

APPROVED

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MINUTES OF THE NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, November 14th, 2023 – 5:00 p.m. (Macomber Room, Recreation Building)

24 Salamander Lane, Tax Map 18, Lot 32. Applicant: Eron Jokipii. Representative: Samuel Taylor, Samuel Taylor Builder LLC. Proposed: Add farmer’s porch inside tidal setback.

Members Present: Beth Barnhorst; Tom Chamberlin; Tony Coniglio; Jim Rini; Bill Stewart, Interim Chair; Conni White, Consultant.

Members Absent: Jim Cerny.

Others Present: Tracy Degnan, Rockingham County Conservation District; Iain Moodie.

1. Call to Order.

Mr. Stewart, serving as Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

2. Approve minutes of the September 5, 2023 and October 3, 2023 meetings.

Ms. Barnhorst made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2023 meeting as submitted. Mr. Coniglio seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Rini made a motion to approve the minutes for the October 3, 2023 meeting as submitted. Ms. Barnhorst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Application.

- A. 24 Salamander Lane, Tax Map 18, Lot 32. Applicant: Eron Jokipii. Representative: Samuel Taylor, Samuel Taylor Builder LLC. Proposed: Add farmer’s porch inside tidal setback.**

Acting Chair Stewart read a letter received from Samuel Taylor of Samuel Taylor Builder LLC, authorized representative for property owner Eron Jokipii. The letter provided an overview of the scope of the project, which is to rebuild a missing farmer’s porch to the front lawn of the cape home. Photos from the New Castle Historic Society included with the letter showed a farmer’s porch on the original house. Mr. Taylor wrote that the owner is looking to recreate the functionality and protection the porch will bring.

The porch will be 8 feet by 34 feet, 4 inches with left and right side staircases each measuring 6 feet by 8 feet. The frame projection from the cape is 8 feet with a total width of 46 feet, 4 inches. The foundation will consist of four 12 inch frost piers extending 48 inches below grade for the porch. The staircases will require eight base footings of 8 inch frost piers extending 48 inches

below grade. Water permeable geotextile fabric and three inches of crushed stone are proposed to go under the porch.

The project will require digging in the front lawn area with a small excavator and tractor to install the footings. The lawn is lush green and in excellent condition, according to Mr. Taylor. The lawn area that gets removed during construction will be replaced. The lawn is elevated above the water by a 10 foot vertical sea wall. The slope from the house to the sea wall is flat to low, and an erosion boom will be maintained along the top of the sea wall to prevent runoff.

Acting Chair Stewart stated that in absence of a DES application and additional information, he recommended continuing this application. Ms. Barnhorst noted that she would like to see buffer plantings in lieu of the grassy lawn being restored. Even if the house historically had a farmer's porch, she was not in favor of one being constructed given its location in the 50 foot buffer. Members agreed that they needed to see more detailed plans showing elevations, setbacks, and all lot calculations, including impervious surface area. The Commission requested a complete copy of the plan as submitted to the NHDES, with stormwater runoff plans, plans for buffer plantings and vegetation, and details for mitigation for the temporary construction impacts. Mr. Moodie added that the applicant will need to present an application for seawall repairs since equipment will be used within the 50 foot buffer.

Acting Chair Stewart will prepare a letter to send to Mr. Taylor, representing the applicant Eron Jokipii.

4. New Business.

A. Update on Pit Lane culvert project.

Tracy Degnan of the Rockingham County Conservation District discussed work that was completed in connection with the Coastal Resiliency Grant, which ended in June 2023. This included outreach and preliminary analysis. Work under a second DES grant, called CFRING, is currently underway. NHDES then requested to examine the western portion of Pit Lane, so CMA Engineers did a hydrologic study and delineated the wetlands on both sides of Pit Lane to the west of the culvert. As a result of the new study, a potential vernal pool was located, along with a rare plant species. The engineering team will likely need to return in the spring to better document the vernal pool when the conditions are ideal. Ms. Degnan noted that this is another wildlife feature that needs to be considered with the culvert project. In addition, the study showed that the highest observable tide line (HOTL) has already shifted since the wetlands was last delineated. The HOTL is now in the freshwater wetland.

The initial design for the replacement culvert at Pit Lane was a six foot wide round pipe, which was the least expensive option and met the resiliency criteria. Ms. Degnan explained that the DES Wetlands Bureau highly prefers a boxed culvert over a round design, mostly because it allows for easier wildlife passage. Ms. Degnan distributed the revised design plans and requested the Commission's feedback on proceeding with the rectangular design for the culvert. All Commission members agreed to proceed with the box design. Ms. Degnan will present this at the next Select Board meeting scheduled for Monday, November 20. She added that part of the

proposal will be to raise the elevation of Pit Lane and to bring it out as far as legally possible into the intersection of Route 1B. Ms. Degnan has a meeting for a NOAA resiliency coastal grant in the amount of \$28 million. New Castle is one of three DES applications amongst all applications for this grant. She will provide an update on the status of this grant request.

Acting Chair Stewart provided an update on conversations with the NHDOT on the 10 year plan and the crest by Shaw Circle. This crest poses a significant hazard, so the Town is looking into options for reducing its size and how this may tie into the nearby Pit Lane culvert project.

B. Discussion regarding changes to definition of lot coverage (Zoning Ordinance Section 2.3.39)

Mr. Moodie discussed his concerns with how residents are swapping ground coverage of driveways for bigger houses by using permeable driveways. The intent of the ordinance to include permeable surfaces is not functioning the way it was intended, which was to reduce build out. Mr. Moodie proposed that driveways, whether permeable or impermeable, always get included as ground coverage.

Members discussed lot coverage issues in Town, as well as the environmental impacts of maxing out the building area on small lots and the associated infiltration issues this creates. Mr. Chamberlin suggested perhaps counting 75% of a permeable driveway toward ground coverage, so as to maintain some incentive for residents to use permeable materials.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

5. Adjourn.

Ms. Barnhorst moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Coniglio seconded. The motion carried, unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rumph
Secretary