

CONSERATION COMMISSION  
AMENDED AGENDA  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

7:15 Eagle Scout Presentation - David Newey

7:25 Design Review Guidelines Committee - Thomas Peterman

7:45 NOI - Continuation - Spring Hill Common - 411, 419, 421 Great Road and 25 & 33 Harris Street  
Equity Residential Properties Mgt. Corp.

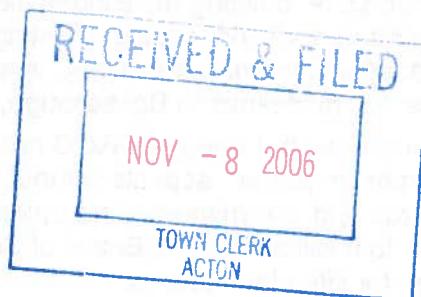
Certificate of Compliance - 85-912 - Town of Acton

Martin Street (from Central Street to Jones Field) sidewalk & drainage improvements.

Review - 9/15 inspection status report - 26 Grasshopper Lane

Minutes

August 16 submitted within  
September 6 forthcoming



CONSERATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Maitland, Julia Miles, Janet Adachi, Linda Serafini

STAFF/RECORDING SECRETARY: Andrea Ristine

VISITORS: George Mariani, Ann Sussman, David Newey, Thomas Peterman, John Kendall, Nancy Seaburg, Charles Torrielli

7:15 Eagle Scout Presentation - David Newey

David Newey reported to the Commission that he completed his Eagle Scout project which involved the installation of a 75' stone dust trail at the Acton Arboretum. He raised \$600 in a fund-raiser to purchase supplies for the project. The project involved 175 man hours and four days to complete. The Commission thanked David for a job well done.

DEP Site Walk - 93 Taylor Road Appeal of Denial - September 22 at 10AM

Certificate of Compliance - 85-912 - Town of Acton

Ms. Miles moved that the Commission issue a Certificate of Compliance for the construction of a sidewalk and drainage improvement on Martin Street (from Central Street to Jones Field). Mr. Maitland 2<sup>nd</sup>, unanimous.

7:25 Design Review Guidelines Committee (DRGC) – Ann Sussman & Tom Peterman

Ms. Sussman reported that the DRGC was formed in 2005 for the purpose of developing design guidelines that would help to streamline the planning and permitting process in Town commercial districts. The guidelines will promote attractive development of commercial areas, preserve and enhance the New England character of the Town's commercial centers and thoroughfares, unify commercial properties both visually and physically with surrounding land uses, facilitate a more walk-able suburban atmosphere integrating pedestrian needs with those of drivers and protect property values by enhancing the Town's appearance. The guidelines address building placement on site, building massing/scale, parking, sidewalks, signage, storefronts, lighting, windows and doors, landscaping, plantings, public spaces, materials, roofs and mechanical equipment concealment. The DRGC investigated surrounding towns with design review guidelines; the guidelines in Boxborough, for example, give high priority to retaining tree canopy.

Tom Peterman stated that the DRGC has tried to create a streamlined document that touches upon the most important aspects without being too limiting, and invites comments from other Town boards and committees. The guidelines will be implemented by a committee, yet to be appointed, that will advise the Board of Selectmen (BoS) in attempt to relieve the BoS of some of the burden for site plan reviews.

Upon query by Ms. Miles, Mr. Peterman reported that the guidelines currently address only commercial districts but later may cover other zoning districts. He emphasized that the guidelines are not regulations.

Ms. Sussman noted that the DRGC is welcomes any comments the Commission might have regarding the proposed guidelines.

Mr. Maitland noted that the only caution he has for the DRGC is not to let the guidelines turn into something as difficult and challenging as what the Town of Weston has for development approval process.

7:57 NOI - Continuation - Spring Hill Common - 411, 419, 421 Great Road and 25 & 33 Harris Street  
Equity Residential Properties Mgt. Corp.

Kevin Klein from Norfolk Ram Group, LLC noted to the Commission that both the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Acton Board of Health (BoH) have issued an administrative consent order. The proposed treatment plant will process approximately 20,540 gallons per day for Spring Hill Common but is designed with a capacity for 40,000 gallons per day, the use of the additional capacity being contingent upon the availability of additional leaching facilities. The proposed pump station is located at the western corner of the site and will pump treated effluent to the opposite end of the site to the proposed leaching field. The apartment buildings are separated by wetlands but the DEP considers all of the buildings as one site, not two, and is why the owner/applicant has been ordered to construct a treatment plant. The proposed leaching field effluent disposal facilities are bisected by a town drainage easement; drainage comes downhill to three drainage structures on Harris Street. In working with the Acton Engineering Department, the Applicant will be upgrading the Harris Street drainage structures for the benefit of the Town which technically is responsible for their maintenance. One catchbasin will be upgraded with a curb inlet and will be slightly raised to prevent leaf clogging. The existing drainage pipe will be upgraded to a 12" pipe and another catchbasin will be installed on the opposite side of the street. Cape Cod berms will also be installed along the street to catch and direct street drainage to the catchbasins and divert flow to the proposed swale and then to the wetland. The swale will divert stormwater around the leach field. Ultimately the Town Meeting needs to approve the relocation of the drainage easement. The owner/applicant has also been working with neighbors who have private wells within 100' of the proposed leaching field and has offered to pay for connections to the public water supply and pay for water service for a "a period of time". The Applicant's offer will remain open to the abutters for two years. Those abutters connecting to the public water supply will be asked to abandon their existing wells; the BoH prefers that the abutters connect to the public water supply.

