

TOWN OF NEEDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 27, 2024

Under Governor Healey's Act "Extending Certain COVID-10 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency", extending the "Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20," issued March 2023, meeting of public bodies may be conducted virtually provided that adequate access is provided to the public.

LOCATION: Zoom Virtual Platform – the meeting was held virtually per Governor Baker's Emergency Order.

ATTENDING: Dave Herer (Chair), Sue Barber, Reade Everett, Bill Hebard, Fred Moder, Polina Safran, Deb Anderson (Director of Conservation), Clay Hutchinson (Conservation Specialist)

D. Herer opened the public meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS –

1. Minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 13, 2024, and October 14, 2021, as amended, by D. Herer, seconded by R. Everett, approved 6-0-0.

2. Enforcement Orders

D. Anderson stated that the revised plan for 10 Lake has been submitted and will be issued tomorrow.

C. Hutchinson stated that the application for 17 George Aggott Road will be on the next meeting agenda.

HEARINGS/APPOINTMENT

49 GREEN STREET (DEP FILE #234-911) – *continued* NOTICE OF INTENT

Motion to continue the hearing for 49 Green Street (DEP FILE #234-911) to July 11, 2024, by D. Herer, seconded by P. Safran, approved 6-0-0.

443 CENTRAL AVENUE (DEP FILE #234-9XX) – NOTICE OF INTENT

Mary Trudeau, Wetland Consultant representing the applicant, explained that this property contains an existing house and driveway with a fairly level backyard. There has been a raise in the grade of the site over the existing topography. There is a fairly steep drop after the fill material, at approximately a 2:1 slope, with a freshwater vegetated wetland at the bottom. The site plan has been based off a recent delineation of the area. The proposal is to demolish the existing single-family house and reconstruction of a larger house. Due to the large amount of

existing impervious surface on this property, the proposed house, though it has a larger footprint than the existing house, will actually have less impervious coverage than currently exists. Currently, there is approximately 5,000 s.f. of impervious surface on the site and the proposal will have a decrease of approximately 103 s.f., leading to a total of 4,765 s.f. This trend carries into the buffer zone of the site, reducing the amount by 365 s.f. The existing house has no garage. The proposed site plan shows cars entering into the existing accessway but then entering into a garage under the proposed house. To maintain a grade off Central Avenue and create the proposed parking, some fill will be needed for the backyard. The plan includes retaining wall, reducing the amount of fill and trees to be removed. Currently, there are 22 trees larger than 6" within the site, with 13 of them within the buffer zone. Tree removal has been reduced to eight mature trees, with a 2:1 replanting plan. The Notice of Intent shows the proposed appropriate tree species. No work is proposed within the 0'-25' buffer zone. There is some landscaping proposed within the 25'-50' zone. A stormwater management system is proposed as part of this project.

B. Hebard asked about why the specific trees are proposed to be removed. M. Trudeau stated that the trees proposed to be removed were determined based more on the grading of the site than the health of the trees. Over 50 abutters were notified for this project.

P. Safran asked if the area with trees proposed to be removed is currently vegetated. M. Trudeau stated that this is a compact, firm yard, without much vegetation except for the trees.

M. Trudeau stated that the current house is 16' from the road. As most people would prefer not to live close to the road, the new house is proposed to be shifted back on the property.

Nazar Vincent explained that the garage is proposed to be on the front of the new house to create less pavement and less pitch to the garage. The current garage is on quite an incline. Water will be able to run through the deck and there will be drainage underneath in the form of crushed stone. There will be gutters that flow to an infiltration system which is designed to accept 1" of water for the entire property.

R. Everett asked if any thought has been given to save the Linden trees that are proposed to be removed. M. Trudeau explained that tree wells cannot be placed around these trees due to the amount of fill needed in these areas. The site grading of the proposal does not allow them to be saved. R. Everett stated that he would like to see a more specific planting plan for the site.

F. Moder asked if impervious surface is moving closer to the wetlands with this project. M. Trudeau stated that the proposed house, as set further back from the street, will be located closer to the buffer zone. However, the pavement proposed to be removed from the site was the closest existing impervious surface to the wetlands. P. Safran stated that she believes this area is labeled as lawn on the plan.

F. Moder asked how this project will match with adjoining lots in terms of elevation. M. Trudeau explained that grades will be met on the property lines. F. Moder expressed concern with the amount of fill proposed, and that, without roots and soil structure there may be a change in the water flow on the site. M. Trudeau stated that there may be some short-term loss from the

proposed tree removal, but the soil is quite compacted currently. The new plantings will take up water flow at some point. N. Vincent stated that the proposal will improve the land.

D. Herer stated that some Commissioners may like more specificity as to where the new trees are proposed. The proposed infiltration system seems to comply with the Town's bylaws. A test pit may be required prior to installation. N. Vincent stated that a perc test has already been completed.

S. Barber asked about the fill and retaining walls proposed. M. Trudeau stated that this will be within the 50' buffer. There will also be some grading in the 25'. S. Barber expressed concern that, with the trees proposed to be removed and fill proposed to be brought in, the fill may go into areas of runoff. M. Trudeau stated that there will be erosion controls placed during construction that will remain until the site is stabilized. The fill will be the planting medium. N. Vincent stated that there is no current control of runoff on the site.

S. Barber echoed that she would like additional information about the planting plan.

D. Anderson stated that the whole back of the property is forested. She suggested that the 50' no disturb buffer zone should be employed for this area, as this is likely wildlife habitat. Regarding the lawn, it appears that this will be expanded, with plantings along the perimeter. She asked if the plantings could instead be placed in the area where the trees will be removed in order to naturalize the area. M. Trudeau stated that evergreens were proposed to screen the new house, but these can be staggered slightly. This suggestion would not leave the site with much lawn area. The applicant would like to expand the yard area into the 25'-50' zone.

D. Anderson stated that the tree report does not give a health assessment of the trees. It appeared on site that all of the trees seems healthy. The fill seems to be to allow for a drive-in garage. N. Vincent stated that the intent of the fill is to maintain the correct pitch for the driveway. This would be helpful for emergency and general access.

C. Hutchinson stated that he spoke with an abutter who has concerns regarding the retaining wall along the property line. The abutter would like to make sure this is not compromised during the grading and foundation work. He sent these concerns to the Building Department. N. Vincent stated that this wall is stable and far from the area proposed to be disturbed.

Motion to continue the hearing for 443 Central Avenue (DEP File #234-9XX) to July 11, 2024, at request of the applicant, by D. Herer, seconded by F. Moder, approved 6-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Commission discussed its existing regulations and bylaw. The Commission agreed to review these items for additional discussion at a future meeting.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by P. Safran, seconded by S. Barber, approved 6-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:

July 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude