

BELMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

APPROVED

October 7, 2003

Members Present: M. Weil, K. Baskin, J. Curro, J. Smith.

Associate Members Present: M. Velie, S. Sanders, N. Davis, M. Moore.

Additional Attendees: See attendance sheet.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by K. Baskin, who announced that she had been asked by M. Flamang to do so in his absence this month and next. He was assigned to the cleanup of Hurricane Isabel in Virginia by FEMA, which then told him that he could not return home for 60 days.

New Business

S. Sanders initiated a discussion of the new law requiring applicants to pay for consultants to the Conservation Commission in certain situations. This could be quite helpful to the Commission in future applications.

M. Moore raised the subject of the request for approval of a residential project on the O'Neill property. Under the new proposal, a 245,000 square foot office project would become a 400,000 square foot residential project, with more impermeable area encroaching into the bordering vegetated wetlands. She also pointed out that the last silver maple forest would be lost if this project is built. In addition, she distributed to the Commission members and associate members a biodiversity study of the area recently completed by the Friends of Alewife.

She noted that the Planning Board will consider this project at its October 14 meeting, and urged all Commission members to attend and provide input.

N. Davis reminded the Commission that the MACC is holding a conference on October 18 on the subject of buffer zones. K. Baskin noted that the Commission had made a strong statement about protecting buffer zones in its rejection of the O'Neill Notice of Intent. M. Moore stated that Will Brownsberger had a meeting with some Belmont residents and agreed that the buffer zone was an issue with regard to that project. However, Tim Higgins' memorandum regarding the outstanding issues on the O'Neill project (which is posted on the Town's website) does not mention it.

S. Sanders reported that three pipes going into Blair Pond are bringing in silt. He suggested that he and Tom Gatzunis go together and look at it for purposes of siltation control. K. Baskin agreed that she, too, would go look at it. She believes the siltation control is partly dependent on the regulation of street sweeping. N. Davis pointed out that storm events bring dirt down the hill and eventually into the pond. K. Baskin suggested

that we could prioritize areas for the Town so that they know which areas are most sensitive and can focus their cleaning efforts first in those areas.

Public Hearing – Notice of Intent - 56 Fletcher Road (7:40)

Randy Huber, Rand Associates Consulting, appeared on behalf of the owner, Cindy Stack. He described the proposal of the owner to demolish the existing house on this property and construct a new house on the site. He stated that 4500 square feet would be altered within the Riverfront Area. He also claimed that there would be no significant adverse impact because of the following features: About 150 feet of vegetative border will be installed. New stormwater management will result in a complete mitigation of the 2.5% increase in impervious area. Also, there will be no impairment of the wildlife habitat because all work is being done within the footprint of the existing house.

Upon questioning, he gave the existing impervious area as 3600 square feet and the proposed impervious area as 4380 square feet. He also noted that some trees within 8 – 10 feet of the house have already been removed.

K. Baskin asked him to detail the stormwater management. All downspouts on the west side of the house will be directed to a new leaching drywell. That constitutes half of the house runoff, which will compensate for the additional 780 square feet of impervious area. K. Baskin asked whether they had considered directing the runoff from the other half of the house. He replied that they had avoided that because it was the side closer to the brook. Can we be sure that the owner would maintain the components of the stormwater management? He suggested that they could install a catchbasin with a sump.

J. Curro asked why a structural engineer signed the plan. Mr. Huber responded that it was for convenience. A civil engineer will definitely sign the final plan.

A neighbor of Ms. Stack, Walter Vartanian, stated that there is a stream above Fletcher Road, which runs under Fletcher Road. He is concerned that any backing up of Winn's Brook would cause that stream to back up as well, and would cause flooding. K. Baskin suggested that the proposed drywell arrangement should direct more flow into the drywells and thus into the groundwater, slowing the flow into Winn's Brook. J. Curro asked whether this stream gives rise to another Riverfront Area.

Another neighbor, Marilyn Horan Kiley, expressed the same concern over whether this would cause flooding in her basement. K. Baskin pointed out that the regulations provide that any portion of a stream which is in a culvert does not give rise to a Riverfront area. J. Curro noted that the plan shows a 12" pipe going to a 15" pipe on Fletcher Road, so that may mean that water comes into the pipe at that point.

Upon questioning, Mr. Huber stated that the drywell is sized based on a certain perc rate (10 minutes per inch), but they can make it larger if necessary. The Commission will

require that, when soils are tested, if the perc rate is found to be less than 10 minutes per inch, the drywell must be enlarged accordingly.

S. Sanders said that each project causes a greater fluctuation in water levels downstream, which is detrimental to the spawning of the herring. They spawn at the mouth of Winn's Brook. K. Baskin noted that requiring stormwater to go into a drywell and then into the groundwater should dampen those fluctuations. A second drywell can be placed at the rear of the driveway so that all (not just half) of the net increase in runoff from impervious surfaces can be captured. She stated that the Commission should consider whether to require that. We should also consider whether to require more information regarding the other stream that was mentioned.

J. Curro suggested that we obtain more accurate calculations regarding the impervious area and the drywell volume. Mr. Huber requested that, if the Commission is going to require that, they give their approval for demolition to occur while awaiting the additional information and acting upon it.

K. Baskin suggested that, as to the stream, they can either have it mapped or have Glenn Clancy look at the Town's map of streams. Mr. Vartanian noted that the stream dries up from time to time, and then fills up during rainy periods. K. Baskin pointed out that it sounds as though it may be an intermittent stream, which would not be subject to the 200 foot buffer. M. Weil stated that the project (if conditions are imposed as discussed) should improve the drainage situation there in any event, so it is her opinion that the Commission should make a determination tonight.

K. Baskin suggested that we impose the following conditions:

Mitigation of 1500 square feet of pervious area that is lost through placement of impervious materials will be required in the stormwater management on the site. Direction of the roof runoff from the entire roof and the placement of at least one additional drywell will be required at the driveway to accomplish this. Haybales should be placed outside the buffer zone where practicable. All demolition materials must be trucked off site. Clean fill materials must be used. The Order of Conditions is also subject to a determination that the Fletcher Road stream is intermittent.

The Commission voted to issue the Order of Conditions with the suggested conditions.

Other New Business (8:55)

The owners of two projects have completed their projects and requested Certificates of Compliance (150 Somerset Street and 233 Prospect Street). N. Davis stated her concern that Somerset Street was not cleaned up following the construction of that project. G. Clancy should check, and require cleanup if it has not been done.

Both Certificates of Compliance were approved.

Minutes

It was pointed out that the minutes of the August 7 meeting should be corrected to reflect that M. Velie did not attend, but that M. Moore did attend.

With respect to the September 9 meeting minutes, S. Sanders indicated that he was incorrectly quoted as having said that the lot at 80 Clifton Street should be returned to grass. Instead what he said was that the parking area there should be replaced by leaf compost.

Both sets of minutes were approved as so revised.

The meeting was then adjourned. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2003.

Prepared by:
Johanna Smith

APPROVED 12/2/03