

PLANNING BOARD

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, NH

Minutes of May 9, 2016

Members Present: Chair Ivy Vann, Jerry Galus, Bob Holt, Joe Hanlon, Rich Clark and Ed Juengst

Staff Present: Peter Throop, Director, and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development

Chair Vann welcomed the applicants to the meeting and introduced the members and staff. She also appointed Mr. Holt to sit.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Galus/Hanlon) to approve the Minutes of April 11, 2016 as written with all in favor.

Chair Vann noted “we only have one public hearing tonight on an application for a Conditional Use Permit for Wetlands Protection Overlay Zone impacts associated with utility activities in a utility rights of way. The project is located within an existing utility right of way located off of Old Dublin Road, Parcel Nos. U028-001-000, U028-012-000, & U022-036-000 in the Rural Zoning District. The applicant, Eversource Energy, proposes to replace/install eight utility poles and associated anchors, requiring 56 square feet of permanent wetland impact and 27 square feet of wetland buffer impact. The project also requires 6,421 square feet of temporary impact for access during construction.” She looked up and said “the first thing we need to do is determine whether or not the application is complete” adding “it looks complete to me.”

A motion was made/seconded (Galus/Clark) to accept the application before them as complete.

Chair Vann noted “Conditional Use Permits, as you know, come with various criteria that must be met for granting.” She then reviewed the Performance Standards of 233-52.B.1 (*no net loss of buffer functionality, no surface runoff directly discharged into adjacent wetlands without preliminary treatment, consideration of any low impact development techniques proposed and impact mitigation to the full satisfaction of the Planning Board*).

Mr. Throop then reviewed the proposed project in relation to the Criteria (*There is no proposed reduction to any important wetland function and values, no surface runoff to be directed to adjacent wetlands without treatment with no permanent changes in topography or runoff patterns permanently altered, project does not represent site development and LID techniques are not called for (simple pole replacement) and lastly all temporary impacts will be fully restored*).

Tracy Tarr introduced herself as the Wetland Scientist and Project Manager for the project. She also introduced John Casey from Eversource Energy and Mark Frazier from GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. (retained by Eversource as their agent to pursue state and local permitting). “This is a maintenance project” she said adding “and does not involve the expansion of the existing Right-of-Way, construction of new lines or alterations to the substation infrastructure.” Referencing a graphic she had put up she pointed out the location of the poles. She told the members they had met with the Conservation Commission and had done a walk through with them. She also thanked the town staff for their assistance in completing the application process.

Ms. Tarr told the members, as Chair Vann had described, the project involved the replacement of eight utility poles and associated stability anchors (five in the wetland and three in the upland). She told the members the wetland impacts included 56 square feet of permanent wetland impact to install the five poles and noted 6,642 square feet of temporary wetland impact for access for the construction “primarily along the existing access road.” She noted the installation of swamp mats would be applied to all wetland areas where temporary impacts would occur and “all mats, material and debris will be removed from the work area upon the completion of the project. “

Ms. Tarr briefly reviewed the Performance Standards (it was noted a request was made to cut the poles at their bases and leave them in place as snakes use them as habitat) and the Criteria for approval. Mr. Casey noted a construction monitor would be on site to assure the infrastructure would be upgraded to current standards and “everything would be done right.”

Mr. Galus asked about the time frame with Mr. Casey and Mr. Frazier agreeing it would take about one month. “So mid-summer” replied Chair Vann. Ms. Tarr interjected “we are hoping for early spring but we are still waiting on DES (permitting). Chair Vann concluded “this is very straight forward quite frankly” and asked “are there any other questions?”

Mr. Throop reiterated the Conservation Commission's opinion that the project would afford better (and safer) access to the poles, allow greater flexibility and ease of maintenance and that all good efforts had been made to minimize impacts in the Wetland Protection Overlay Zone with permanent impacts to the wetland designed to be minimal.

A motion was made/seconded (Holt/Clark) to approve the request for a Conditional Use Permit as all Performance Standards and Criteria have been met or are not applicable with all in favor.

After the applicant and their representatives had left the room Mr. Hanlon expressed his frustration over pulling people out at night to talk about four utility poles. "It is the wetlands" replied Chair Vann. Mr. Throop added "this is a sensitive part of your ordinance and requires you make those findings. This seems self-evident but that will not always be the case." Chair Vann agreed noting "this one was straight forward and uncomplicated." She went on to say "in terms of wetlands, as irritating as it is on the whole we are better off not having a history of routinely filling in the wetlands. It is hard to write an ordinance for four telephone poles." Mr. Throop added "an important function and value of the wetland is flood mitigation."

Mr. Clark commented on the ditching work the state had been doing, particularly on his property. He noted his land had functioned in a storage capacity for the wetlands but since they dug a 3-foot trench he was amazed at how quickly the water moved off his land. Chair Vann noted the state has been very vigorous "they have been ditching like mad" she said. Mr. Clark replied "I am just curious about their reasoning" with Mr. Throop interjecting "it is probably all about not losing the functionality of the road systems."

Other Business:

Mr. Galus asked about the status of Dunkin Donuts with Mr. Throop indicating that the plan has been signed and giving an update of road improvements that must be made first.

Chair Vann asked about the Monadnock Plaza and how they narrowed their entrance and exits with paint. "Lining up the entrance with the street across the street is great but I thought I heard a rumor of promised improvements" she said.

Mr. Throop gave a brief review of potential changes to the southwest corner of the 101/202 intersection. Mr. Clark interjected “it is really too bad, it was a beautiful building in its old gas station sort of way.”

Chair Vann gave the members an update on the Open Space Residential Development subcommittee. She noted they had met with local real estate representatives to discuss incremental development and form based code and how it may be marketable in town. She went on to say they would be meeting with developers (builders), representatives from land use companies (civil engineers) and land owners as well “to let them know what we are thinking and get their response” she said.

Mr. Throop told the members the Master Plan Steering Committee had convened a subcommittee for the update of the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan. “It is a pretty robust group” he said adding “there are about 12 or so people who are really interesting. Some new faces, and a variety of people who come from different walks of life.” He also mentioned Joe Ierna, a new Peterborough resident who was the former Vice President of the Hartford (CT) Chamber of Commerce. “He brings a different perspective” he said adding “it is really good, energized group of people.”

In closing the members briefly discussed parcels of land with skinny appendages. Mr. Throop noted “we need to try to avoid creating these things in the first place.” The members discussed the option of not permitting lots with these appendages to be created with Mr. Clark interjecting “people are breaking up properties and as they do I can guarantee triangles will be left.”

Next Meeting: June 13, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant