

Hampton Falls Conservation Commission

April 12, 2007

Final

1. Call to Order: Karen Ayers called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were Karen Ayers (CC Chair), Marietta Garavaglia (CC Administrative Assistant), regular members David Gandt, Tracy Healey-Beattie and Robert Wiener; Nancy Roka and Greg Smart arrived at approximately 6:45 p.m. and Selectmen's Representative Shawn Hanson at approximately 7:00 p.m. Absent was alternate member Larry Smith.

2. Application from Joyce Marelli (Map 5, Lot 58): Ken Berry (Beals & Associates), Luke Hurley (Gove Environmental Services) and Robert & Lee Marelli appeared on behalf of the applicant requesting a variance to Article III, Section 8.4.1. Karen Ayers thanked the Marellis and their agents for reviewing this application with the Commission at the onset of the approval process. K. Berry provided background on the application, stating that the Marellis wished to subdivide their 6.4 acre parcel into two lots in order to provide a buildable lot for their son Lee. Mr. Berry stated that there are two distinct wetland systems located on the property: an open water pond constructed by the Marellis and a wooded wetlands area. The current plan calls for an approximate 700 sq. ft. wetlands impact for a portion of the driveway with the remainder of the driveway and the proposed home located entirely within the 100 ft. wetlands setback. Mr. Berry explained that the wetland crossing for the driveway would be designed to function at the same capacity as the current culvert. He also reported that the 100 ft. buffer was comprised of well-drained soils and that the septic system would be located outside of the buffer. Luke Hurley provided information on the two wetland systems and stated that the lot is being proposed in such a way that it does not create a steep slope dropping into the wetlands area; he added that the driveway will not be paved and should therefore be considered a pervious surface.

Questions were raised by the Commission concerning replication of the emergency spillway, the extent of the wetlands beyond the Marelli's property lines and whether the large "lollipop" shown on the plan would constitute a structure. The overall consensus of the Commission members was that given the amount of potential wetlands impact and the fact that the house is located entirely within the wetlands setback, the hurdles are significant. Tracy Healey-Beattie requested a site walk. The Marellis and the CC members agreed to meet at the property on Thursday, April 19th, at 6:15 p.m.

3. Prime Wetlands Warrant Article→Mark West Presentation: K. Ayers introduced Mark West to the group and also the members of the Commission and audience to Mr. West; she explained that his role would be to guide the Commission through the Prime Wetlands designation process (and possibly assist the Planning Board's Regulation and Ordinance committee with their Shoreland Protection ordinance). M. West provided a brief background of his company and his past work with other towns on water and wetland protection. Mark emphasized that his firm works with clients to ensure that their conservation objectives are met.

Mr. West noted that the Prime Wetlands study completed by Gove Environmental Services for the Commission identified the top ten prime wetlands in both Hampton Falls and Hampton, and asked the Commission what their objectives were with regard to the study. Karen Ayers responded that the Commission originally thought it would meet with greater success if the Prime Wetland designation was phased in. Mr. West responded that because the identified wetlands are all large in area and of high functioning value, it would be reasonable to include them in one Prime Wetlands warrant article. He added that while some towns protect wetlands as small as two acres, the smallest wetland complex under consideration in this study is forty acres. He recommended that he review the data prepared by Gove to get a better understanding of their mapping; that the Commission arrange to have these ten prime wetlands identified on the Town's tax maps (E. Small to determine the cost for this service); and (upon reviewing this data) that the Commission agree on those wetlands that should be designated, treating all areas of the Town the same in this decision process. Once this work is completed, Mr. West will work with the Commission on planning and community awareness with the ultimate goal of drafting a Prime Wetlands warrant article for the 2008 Town ballot.

Based on questions from the Commission members, Mark talked about his success at the State level (in their acceptance of these protected zones) and stereoscopic mapping verses color infra-red mapping; he will do some verification of the Gove maps, but overall the Commission understands that he will be working with the data provided by Gove.

K. Ayers inquired about the possibility of developing a Shoreland protection ordinance in conjunction with a Prime Wetlands warrant article, acknowledging that the Planning Board's Regulation & Ordinance Committee was working on this document. Mr. West will consider this option and report back to the Commission.

4. Biggi Update: D. Gandt will contact Pam Biggi to arrange a meeting to review the recent appraisal and final acreage for this proposed easement. D. Gandt and Tracy Healey-Beattie will represent the Commission. Larry Smith (alternate), Mary Currier (RCCD) and Shawn Hanson (Selectmen's Rep) will be advised of the meeting date and time in the event that they would like to participate.

5. Proposed Retaining Wall Reconstruction, Brown Road (Map 5, Lot 55): K. Ayers provided an overview of the proposed construction, stating the necessity for this in light of recent storm water damage. N. Roka was asked if she would like to review the report prepared by Jones & Beach engineering. E. Small commented that the plan was being redesigned by B. Jones.

6. Seacoast Academy Site Plan (Map 6, Lots 22 and 22-2): K. Ayers reported that the Site Plan proposal was on the Planning Board's April 24th agenda. Based on the information received so far and the plans that were reviewed by the Commission members, it does not appear that any wetlands would be affected inasmuch as the proposal deals with the existing buildings and the new septic system will be replaced in the same location as the current system.

7. Prior Meeting Minutes: In the interest of time, Karen asked the Commission members to review all published minutes prior to the May meeting for revision/approval.

8. Action Item List: With respect to the Kopka acquisition, K. Ayers said that she had been in touch with the SELT and learned that A. Melville is considering a conservation easement. Based on this possibility, and combined with the Elias easement, she suggested that it would be logical for the SELT to handle these three easements. She also reported that a site walk for the Melville property has been scheduled for Wednesday, April 18th at 10:00 a.m. If his schedule allows, R. Wiener will participate in this walk. T. Healey-Beattie added that she has written the press release for the Kopka acquisition.

Karen also informed the members that the Tonry easement is scheduled to occur in June.

G. Smart left the meeting at 8:30 p.m. R. Wiener made a motion to adjourn at 8:59 p.m.; N. Roka seconded. Unanimous.

Marietta L. Garavaglia
Conservation Commission Administrative Assistant