Town of Wilton

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Site Visit Minutes

Date: October 29, 2022
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Place: Barrett Hill Road, Wilton
Present: Neil Faiman (Chair), Joanna Eckstrom (Vice Chair); Andy Hoar; Jeff Stone; Paul Levesque; Judith Klinghoffer (alternate)
Absent: None
Attendees: Ken Lehtonen (applicant), Kenny Lehtonen (applicant), Sandy Lehtonen (applicant), Nikki O'Neil (San-Ken Homes), Chris Guida (Fieldstone Engineers), Alan Preston (Wilton Conservation Commission), Nikki Andrews (Wilton Conservation Commission), Jennifer Beck (Wilton Conservation Commission), Marilyn Jonas, (abutter), Gene Jonas (abutter), Bill Abrahams-Dematte (abutter), Chris Conley (abutter), Shelley Newman (abutter), Patrick Walk (abutter), Peter Howd (abutter), David Miller (abutter), Doreece Miller (abutter)

N. Faiman opened the site visit at 10:00 AM and explained the purpose of visiting the property, and the rules for site visits.

N. Faiman announced the board members that were present, and stated that P. Howd was here as an abutter.

N. Faiman recognized the Wilton Conservation Commission committee members that were present.

Chris Guida led us to the location of interest, about ¼ mile down an established logging road.

J. Stone asked C. Guida to talk briefly about why we need to approve a wetland crossing and what is it that is being proposed.

C. Guida stated that they would never ask for a wetlands crossing if it wasn't needed, but there is a large section of land in the rear that is isolated by wetlands surroundings. To minimize impact, the narrowest location was chosen. The proposed wetlands crossing is well under 3,000 sf which, if greater, would a trigger a minimum impact permit. Alternative driveway options would cause a larger wetland and topography impact. He pointed out the pink and black flags that defined the edge of the wetlands. Where we were standing, these delineated a very narrow area of seasonal run-off and channelized flow making the impact of the wetland crossing very small as characterized by the small banks and natural swale. The goal is to maintain the hydrology so that all the water stays in the same riverine state. The stream bed would be recreated inside the embedded culvert with natural substrate common to the critters that travel through there. Though the hydrology calls for a 12" culvert, the culvert proposed would be large enough (30" or 36" wide) to have a terrestrial feel and allow for the hydrology to continue to flow

at its current velocity so you don't get erosion at the inlet or outlet which is often the result in smaller and older style culverts. C. Guida stood at the start of the proposed 30'/40' culvert and K. Lehtonen stood where it would end.

C. Guida explained that the 15 or so acres, whose access is isolated by the wetlands, would be the right of the property owner to access. The approach taken was the best case scenario to minimize impact and meet all of the town and state regulations. The proposed driveway would be level to the land on top of the fill necessary (2' to 3') to support emergency and construction vehicles.

In response to a question on embedding the culvert, C. Guida conveyed the organic and unsuitable material we see would be scraped down to the native mineral soil/brown layer, leveled with sand matching the existing grade, the culvert set, and the natural substrate placed back inside the culvert once it was covered.

A. Hoar asked about erosion control at the inlet and outlet to which C. Guida explained the natural substrate placed back into the culvert would basically match the existing natural area outside the culvert and would not change what we are seeing today. A small fieldstone headwall would be made with the area's natural stones ~~to~~ direct the energy of the run-off. Since the topography was created long ago, and we have not seen additional changes affecting the active flow of water, there is no active erosion, thus a natural stable condition would be maintained.

C. Guida addressed the concern of higher water flow during ice melt. He pointed out the existing banks and moss which show where the water has flowed and which demonstrate that the area of concern, is a very small watershed.

A question was raised about the forest management that has taken place and the future harvesting of trees effecting the water uptake and increasing the amount of flow through the area. C. Guida affirmed that when you open the forest up, you increase a lot of exponential growth, and those saplings actually drag up more water than larger trees.

C. Conley asked if removing the organic matter would affect how the aquifers are replenished annually. C. Guida reiterated that the organic matter is removed for the purpose of setting the culvert then returned to the inside of the culvert preserving its natural state. The size of the impact area is small and the velocity of the flow not changed. The wetlands will remain uncut, so no additional change from there. Stormwater management will be addressed with the Planning Board as will maintenance of the culvert.

In closing, C. Guida stated they are proposing more than is required by town and state regulations.

N. Faiman closed the site visit at 11:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Caryn Case, Secretary
Approved on 11.08.2022