

DURHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes to Special Meeting
June 5, 2007

Meeting called to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members present: Dwight Baldwin, Cynthia Belowski, Beryl Harper, Jim Hellen, Julian Smith,
Peter Smith, George Thomas, Robin Vranicar

Excused absence: Richard Ozenich, Duane Hyde

1. Site Walk

The site walk planned for the property shown on Map 10, lot 7-0, at the corner of Bagdad and Canney Road was postponed to June 14th at 6 p.m. due to severe weather conditions. The site walk is relative to a conservation subdivision application submitted by Joseph Caldarola, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for subdivision of one (1) lot into nine (9) lots.

- 2. Discussion re Site Plan for Canney/Bagdad** – Mr. Joseph Caldarola presented his plan; explained the special conditions relative to his request to be able to substitute useable land for somewhat poorly drained and steep slope land within the houselot area; and, answered questions relative to the above referenced conservation subdivision plan. The Conservation Commission will finalize discussion and prepare a written statement regarding their position on this conservation subdivision plan following the next regular meeting on June 14, 2007.

- 3. Discussion re Site Plan for Strafford Ave** – Mr. Steven Kimball was present with his engineer and wetlands scientist to answer questions relative to a site plan application for the building of a 16-unit residential and a 4000 square-foot commercial, mixed-use building at 20 Strafford Avenue. The Conservation Commission determined recommendations to be sent to the Planning Board relative to this site plan. The letter prepared by chair Belowski is attached.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Cynthia Belowski

June 12, 2007

June 6, 2007

William McGowan, Chair, Durham Planning Board
Durham Town Hall
15 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

Re: site plan application submitted by Steven F. Kimball, Auburn, New Hampshire, for the building of a 16-unit residential and a 4000 square-foot commercial, mixed-use building located at 20 Strafford Avenue

Dear Chair McGowan:

The Durham Conservation Commission joined the Planning Board on a site walk at this location on April 7, 2007, and has discussed its position relative to this application in a special public meeting held June 5, 2007.

First, we would like to commend the applicant for his willingness to utilize the new pervious surface paving technology. This new and innovative system will likely be a great advantage over conventional impervious asphalt in attenuating the impact of stormwater runoff on a site.

That said, the Conservation Commission would like to stress that one of the purposes of a wetland buffer is to maintain natural vegetation in the immediate area of a wetland to ensure the proper functioning and health of the ecological system. For instance, in addition to habitat for wildlife, the trees and shrubs provide shade that keeps the water within the wetland cooler than if that cover is lost.

Following are our comments relative to Article XIII Wetland Conservation Overlay District 175-61. Conditional Uses in the WCO District. B.:

- Given the size of the proposed project, we have concluded that there is no alternative location on the parcel that is outside of the WCO, which is feasible for the proposed use. However, impact to the buffer could be greatly minimized if the overall size of this project were reduced.
- We recommend a written agreement to ensure minimal disturbance of the short term impacts of construction by full use of current Best Management Practices.
- We would like to commend the applicant for his willingness to reduce the size of the parking area, thereby minimizing the impact of the project as currently proposed.
- The proper maintenance of the proposed pervious surface driveway and parking lot is critical to ensure that it functions properly over time. It must be made clear that the owner assumes full financial responsibility for the long term maintenance and replacement of this pervious system. Additionally, we recommend that it be a requirement of this conditional use permit that the owner of record submit an annual report to the Town Department of Public Works relative to the annual maintenance and current condition of the pavement system.
- We understand that the proposed driveway which is within the WCO is in a location that is already a gravel drive. The change to a pervious cover will likely improve the current conditions.
- About half of the parking lot in the rear of the building will be within an area of the WCO that is currently undisturbed upland. If the size of the project is not reduced, and this

impact cannot be avoided, we recommend that the applicant retain the services of a professional experienced in wetland restoration to develop a plan for restoration of those parts of the current gravel drive that will not be used within the proposed development—thereby mitigating the new impacts to the WCO.

- Vegetative cover planted by the applicant within the WCO in restoring the site after construction should be with native species that are consistent with a wetland buffer.
- Disturbance to the vegetation in the southwest corner along Strafford Ave should be minimized to the fullest extent possible.

In closing, the overall hope of the Conservation Commission is that a compromise will be crafted to reduce the size of the project in order to reduce the impact on the WCO district. Within the limitations of the project, we hope the Planning Board will take all necessary action to ensure that impacts to the wetland and associated upland buffer be minimized to the fullest extent possible.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Belowski
Chair, Durham Conservation Commission

Cc: James Campbell, Director of Planning and Community Development