

Shelburne Natural Resources and Conservation Committee
Regular Meeting, July 8, 2020
Minutes

In attendance: Dean Pierce, Gail Albert, Bob Paquin, Sean MacFaden, Fred Morgan, Jon Cocina, Peg Rosenau, Don Rendall (arrived around 7:15pm), Mike Schramm (arrived 8:34pm); Andy Rowe and Bart Frisbie (Gardenside sub-division), Jim White (Animal Coexistence Working Group) and Michael Ashooh (Selectboard).

1. Agenda. Jon moved to accept; Bob seconded; all in favor
2. Minutes. Date should be June 10 rather than June 1. Bob moved to accept; Jon seconded; all in favor.
3. Development Review
 - a. Gardenside sub-division (Andy Rowe, Bart Frisbie). Andy Rowe described project: a Planned Unit Development, 13 single-family homes; 4 units in two duplexes. Wetlands drive configuration of sub-division. Gilman & Briggs Environmental performed field assessment. No rare or threatened species onsite but there are some non-native species that were escapes from previous nursery operation. No northern long-eared bat habitat. Stormwater will flow into: 1) bio-retention area; 2) gravel wetland (southern portion of project); and 3) small infiltration area between lots 2 and 11. There are Class 2 and 3 wetlands onsite. All existing structures (greenhouses, single-family house) will be removed (none of the structures have notable historical value). Bob asked how close the LaPlatte River was; Andy replied that is about 1,000 feet away. Sean asked whether the gravel wetland is in the open space parcel (parcel #18). Andy indicated that it is, and he also clarified that the open-space area requirement in the PUD zoning standards would still be met if the gravel wetland were not included. Dean asked about vernal pools, and Andy maintained that there are no potential sites on the property (his firm performed its own survey and also consulted with Tina Heath of Vermont DEC). Jon asked whether undevelopable Class 2 wetlands can be included in the open space calculations, and Dean indicated that they do count toward that requirement. Don asked whether some of the sandy soils onsite would be used for stormwater runoff infiltration and Andy indicated that the infiltration area between Lots 2 and 11 will take advantage of these soils, although they are limited. Gail asked about wetland plant species and Andy indicated that native species would be used. Dean inquired further about the developable land calculation, and Andy described how the application must subtract Class 2 from the developable area but not the Class 2 buffer. Dean also mentioned that the area of Class 2 wetlands affects the developable area calculation but these wetlands can be included in the open space component. The committee had no further comment on the project and approved the plan as presented (Jon made a motion to accept, Bob accepted; all in favor except Don, who abstained because he was not present for the entire presentation).
 - b. Kwiniaska sub-division, status of rock\soil piles (Andy Rowe). Gail asked about the location of the piles relative nearby trees (a condition of the project is that spoil piles will not impact tree roots and moisture drip from above foliage). Andy described that

the Phase 1 pile will be in place for much of the project but a nearby weeping willow will be removed. A pile near Spear St. will be moved away from nearby trees.

4. Animal Coexistence Working Group

- a. Don described two draft policy statements developed by the working group: 1) a far-ranging policy statement including habitat protection and other issues germane to the Town Plan; and 2) specific administrative actions (tasks performed by town employees or contractors). The group would like recommendations from the SNRCC before sending the draft policy statement to the Selectboard. Mike Ashooh described that the impetus for an animal coexistence policy stemmed from a series of recent issues with beavers, but overall he believes that a coherent policy is needed to minimize negative effects to wildlife and their habitat. Jim White further mentioned that, in addition in town employees, the policy document should inform town residents at large. Dean suggested that the document would be most effective if it focused on tangible goals and benefits. Mike reiterated that the initial goal was fairly specific but it's hard not to consider more far-reaching policy goals. Sean suggested that two documents may be necessary in the short-term: 1) a specific set of policies for administrative actions; and 2) a general set of policy goals that will inform subsequent versions of the town plan, open space plan, and related documents.

5. Bylaw Changes

- a. Dean reminded the committee that the Planning Commission has requested suggestions for improvements to zoning regulations passed in February 2019, particularly definitions of open space and other planning and ecological concepts. The committee has already devoted several meetings to definitions but more work is needed, and the Planning Commission would like an update at their meeting on July 9 (tomorrow). Don asked whether additional discussion is needed before updating the Planning Commission. Dean reminded the committee that definitions need to be clarified for Section 1930 of the zoning regulations. Jon mentioned that a clear definition is needed for calculation of open space for PUDs (i.e., developed features such as stormwater retention features should not be included). Gail also mentioned that the configuration of open space portions is also important. Sean mentioned the forest block analysis that the committee performed last year, describing how the core forest concept should be dropped in favor of forest blocks. This change would be in keeping with the State of Vermont's landscape planning documents. He also suggested that a 25-acre standard would be a good starting point for discussion because, based on 2011 data, there are 38 blocks (out of 118 greater than 5 acres in size) that satisfy this criterion, constituting about 4,425 acres (27.6% of the town's land area). He will refine this analysis before the next meeting. Don will provide an update to the Planning Commission tomorrow night.

6. Updates

- a. Dean indicated the Regional Planning Commission provides about 25 hours of support to Shellburne per year, and some of those hours could be devoted to helping the SNRCC with definitions for ecological terms in the zoning regulations.
- b. Dean also provided an update on lamprey management on the LaPlatte River, near the Falls Rd. bridge. A physical barrier is being considered as an alternative to chemical treatment. Several sites are under consideration, and Gail indicated that she

recommended that the structure be installed as close to the bridge as possible to reduce visibility from the nearby overlook.

- c. Dean described a grant opportunity for towns to receive technical assistance on compliance with Act 171 (Forest Integrity). Dean will be attending a meeting to learn more.
 - d. No conservation issues.
 - e. Discussion of Section 800 of the zoning regulations will be continued at a later meeting.
7. Adjourned at 9:25pm (Don motioned, Bob seconded, all in favor).