

MINUTES OF THE NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, April 2nd, 2019 – 5:00 p.m. (Town Hall)

Members Present: Conni White, Vice-Chair, Beth Barnhorst, Tracy Degnan, Rockingham County Conservation District, Darcy Horgan, Brian Mack, Bill Marshall, Jim Rini, Brandon Tanguay.

Members Absent: Lynn McCarthy, Chair, Rebecca Audet, Ron Pascale.

Others Present: John Chagnon, Ambit Engineering, 200 Griffin Rd. Unit 3, Portsmouth; Steve Riker, Ambit Engineering, 200 Griffin Rd. Unit 3, Portsmouth; John and Jean Shields, P.O. Box 315, New Castle; Thomas Shippee, 171 Picketpocket Road, Brentwood; Corey Stringham, New Castle; Robbi Woodburn, Woodburn & Company Landscape Architecture, 103 Kent Pl., Newmarket.

1. Approve Minutes.

Ms. White called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m. and asked attendees to sign in. Ms. White made a motion to approve the March minutes as submitted. Ms. Barnhorst seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Work Session / Applications.

The Commission heard the application of John and Jean Shields, of 41 Mainmast Circle, who are seeking to replace an existing structure that falls within the 100 foot shoreline buffer. Mr. Chagnon and Mr. Riker of Ambit Engineering presented the plans, which call for the redevelopment on the lot to tear down and rebuild a single-family home. The lot is approximately one-quarter of an acre and nearly all of it is in the 100 foot wetland buffer.

The proposal includes an attached garage, pervious paver driveway, brick walkway and porous patio off the rear of the property. There would also be a small set of stairs, likely hardscape stone or granite, for the Shields to have foot access to the water edge. The overall impervious surface coverage on the lot would decrease from 23.9% to 19.2%. Mr. Chagnon provided examples of stormwater management plans for the project, which include using a pervious driveway, having a drip apron off the rear of the garage, and creating a 1,238 square feet area of buffer planting. Mr. Riker has been working with Amy Lamb at the NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) to develop a list of buffer plantings native to NH that could be used on the property. The structure area within the front setback would decrease from 30 square feet to 28 square feet, while the constructed surface within the 50 foot setback would increase from 144 square feet to 172 square feet.

One of the main purposes of the proposed redevelopment is to create space for a two car garage, as the current structure only allows for one car. The existing driveway is steep and pitches down to the water, so the Shields would like to make the driveway pitch more reasonable. To accomplish this, Mr. Chagnon noted that the house would be turned and raised, and there would

be grading in the front and back. Mr. Chagnon stated that there would be one underground gas tank out front to replace the two that are currently above ground, and the generator on the side of the driveway would remain there on a concrete pad. He commented that they are trying to use the existing space as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Rini inquired about water drainage on the southeast corner of the lot, which drains over the land. Mr. Chagnon responded that the grading plan for the lot would allow for water drainage to be picked up in the buffer planting area.

Mr. Tanguay asked about the patio placement and the removal of a 30" red oak tree in the 50 foot setback. Mr. Chagnon stated that the oak would need to be taken down in order for the house to shift over. The proposed patio is placed in a specific area on the plans due to the interior layout of the house. Mr. Tanguay voiced concerns about cutting down trees in the 50 foot setback when there is also a proposed deck, and there is flexibility to shift the patio elsewhere. Ms. Barnhorst shared these concerns and was wary of removing more mature trees when the Applicants had previously removed trees last year. Ms. Shields responded that one of the primary reasons some trees were taken down was because a big branch fell through their roof. In addressing members' concerns, Mr. Chagnon commented that the Applicants could look into planting trees on the lot to replace the red oak being taken down. Mr. Mack and Ms. White both replied that they would like to see deciduous trees as a replacement.

Ms. White pointed out that the surrounding properties have no buffer planting, so the Shields' proposed plantings would be a great benefit over what currently exists. She noted that the Commission typically asks Applicants to procure a performance bond, in an amount to be determined by the Town Planning Board, from a company to assure that they will do the landscaping, and that the Commission has the right to come back within a year to inspect the property and ensure that the proposed plantings have been completed. Mr. Tanguay added that he would like security for the site restoration as well.

Mr. Chagnon informed the Commission that the Applicants have an approved shoreland permit from the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES). The Applicants will need DES to approve a wetland permit and will also require a conditional use permit from the New Castle Planning Board.

Mr. Tanguay motioned to recommend to the Planning Board the plan dated March 19, 2019 for 41 Mainmast Circle, with the conditions that the Applicants 1) post a performance bond (amount to be determined by the Planning Board) to cover buffer planting plans and site restoration as needed so as to match the proposed construction plans on page C2, and 2) plant one (1) deciduous tree (not an ornamental tree) of at least 1.5" diameter to be located at or near the location of the proposed stairs on the southeast corner of the lot. Mr. Rini seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

A work session was held for Thomas Shippee, who is seeking to build a new house within the 250 foot shoreline buffer zone on the old Tarbell property at 148 Portsmouth Avenue. The Town Planning Board approved the subdivision of the lot, and Mr. Chagnon presented more detailed plans for the back lot. The proposal includes a single-family residence with a porous patio in the

back and a 12 foot wide paved, asphalt driveway with four feet of drivable grass surface on each side. The driveway will be on the left side coming off Portsmouth Avenue to service the Shippee home. An easement would allow for a 15 foot access area to the water. Mr. Chagnon noted that the impervious surface area of Mr. Shippee's lot is already at 6.6% because the lot encompasses Tarbell Lane, an existing right of way that services two neighboring properties (Tax Map 16, Lots 10 and 11).

Mr. Chagnon reviewed the stormwater management plans for the Applicant's lot. The southwest portion would consist of a rain garden to handle runoff from the driveway, the roof on the front of the house and from the future property on Portsmouth Avenue. The rain garden will be a lawn, not planted, and will be a gradual slope (depression in the topography). A stormwater chamber system for roof runoff on the back of the house would be located north of the proposed patio. The chamber system consists of digging an area and putting in stone with a dome plastic chamber, which allows for water to come in and seep into the ground. There will be two swales to go around the side of the house, one going to the proposed retaining wall and one along the west side of the house, where a paved check dam will also be incorporated.

Robbi Woodburn of Woodburn & Company Landscape Architecture discussed the proposed rain garden and buffer plantings. The lawn rain garden will give infiltration without having big, visible plantings. The buffer plantings would consist of ornamental grasses, using a combination of native grass and one non-native grass. All grasses will have seed heads that provide habitat for birds. Evergreens would be added along the eastern property line.

Ms. White expressed support of Ms. Woodburn's detailed planting plan, and commended Mr. Chagnon for his work in mitigating the water runoff on the lot. Ms. Barnhorst asked about the possibility of eliminating any more impervious surface area. Mr. Chagnon noted that they would work to add more porous area to the space between the proposed garages.

The Applicant will come back to the Commission next month to get a recommendation for a minimum impact expedited permit for the NH DES wetland and shoreland permits.

3. New Business.

Ms. White announced that Tom Chamberlain will be joining the New Castle Conservation Commission next month and will be taking Ms. Audet's place.

Ms. White estimated that she received 16 letters from abutters in support of the Conservation Commission's response to the decision of the NH DES Wetlands Bureau (File #2017-00487) regarding approval of a dock in Lavenger's Creek.

Members also discussed tree cutting that has been occurring on certain properties located in the wetlands. Ms. White stated that she and Chair McCarthy will try to work on a letter to send to residents reminding them not to cut down trees without consulting with the Conservation Commission beforehand.

Discussion also continued about banning the use of jet skis in New Castle. Based on preliminary research, it appears that the Planning Board would have to write a warrant article banning jet skis, which would then need to be passed by Town vote.

4. Unfinished Business.

None.

5. Announcements.

None.

6. Adjourn.

Ms. Barnhorst moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Marshall seconded. The motion carried, unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rumph