

**Hamilton Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting of July 29, 2009
Meeting held at Hamilton Town Hall**

Commissioners present when meeting convened at 7:30 p.m.:

Nancy Baker (co-chair), Robert Cronin, Sarah Getchell (co-chair), Camilla Rich

Staff present:

Jim Hankin, Conservation Coordinator

Others present: Dirk Nims of Asbury Grove Campmeeting Association

Chuck Johnson, consultant

Steven Davidow

The Commission is scheduled to meet next on Wed. Aug. 12, 2009. The Commission holds only one regular meeting in August. Site walk is scheduled for Sat. Aug. 8, 2009.

Sarah Getchell opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Conservation Coordinator Jim Hankin noted that prior to this meeting; commissioners received copies of two documents related to a previously submitted Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation for 315 Sagamore Street: a report by the Neve Morin Group about its review of the wetland delineation, and supplemental information submitted by the applicant's engineer. He noted that the agenda packet for this meeting also included his revised draft annual report for 2008.

Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation

(Public Hearing continued from May 27, June 10, June 24, and July 15, 2009)

315 Sagamore Street

Three Fifteen Sagamore Realty Trust, applicant; Seekamp Environmental, representative

Review Hamilton Conservation Commission consultant's report

Michael Seekamp of Seekamp Environmental discussed with commissioners details of Seekamp's delineation of wetlands at 315 Sagamore St.

Details discussed included a swale that Mr. Seekamp said was designed for stormwater run-off; those present discussed whether it falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, and its precise square footage. Commissioners also asked about a vernal pool on the parcel. They asked Mr. Seekamp to amend the site map to show the vernal pool's location.

Mr. Seekamp asked the Commission to provisionally approve the wetland delineation, pending receipt of his amended report in which he would add the general location of the vernal pool, so that he would not have to attend another meeting to settle these details.

Nancy Baker made a motion to approve the wetland delineation provisionally, until the Commission receives a revised plan, with Greg Hochmuth's approval and signature. Mr.

Hochmuth is the Commission's consultant on this filing. Camilla Rich seconded the motion.
VOTE: Unanimous.

Request for Determination

34 Cutler Road

Steven and Tracey Davidow, applicants and owners

Construct addition and garage at 60' (+/-) from edge of wetlands

Conservation Coordinator Jim Hankin showed commissioners a site plan for a proposed addition at 34 Cutler Rd., and provided details. The owners want to build a 10' X 25' addition with an attached garage. Mr. Hankin pointed out the wetland line drawn on the site plan. He said that the entire area between the existing house and wetlands is now lawn, which he said is nearly flat, with a very minimal slope toward wetlands. He said his measurements on site confirmed that the site plan is accurate. He suggested that erosion control measures be added; bales along the 50' arc shown on the site plan would ensure that nothing would get down to wetlands, he said. Mr. Hankin sketched boxes on the site plan to indicate the locations at which erosion control should be placed.

Peter Dana and Virginia Cookson joined the meeting during discussion of this matter; at 7:45 p.m.

Nancy Baker made a motion for the Commission to grant a negative determination. Camilla Rich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 yes, 1 abstention (Ms. Cookson)

Violation Notice

Asbury Grove

Asbury Grove Camp Meeting Association, property owner; Chuck Johnson, representative

Excavation around Tabernacle

Chuck Johnson showed commissioners an aerial photo of Asbury Grove that he said was taken in 1998. He pointed out the building known as the Tabernacle, and the wetland lines in that area of the Grove. He reminded commissioners that the Grove has requested permission to take temporary steps to stabilize an area disturbed by unauthorized excavation, so that events can take place as scheduled in the Tabernacle during an August celebration of Asbury Grove's 150th anniversary. He said the Grove might propose a more permanent solution later.

Mr. Johnson said the Tabernacle is sited in an area where rainwater sheet flows downgrade toward the Tabernacle. The Grove's goal is to capture it before it enters the Tabernacle. He said sandbags are in place at present across the Tabernacle entrance to divert water from that spot. He proposed redirecting run-off by installing a trench break constructed of 6' and 3' sections side by side, which would be the width of an existing paved walkway. He displayed a site plan showing the proposed drainage structures. The trench would discharge only at one end, because at the other end there is a septic system serving the house at 24 Lee Park, and Grove officials do not want to compromise it by adding more water to that area.