Upon query by Ms. Miles, Mr. Klein reported that the two closest wells are 50 and 75 feet from the proposed leaching facility.

Mr. Klein noted that the leaching field will be raised above groundwater levels, the Applicant is proposing a planting plan to screen the leaching field from the abutters and compensation for the loss of tree canopy. As required by the Town Highway and Engineering Departments there will be no large plantings, such as willow trees, that would contribute to premature failure of the leaching field.

Upon query by Ms. Adachi, Mr. Klein stated that the intent is to do the wetland crossing during the winter; the consent agreement requires that construction commence in January 2007 and be completed by November 2007. If the Applicant can obtain sufficient assurances from the Town with respect to the relocation of the drainage easement they will proceed with the plans prior to Town Meeting approval of the proposed relocation. If Applicant were to wait until after Town Meeting approval, the wetland crossing would have to be done during the winter of 2007-2008, which would delay the project approximately six months.

Upon query by Ms. Miles, Mr. Klein noted that there are three culvert drainage easements along the length of Harris Street on Applicant's property that flow into the on-site wetland; A significant amount of drainage flows to this wetland. The pre- and post-construction drainage runoff calculations are similar due to the coarse sand proposed for the leaching field; over-surface flow will be the same from the surrounding topography. Post-runoff drainage rates will be slightly higher but there will be no increase of surface runoff volume. The total volume of post-runoff is actually slightly less, calculated at .006 acre-feet, from the existing at .011 acre-feet; the volume of runoff will decrease but flow rate will increase. Surface runoff will no longer flow to abutting property but will remain on-site. Harris Street catches runoff from 1/4 mile up the hill; the existing catchbasin receives a lot of runoff but also tends to clog with leaves and consequently does not function properly. The proposed raised catchbasin design will maintain drainage flow and eliminate the ponding/flooding problems that currently develop during storm events.

Greg Winter stated that the Applicant is remedying a poor civil engineering issue on Harris Street (public road) with private dollars.

Upon query by Mr. Maitland, Mr. Klein stated that it is best to cross the wetland during frozen conditions when the vegetation is dormant. The Applicant will remove the soils in layers so that they can be replaced in the same order and will do replanting later when it is viable. The Applicant anticipates that the wetland crossing will take approximately five days. The crossing will consist of a small trench with two small sleeved pipes for sewage and the electrical conduit. R.H. White will be the contractor and ultimately will be the plant operators as well.

Upon query by John Kendall from 52 Harris Street, Mr. Klein reported that the culvert outlet at Great Road is maintained by the Mass Highway Department.

Mr. Kendall also noted that the drainage runoff directed through the culvert under Great Road is less than 200' from the Town's public water supply wells near Main Street. Mr. Winter stated that this proposal will improve groundwater quality; the proposed sewer treatment plant has a high level of technology. Runoff and groundwater will be improved dramatically in comparison to the current septic system conditions.

Upon further query by Mr. Kendall, Mr. Klein stated that the sewer treatment plant will not remove phosphates from the water but the treated water will be discharged to the leaching facility, and monitoring wells will inform the owner if there is a problem.

Upon query by Mr. Maitland, Charles Torrielli from 48 Harris Street stated that the Applicant has been working with the abutters regarding screening along the Harris Street and across from his property and there are a few other concerns that they are still discussing.

Upon query by Ms. Miles, Mr. Klein reported that the Applicant's proposal regarding drainage along Harris Street will redirect much of the current runoff away from the existing swale located at 51 Harris Street.

Mr. Maitland stated that the Commission is pleased to see the Applicant's cooperation with the abutters and would like to see the cooperation continue if the Commission approves this project.

Mr. Winter noted that the Applicant/owner is a Fortune 500 company and it will do what is right.

Upon query by Ms. Miles, Mr. Klein reported that the wetland crossing will be done during the winter months but the Applicant does have plans for dewatering the trench during construction if necessary. Directional drilling was not an option due to existing bedrock.

8:38 Hearing no further comments or questions, Mr. Maitland closed the hearing.

Discussion; the Commission agreed that the proposal is an improvement over the current septic situation.

#### Decision – Spring Hill Common

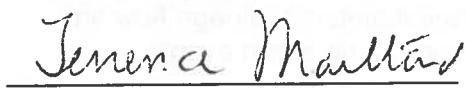
Ms. Miles moved that the Commission issue an Order of Conditions for the plans as presented with the special condition that it is the responsibility of the Applicant (and all subsequent owners) to ensure that all Harris Street drainage structures adjacent to the project site and on-site drainage structures are routinely and properly maintained in perpetuity.

Ms. Adachi 2<sup>nd</sup>; unanimous.

#### Review - 9/15 inspection status report by Tom Tidman - 26 Grasshopper Lane

The Commission reviewed the status report summarizing Mr. Tidman's observations from his 9/15 inspection of the site and agreed that a copy should go to the Applicant.

9:15 Meeting adjourned.



Terrence Maitland  
Chair

ahr.concom.minutes.2006.092006