The Commission works with landowners to administer State and town wetlands regulations, and advises other town boards, such as the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment on environmental impacts and alternative considerations regarding development projects. The Conservation Commission promotes conservation activities and communicates with the citizens of Bedford on important environmental issues.

Our Motto – Keeping Bedford Beautiful

New Business:

Jeremy Blanchard- Review of a variance request to build a garage 37.2 ft. from the edge of a wetland where 50 ft. is required at 66 Parkhurst Rd., Lot 40-1-4.

Mr. Blanchard introduced himself and Earl Sandford of Sandford Engineering. Mr. Blanchard explained his plan to build the garage. There were three concepts submitted. Option A would place the garage 37.2 feet from the edge of wetland. Option B would be 44.6 ft. Option C would meet all zoning requirements and would not require a variance. Mr. Blanchard prefers option A. While it is the closest to the edge of the wetland it will actually have less of an impact on the land adjacent to the wetland. Option B would slide the garage further away from the wetland but it would require a lot a fill to construct a driveway along the back of the garage, as would option C.

Mr. Sandford explained the wetland delineation and stormwater management plans for the garage. The lot is challenging and is actually located in two towns, Merrimack and Bedford. There will be two infiltration trenches to handle roof runoff. In designing the trenches, Mr. Sandford utilized best management practices using water quality flow calculations.

The Commission discussed the design. Mr. Carter asked if the building could be moved closer to the retaining wall in front of the house so it is only 20 feet from the wall. This will reduce the amount of the building located within the wetland. It would still enable a turning radius for use of the driveway that goes alongside the house. Option A does seem to be the best option. No problem with a 30 ft. x 40 ft. garage. Perhaps put a trench along the back roof line. With the other options you would have to cut more tree within the setback with the neighboring property.

Mr. Sandford did install the trench for the roof runoff. Mr. Blanchard was proposing gutters on the front and back of garage. Mr. MacPherson asked if there would be any hazardous materials in the garage. Mr. Blanchard state just a few things. Anticipate regular residential amounts. Maybe a few cans of oil. No large amounts.

There was no public input.

Motion by Mr. Carter to recommend approval of the variance request for option A contingent upon moving the garage 20 feet from the retaining wall and all stormwater infiltration installed. Second by Ms. Jones. Roll call vote:

Maggie Wachs - yes
Stephanie Jones - yes
Dave Chiappetta - yes
Bob MacPherson - yes
William Carter - yes
Stephen Clough - yes
Patricia Grogan – yes

Motion passed.

Peter Sullivan, DVM – PowerPoint presentation on the wildlife habitat on Chubbuck Rd.

Mr. Carter thanked Mr. Sullivan for his presentation and agrees there should be a plan for this property but would recommend making the PowerPoint presentation a litter shorter than a 27 page presentation. He will be happy to help move this forward with other departments and the Council.

Mr. MacPherson thanked Mr. Sullivan for this presentation and agrees the protecting the wildlife is important. Do you already have volunteers lined up? Mr. Sullivan just wanted to let you know that I am willing to volunteer and I am not expecting the Town to do everything on its own.

Ms. Evarts also thanks Mr. Sullivan and agrees with Mr. Carter that this is a great first step but cautions the use of citizen volunteers when it comes to some of the endangered wildlife because they may inadvertently cause harm to a species without realizing it. A wildlife biologist may be a better option in this case. Perhaps creating a subcommittee like we did at Pulpit Rock, with at least one member of the Commission on the subcommittee to work toward a plan for the property.

Ms. Wachs stated that the Conservation Commission is an advisory board only. Others in the town would have to make the final decision on any conservation designations. We are glad when residents come to us to ask us to preserve more land. The Commission is making an effort to protect as much green space as possible.

Ms. Hebert stated that the land is town owned but does not have any conservation designations. There is currently no development of the lot planned. However, in the past there have been conversations regarding possible expansion of the transfer station and highway garage, a cell tower and a solar array. Town Council has talked about perhaps forming a subcommittee and doing a comprehensive plan for the lot. Mr. Sullivan may be a great person to have on that committee.

Ms. Bemis, an abutter, wanted to thank Mr. Sullivan. He is actually a veterinarian and has a lot of knowledge about animals. I just want to make sure there is a plan developed for that land. We already own it and it has value for the wildlife habitats and would love to see a subcommittee. We know existing uses on the lot have to expand but we need to do so in a responsible manner.

Ms. Wachs summarized that Mr. Carter and Mr. MacPherson will work on coming up with a plan on how to move forward. We will put this item on our agenda for all our meetings to keep track of the project. Mr. Carter will also bring up the topic with the Town Council on a monthly basis.

Ms. Elmer will forward Mr. Sullivan's PowerPoint presentation to everyone so they can review and digest all the information that was presented. Mr. Carter thanked everyone involved.

Mr. Bemis, abutter, also wanted to thank Mr. Sullivan and is also happy to volunteer for any projects we may have.

Minutes:

MOTION by Mr. Carter to approve the minutes of February 9, 2021 as presented. Second by Ms. Jones. Roll call vote:

Ms. Jones Yes.

Mr. Carter: Yes.

Mr. Chiappetta: Yes.

Ms. Wachs: Yes.

Mr. MacPherson: yes

Mr. Clough: Yes

Ms. Grogan: Yes

Ms. Evarts: Abstained

ALL IN FAVOR. Minutes approved.

Other Business:

Ms. Elmer state there are no updates for the Commission since their last meeting.

Non-Public Session:

Ms. Wachs moved to enter a non-public session at 8:37pm per RSA 91-A:3, II(d) for consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which we've discussed in public would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. Seconded by Mr. Carter. Roll call vote:

Maggie Wachs: Aye
Bill Carter: Aye
Stephen Clough: Aye
Stephanie Jones: Aye
Bob McPherson: Aye
Patricia Grogan: Aye
Dave Chiappetta: yes

The Commission came back into public session at 9:28pm.

Motion by Mr. Carter to seal the non-public minutes. Second by Mr. Clough. Roll call vote:

Maggie Wachs: Aye
Bill Carter: Aye
Stephen Clough: Aye
Stephanie Jones: Aye
Bob McPherson: Aye
Patricia Grogan: Aye
Dave Chiappetta: Aye

Motion by Mr. Carter to adjourn at 9:30 pm. Second by Ms. Grogan. Roll call vote:

Maggie Wachs: Aye
Bill Carter: Aye
Stephen Clough: Aye
Stephanie Jones: Aye
Bob McPherson: Aye
Patricia Grogan: Aye
Dave Chiappetta: Aye

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.