He proposed that a 5' section of 6" pipe lead from the proposed trench to a small catch basin to trap silt. He said a typical catch basin has an inner diameter of 4', but the Grove is proposing a 2'6" unit for this site. The catch basin would discharge into a 5' wide swale lined with filter fabric, and filled with stone larger than 3/4", which would constitute the top surface of the swale.

Dirk Nims, the president of the Asbury Grove Camp Meeting Association, emphasized that Grove officials are eager to complete this work before the planned anniversary celebration.

Mr. Nims said the proposed temporary fix would capture silt and be an improvement over the existing conditions.

Nancy Baker asked about the catch basin specifications and the fact that they were not the same as required under state regulations for highway catch basins. Mr. Johnson replied that he could revise the catch basin specifications to address Ms. Baker's concerns and would file those revisions with the Coordinator.

Virginia Cookson asked how sand and gravel would be prevented from proceeding to wetlands when run-off is heavy and fast. Mr. Johnson said at present, sandbags serve this purpose. Sarah Getchell asked whether flows focus on one outlet. Mr. Johnson answered that lines of silt are visible when water comes across the slope. They were visible over the floor of the Tabernacle prior to the placement of sand bags. The silt flow lines are not focused at any one particular point he said.

Mr. Nims said that installing drainage structures to channel water and capture silt, plus the filtration grass provides, should improve the situation; in the past, nothing prevented silt from entering wetlands. During this summer of frequent and heavy rain, it has been necessary to shovel silt from the area blocked by sandbags, he said.

Ms. Baker re-iterated at this point her concerns that the catch basin needs to be bolstered given the conditions as Mr. Nims described them.

Mr. Dana suggested the Commission approve the Grove's proposal, with the understanding that Grove officials would report back in two months and propose further work if this proposed drainage system proves inadequate.

Mr. Johnson said the catch basin could be made deeper by adding a 1' riser section at the top, for a total of 3' of depth. Ms. Baker said this would be a reasonable compromise.

Mr. Nims said the elevation around the Tabernacle is 45', and wetlands nearby are at approximately 41'.

Mr. Hankin inquired about the nearby residential septic system. Mr. Johnson said the state sanitary code warns that intercepted and/or directed storm water can overtax a septic system. He said the Grove does not want to "short circuit" that system.

Mr. Johnson provided details about the trees he proposed removing. He said a 42" hemlock, a 14" maple, and an elm tree may need to be removed at some point because of their normal life span, and he asked for permission to remove them as part of this project. He said if they fell in a storm they could cause major damage. Mr. Dana suggested the Grove prune back the maple and hemlock trees rather than remove them.

Mr. Hankin expressed the consensus the Commission reached. The Grove's proposed drainage system is acceptable as an interim solution, to be installed promptly in order to make it possible for the Grove to hold anniversary events in August at the Tabernacle. One tree, an American Elm, can be cut down to make that work possible. In two months, representatives of the Grove are to evaluate the performance of the swale, catch basin and associated drainage features.

Mr. Johnson suggested that it might be better for him to speak with Mr. Hankin about it during the fall, but to wait until spring 2010 to fully evaluate the performance of the system. Ms. Cookson noted that if the approved temporary solution works quite well, and the Grove decides not to propose additional work, Grove officials nevertheless will need to file a Notice of Intent with the Commission for tree removal beyond the elm tree. .

Mr. Johnson said he would revise the plan to indicate that only one tree would be cut down.

Mr. Nims said having Mr. Johnson work with Grove officials has been very helpful and resulted in a better outcome.

Discussion

Commissioners and Mr. Hankin discussed changes he made to the draft 2008 annual report in response to commissioners' comments and questions. The revised draft has a new paragraph to indicate that he responds to questions and complaints and makes inspections, and a sentence has been changed to make it clear that Commission alone decides if a project is in compliance.

Bob Cronin made a motion for the Commission to approve the 2008 annual report. Virginia Cookson seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

The Commission adjourned at 8:40 p.m. by general consent.

Minutes submitted Aug. 24, 2009 by Ann Sierks Smith