

Conservation Commission Meeting  
Sharon Community Center  
October 17, 2019 - DRAFT

Peg Arguimbau, Chair, Keevin Geller, Meredith Avery, Stephen Cremer, Alan Westman were the members present, Michael Donatelle and Jon Wasserman were not present. The Conservation Administrator, Greg Meister, was also present.

A sign-in sheet is on file in the office listing other attendees of the meeting.

Meeting started at 7:45pm

**7:45 PM – Hearing Continuation, 269 South Walpole Street**

*Notice of Intent: Proposed construction of a driveway within the inner wetland buffer zone and the inner riparian zone*

Dan Merrikan, Engineer from Legacy Engineering was presenting for the applicant. He began by noting that at the last hearing, the Commission asked for several changes to the proposed plan. The updated plan reflects the width of the driveway was narrowed from fifteen feet to ten feet, the gravity retaining wall will be built using Redi-Rocks, and plantings in the area have been added. Arguimbau asked Merrikin if he had a chance to speak with the building inspector regarding the retaining wall. Merrikin explained that if the walls were less than four feet tall, then he was not required to speak with the building inspector. Merrikin explained that the Redi-Rocks system is more substantial than the Versa Lock which was initially proposed, and that the retaining wall to be built will be less than four feet tall.

**Abutters**

Furst asked if there were any setback requirements for this project. He was informed that question fell under the Zoning Board, and is not within the Commission's purview. It was also noted that driveways tended to be different and had their own set of rules. Furst also asked about the retaining wall and its integrity, and mentioned the amount of trees in the area. He also had questions regarding the pit. According to Furst, he believes the pit is a good ten feet deep and feels a tremendous amount of fill will be required to "level" it off. Merrikin explained the process; grading on both sides of the pit, putting in the retaining wall, etc..... Merrikin maintains that once work has been done and completed, only five feet or so of fill will be needed to fill in the pit. If required by the Conservation Administrator, the area around the driveway can be seeded.

Abutters concerned about inspections and developer proceeding as required. Arguimbau explained that over the course of the driveway being built, there would be many inspections. There would also be a number of inspections once a house was to be built (from the Board of Health and others). All work at the site must be per plan. Arguimbau informed abutters that if they see something "funky" going on, then they should notify the Conservation office. A question was raised regarding electricity. Merrikin explained that it is up to the electric company what will be done, and he will know once a permit has been applied for. He did explain however that electricity will either come in underground or via poles. The decision however, is up to the electric company.

Another abutter asked about the size of the lot and could it be rezoned. Merrikin explained that the lot is 5.1 acres and as far as rezoning goes, it is his understanding that any changes would need to go before town meeting. Another abutter asked about use of chemicals on the

driveway and would they be banned. Arguimbau responded that she does not believe the Commission can regulate that, but did note that the proposed driveway was flat.

Some of the abutters were concerned about security. The driveway being proposed is long and seems to go nowhere (at least for now). Arguimbau explained this was not under the Commissions purview. An abutter asked if the width of the driveway could be increased in the future. Arguimbau explained that if the owner wished to widen the driveway, they would need to come before the Commission.

There was concern about a developer coming in and building an apartment building. Arguimbau explained that the lot was zoned for a single family home. If someone wished to rezone for another use, it would need to go through town meeting. Additionally, the project would need to come before the Commission. Arguimbau explained to abutters that any proposed project would need to follow the Wetland Protection Act. Arguimbau noted the Commission has done its best with the property, following the Wetlands Protection Act. All concerns from the Commission have been addressed by the applicant.

**Motion** to close hearing and issue order with updated plans. (use of Redi-Rocks for retaining wall, ten foot wide driveway and additional plantings.) Geller, Cremer 5-0-0

#### **8:00 PM – Request for Determination – 18 Franklin Street**

*Modification/expansion of existing carport, driveway, deck and front entry.*

David Agnew, contractor for the project, was presenting for the applicant.

