

RYE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Site Walk Minutes

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm by Chair Suzanne McFarland.

RCC members present at the site walk: Chair Suzanne McFarland; Vice Chair Sally King, Members Mike Garvan and Susan Shepcaro.

3:00 pm: 55 Recreation Road, Tax Map 12 Lot 79 Owner: Town of Rye

Present: Mike Cuomo, Certified Wetland Scientist, Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD); Steve King and Cory Belden, Rye Recreation Commission.

The Rye Conservation Commission (RCC) conducted a site walk on October 19, 2021 at 55 Recreation Road to address concerns that grass clippings and other materials have been dumped in the wetland buffer adjacent to the playing fields. Another concern regards the drainage system which appears to have two outlets that direct excess water into the wetland buffer on Conservation Commission property in the Rye Town Forest. Mike Cuomo was engaged by the RCC to delineate the wetland and buffer boundaries. The RCCD is the easement holder on the Town Forest.

Member Shepcaro noted that she had reported her concerns about dumping in the buffer to former Recreation Director Lee Arthur and members of the Recreation Commission for several years but the activities have continued. The group noticed that grass clipping had been dumped on the east (marsh) side of the soccer field. There were also some sand bags and a dilapidated lacrosse net in the buffer.

Steve King said he believed the wetland was out in the marsh and that the buffer was beyond where the dumping had occurred. Member Garvan asked Mr. Cuomo if there was a freshwater wetland closer to the fields and Mr. Cuomo replied that it did appear to be the case. There is also a fence around the soccer field on the marsh side of the field which appeared to be in the buffer. Mr. King said that the fence and drainage plan had been permitted by the town and was legal. He also asked where it said that dumping was illegal. Member Garvan replied that the Rye wetland ordinances prohibited it.

James Verra Surveying will be surveying that section of the Town Forest in early November and he will mark the points in the buffer delineated by Mr. Cuomo. This should end any dispute about the location of the buffer. The Recreation Commission members said they had a survey of the property which on closer inspection was a sketch plan, not a formal survey. The Conservation Commission also has a sketch plan of the area. The upcoming survey should supercede those sketch plans and settle any conflicts about the wetland and buffer boundaries.

The site walk then looked at a rock swale that is one of the drainage outlets from the soccer field. Vice Chair King noted that she has seen flowing water in that swale during the spring and that it discharges water into the Town Forest. Rye building ordinances specify that a property owner must deal with storm flow on their property and not discharge it onto the property of an abutter. Mr. King said that the drainage plan was designed by Greg Mikolaite and approved by the town.

While back on the soccer fields, there was a discussion of where the grass clippings could be disposed of. Asking Sean Crapo's crew to take it to the transfer station would require more time and would therefore be more expensive. His contract does not currently include that requirement. Mr. Belden said that it could be dumped on the other side of the field in the 50 feet beyond the fence owned by the Recreation Department. This would not be in the buffer. Steve King added that the field was fertilized only three times per year and a low rate of fertilizer was used and that the field was healthy with a lot of clover in the ground cover.

The group agreed to wait until it had the results of Mr. Cuomo's delineation of the buffer before it decided on a future course of action.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:32pm by Chair McFarland.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis P. (Mike) Garvan II, Clerk