

RYE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Site Walk Minutes

Monday, November 16, 2020

Meeting was called to order by Chair McFarland at 3:35 pm.

RCC members present at the site walk: Chair Suzanne McFarland; Vice Chair Sally King; Members Jeff Gardner, Karen Oliver, Susan Shepcaro, Heather Reed and Mike Garvan. Chair McFarland seated Alternate Karen Oliver in place of Member Jaci Grote.

3:30 am: 4 Washington Road, Tax Map 013 Lot 40, Owners: Jay Mason & Jacqueline Doherty

Present: Eric Weinrieb, Altus Engineering. Abutters Lucy Braun, Mike and Padi Anderson and neighbor Earl Sheesley. Owners Jay Mason and Jacqueline Doherty.

The Rye Conservation Commission (RCC) conducted a site walk at 4 Washington Road to evaluate a new proposal to tear down the existing dwelling and construct a new house and install a new septic system. Eric Weinrieb presented the new plan for a 3 bedroom home that would replace the existing 3 bedroom home. A previous design had been denied by the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) for being too large for the lot.

Approximately 75% of the lot is in either the tidal wetland buffer or the freshwater wetland buffer. The proposed structure would be 78.9 feet from the tidal buffer where 100 feet is required and 42.1 feet from the freshwater buffer where 75 feet is required. The new house location will allow the septic system to be completely out of the buffer. The plan calls for a gravel drip edge around the house as well as a small swale on one side to improve storm water management by allowing infiltration and reducing surface flow. The existing impervious asphalt driveway and walkway will be replaced with pervious pavers. The engineering calculations indicate a reduction in both peak flow and total volume. A 2,000 square foot buffer restoration area is proposed in order to protect the freshwater buffer between the proposed home and the pond on the Anderson property at 10 Washington Road. Much of this area is currently lawn. The new restoration area would be unmown and native plants would be added.

RCC members had questions about the footprint of the existing home compared to the proposed home. Mr. Weinrieb answered that the current house is 1,100 sq. ft. and the proposed house would be 1,382 sq. ft. plus a 382 sq. ft. deck. Lucy Braun observed that the town map indicates the current dwelling is 1,003 sq. ft. Ms. Braun expressed her opinion that the current home location was preferable to the proposed location even though the current home is just a few feet from her home and runoff from the house floods her basement. She prefers the current location because it is further from the wetlands.

The group then went next door to 10 Washington Road to observe the pond and the Anderson property. Mike Anderson led the tour and pointed out the many trees they have planted and gave a history of the property. He pointed out the lawn and garden they have adjacent to the marsh. Mr. Weinrieb commented on those uses in the tidal buffer. Mr. Anderson showed the RCC the pond and expressed his strong concerns that the proposed home was too close to the pond and that it would negatively affect the pond. He believes that the proposed project will cause permanent harm to their pond which supports an abundant, diverse population of wildlife. Mr. Weinrieb asked about a pipe coming from the pond which Mr. Anderson said they installed 6 years ago to water their garden but never used. Mr. Sheesley had to leave the meeting but

expressed his hope that the Conservation Commission would do the right thing. Mrs. Anderson agreed with her husband that the project would harm their pond. There ensued a discussion of the use of the home as an Airbnb rental. Chair McFarland requested that this discussion stop since the use of the home is outside the purview of the RCC.

The meeting then returned to 4 Washington Road. The RCC members had more questions for Eric Weinrieb about the storm management plan. Vice Chair King asked about the planting plan for the 2,000 sq.ft. buffer restoration area. Member Oliver wanted to know what constituted storm flow and how the plan would deal with it. Mr. Weinrieb explained that the gravel drip edge and the swales would reduce both peak flows off the property and the total volume. Additionally replacing the existing impervious driveway and walkway will result in no increase in impervious surfaces on the lot.

Lucy Braun showed the group photographs of flooding on her property from previous storm events. Mr. Weinrieb commented that replacing Ms. Braun's impervious driveway with pervious pavers could help with drainage during storm events and reduce basement flooding. Member Garvan commented that the new design would not prevent flooding during extreme storm events nor would building in the old footprint prevent flooding during such events. Member Garvan mentioned that the new design is 25.6% larger (without the deck) than the existing footprint. Member Gardner commented that he would prefer the new house be built in the old footprint rather than be moved closer to the wetlands and more in the buffer. He wondered if the commission couldn't develop a policy that addressed that. Member Garvan said that would be an important policy to develop although each property and situation is unique. The RCC members said they would work on guidelines.

Member Shepcaro said that moving this house from its current location is allowing the septic to be constructed completely out of the buffer. There was general agreement that this was a major consideration and improvement over building in the existing footprint. The commission believed that improved storm water management, creation of the 2,000 square foot buffer restoration area, and locating the septic outside of the buffer were significant improvements to the lot and mitigated the impacts of moving the new house more into the buffer. The commission members felt that they preferred to see the size of the new home reduced but that is beyond the scope of what the RCC is allowed to recommend.

The RCC then voted to pay two outstanding bills. Mike Garvan reimburse \$79.61 for paint to blaze Town Forest trails. Suzanne McFarland \$498 for Goss Barn sashes.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm by Chair McFarland.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis P. (Mike) Garvan II, Clerk