Agnew explained he was before the Commission asking to expand an existing carport, redo the front entry of the home and expand the driveway. The whole project is within the buffer. Permission from the Zoning Board has been given for the project as this case is not precedent setting. The carport will be open as will the deck. Permeable asphalt will be used for the driveway. The homeowner would like to be able to park their cars on their property, and off of the street. The area where the driveway will be expanded is currently lawn. No trees will need to be removed.

Meister explained that originally, the homeowner wished to expand at the back of property, but he pushed back on the original proposal as he felt it would be too close to the wetlands. He is in support of this project.

**Motion** to close hearing and issue a Negative Determination as per plan.  
Westman, Avery 5-0-0

#### **8:15 PM Discussion, Cranberry Bogs**

Fred Bottomley is not present tonight, discussion will be postponed.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes (September 19 and October 3, 2019)**

##### **Meeting Minutes of September 19**

- Minor grammatical errors.

**Motion** to approve meeting minutes of September 19 as amended  
Cremer, Geller 3-0-2

**Meeting Minutes of October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

- Minor grammatical errors.
- Notice of Intent – 269 South Walpole Street. Avery asked to include the following in the minutes: *updated plan to include change in width of driveway, use of Redi-Rocks for gravity wall and additional plantings.*

**Motion** to approve meeting minutes of October 3<sup>rd</sup> as amended  
Westman, Cremer 5-0-0

**194 Edgehill Road – Issuance of Negative Determination**

Arguimbau informed Commission members that an updated plan was submitted to the office.

**Motion** to close hearing and issue Negative Determination  
Westman, Cremer 5-0-0

**Voucher**

Voucher for telephone was passed around and signed by Commission members.

**8:30 pm - High School: Artificial Turf Discussion**

The architect for the proposed high school, Christopher Blessen of Tappe Architects, along with his team, is present this evening to begin preliminary discussions of the project.

The Commission was shown the proposed plans of the new Sharon High School. Blessen noted that nothing is finalized, and that he is present this evening to update the Commission on what is being proposed and to hopefully get some feedback from the Commission as to what may be potential concerns with the proposed project. The plans presented show the existing high school, the proposed high school, and the athletic fields. Blessen noted that no vegetation will need to be removed in order to build the new high school. The location for the new high school is where the baseball field is currently located.

Blessen also explained that plans for the high school also include adding additional plantings around the school as well as a “walkway” for students to use to classroom. He also noted that the proposed high school was in the water protection district, and that the closest the new building will be to the wetlands would be 62 feet. Also discussed was the approach to stormwater. The plans show a green roof will be used on part of the new building, and infiltration around the wetlands will be promoted. Use of permeable pavers will be used in the front of the school. Plans for treating the water are still in the design phase. A turf field is also being proposed where the current football field is located.

Ti Johnson, the landscape architect for the proposed project discussed the location of the Tennis Courts, practice and other fields, and the proposed artificial turf for the football field. He reviewed with Commission members the plan being proposed including the installation of a turf field. One of the questions raised has been about what infill will be used on the turf

field. The firm is looking at several types of infill for the turf field, and is currently leaning towards Brockfill. Brockfill is a southern yellow pine. Johnson understands there have been some recent reports about infill fiber and the effect on groundwater. His firm is in the preliminary stages of designing the turf field, and no decisions need to be made at this time. Johnson noted that in discussions with the Standing Building Committee and School Committee, the belief is a turf field makes sense as it would take the pressure off the town to build other fields. Usage of a turf field is typically four times more than a grass field. Johnson also explained that they will need to come before the Commission whether they proceed with a turf field or a grass field. He asked the Commission for feedback on what members would be looking for if a turf field were to be proposed. Meister explained that it is the responsibility of the applicant to come prepared to the Commission meeting, and that they should be able defend and answer what is being proposed for the turf field, and that the proposed field and materials used will be safe for the community.

Geller asked about using walnut or coconut husks and if that material deteriorated overtime. Johnson explained that they do deteriorate and will need to be replenished, especially around the spots where there is higher usage. Johnson further explained the process of maintaining the turf field.

A Commission member asked the life and cost to replace a turf field. Johnson explained that typically the life of a turf field was between 8 to 12 years and that the carpet and infill is what will need to be replaced. Costs for that normally run between \$500,000 and \$550,000. In time, the shock pad will also need to be replaced, but that usually lasts about two cycles. Johnson then explained to Commission members what a shock pad was, how it worked, and the materials it was made of.

Johnson was asked the cost to install a natural grass field. To do right, Johnson explained that a full renovation of the field would be required. He believed the initial cost would run about \$500,000. After that, there would be yearly maintenance costs. Johnson noted that because the fields will be heavily used, it will be difficult to properly aerate the fields.

There was a brief discussion on test pits and the depth to groundwater in the area where the new high school will be built. When the high school project is filed, Meister explained that the consultant will need to return to the Commission and present their proposal. Meister explained that Commission members are not experts on turf fields and the materials used. It will be up to the consultant to educate the Commission on turf fields, (materials used, etc...) and the potential affects to the groundwater and wetlands. The consultant should provide both the pros and cons of a turf field. Without adequate information it will be difficult for the Commission to approve the project.

Linda Orel (audience member) is concerned about turf fields and the materials used to construct such fields. She is concerned about the recent published reports on the toxicity of **PFAS** and their safety, both to children and the environment.

Paul Lauenstein (audience member) is also concerned about the use of PFAS used for turf fields. Lauenstein noted he was a member of the Water Advisory Committee in Sharon, but

was present tonight as a citizen. He is concerned about potential impact to Beaver Brook and the Cedar Swamp.

Diane Tatro (audience member) also noted her concern with turf fields and the potential health impact to users of the field.

Keith Bernstein (audience member) believes some folks are missing the point. He contends the real problem is that of safety. The fields in town are overused and though maintained as best as possible, still pose a safety risk. He believes that as a community we need to look at what the real solution is. How to keep the existing fields at a level which will be safe for children to play on.

Paul Driscoll (audience member), explained he worked on the soccer fields at Gavins Pond. There are not enough fields in town to meet demand and there is nowhere to put additional fields. A turf field is equivalent to that of four fields and would help with the lack of fields. The grass fields in town are being maintained as best as possible. The fields at East Elementary have been regraded and reseeded and have been off line to let them “rest”. The best maintenance for a grass field is rest; however, there are not enough fields in town to allow for this.

Blessen asked Commission members for feedback on the proposed project for the high school. Of concern is one of the corners of the building which is close to the wetlands. They have done their best with the building (it is shoehorned into the site), but would like to know if there is anything specific they should be looking at and any potential changes to be made. Blessen also explained to Commission members that a boardwalk will be built leading out to the wetlands which will be used as an educational area for the students and teachers. More information on this will be presented if the high school passes at Town meeting and the ballot.

**Signing of Deed for land at the Sharon Housing Authority.** Arguimbau informed Commission members that this land consisted of approximately 11 acres and is mostly wetlands. It was previously under the control of the Selectboard and is being turned over to Conservation. In 2010, Town meeting voted for this property to go to Conservation, but a deed was never executed. Arguimbau read the motion in its entirety and Commission members voted to accept the deed.

Cremer, Geller 5-0-0

### **Other Business**

- Rattlesnake Hill. A flyer for this property has been developed and will be mailed to every household in Sharon prior to town meeting. It is an informational piece about rattlesnake hill. Money left over in the Rattlesnake Hill account will be used to pay for the flyer.
- Next Commission meetings are scheduled for: November 7<sup>th</sup> and November 21<sup>st</sup>

**Motion to adjourn**

Conservation Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes October 17, 2019

Cremer, Geller 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 9.45pm