

**Minutes of the Special Meeting
The Conservation Commission – City of Milford
Thursday, November 5, 2015 – 5:30 p.m.**

Chairman Bill Poutray called to order the November 5, 2015 special meeting of the Conservation Commission at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order / Roll Call at 10:04

- a) Present: Bill Poutray, Claire Casey, Maureen Mauro DeSantie, Oden Seaholm, Dan Drago; Jerry Loiselle, Ryan Keeler
 - 1. Applicant representatives, Michael Grillo, L.J. Grillo, and Brian Stone, Esq., Fred Mascia
 - 2. Steve Johnson attended as Staff Liaison
- b) Absent: Keith Dunn

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comments

- a) None

4. New Business

- a) **Application for Site Plan Approval and Special Exception, Grillo Services LLC, 553 West Avenue.**

Chairman Poutray stated that the purview of the Conservation Commission will be the physical conditions of the flora and fauna in the easement areas.

Chairman Poutray also clarified the advisory role of the Conservation Commission.

Chairman Poutray asked about the acoustic study that had been completed. Michael Grillo said that Grillo Services had hired Acoustical Technologies to provide an Airborne Noise Assessment in 2013. The noise study was completed January 28, 2013 and measured the operations at 1183 Oronoque Road that included grinders and screening operations. They also measured the background ambient noise at 553 West Avenue. The report concluded that the Grillo Services operations at 553 West Avenue will have no impact on the neighboring residential or easement area. The noise generated from operations will not exceed the level of the highway [I-95] and their mulching piles would provide an additional sound buffer.

Maureen Mauro DeSantie asked if this acoustic report had been requested by residential neighbors. L.J. Grillo said no however, the applicant wanted to be proactive anticipating questions such as this.

Chairman Poutray was handed a copy of the Airborne Noise Assessment report.

Dan Drago asked the Applicant about the purpose of the noise study and he wanted to reconfirm what impact of the residential neighbors.

Michael Grillo stated there will not be any impact on the neighboring residential area since it will not exceed the ambient noise level of the highway.

Chairman Poutray asked about the impact of noise on the easement area.

Michael Grillo said there will be no impact since the storage piles will absorb noise.

L.J. Grillo said the plantings that they are proposing in the Landscape Plan will also buffer noise.

Chairman Poutray provided the Commissioners and Applicant a draft copy of Grillo Application recommendation for discussion.

Michael Grillo asked Attorney Brian Stone if he had reviewed the easement language. Attorney Stone said the City of Milford has maintenance responsibilities for 25' centerline of the trail. The property owner has responsibilities to maintain the easement in perpetuity. The obligations are detailed in the Declaration of Conservation Easement and Trail Easement documents.

Maureen Mauro DeSantie stated she appreciated the responsible plantings to mitigate the proposed development and their clean-up efforts.

Dan Drago said he was concerned about the level of tree deforestation. The number of fully developed trees that will be cut is either not known or disclosed. The extent of the tree cutting has value beyond the loss of habitat. He is concerned what the environmental impact will be on the soil, air quality due to the proximity of I-95. Dan would like to see a report on how many trees and shrubs will be removed and made a motion to table this review until the Applicant can provide details.

Attorney Stone objected to the reference of massive deforestation. He said that term is very inaccurate. He disagrees tremendously with Commissioner Drago's comments. The Applicant has a very small building footprint and the benefits of the proposed improvements more than offset the tree clearing.

Chairman Poutray says the applicant has submitted extensive tree planting on their landscape plans. He suggested that if Dan wanted to make a motion that he consider referencing a net gain or loss of trees.

L.J. Grillo said from an environmental benefit, that the oceans and compost absorb the largest amount of greenhouse gas.

Oden Seaholm said that tree lines can act as valuable buffers.

Dan Drago asked Steve Johnson, as Staff Liaison, to comment. Ecosystem services describes a host of benefits that Dan Drago was referring to. Vegetation studies along roads have shown that they absorb pollutants but this would be hard to quantify. The current overall conditions of the proposed development area was studied by the Inland Wetlands Agency by their consultant, Dr. Michael Klemens. It would be difficult to provide a detailed answer to Dan's question for this proposed development.

Johnson also stated that as a condition of approval for the Inland Wetlands application, the Applicant had agreed to a substantial wetland planting plan that will improve the water quality of that area. Those planting plans are not part of the landscaping plans that the Conservation Commission has.

Fred Mascia – The White Pines were planted to protect site erosion as a mitigation project when I-95 was being built. Many of these trees are growing on disturbed sub-soil ground.

L.J. Grillo, said that out of 57 acres, they are proposing to use only 8 acres.

Michael Grillo says the massive planting they will be doing more that offsets the project impact.

Chairman Poutray suggested a motion to request the net gain or loss of trees on the site.

Oden Seaholm says it is likely a net balance of zero.

Chairman Poutray would prefer the Tree Commission who will be advising on this application, provide their recommendations. He said he felt it is unwise to step into an area that we don't have the expertise on.

Dan Drago said he understands that there is a minimal building footprint but that he still has concerns.

Maureen Mauro DeSantie motioned to accept the draft recommendations Chairman Poutray provided as amended with item 3.

1. Parties (City and Owner) should clarify the maintenance responsibilities with the easement area.
2. Should it be determined that the property owner is responsible for maintaining the conservation easement area, other than the City responsibility 25 feet (12.5 feet from the centerline on both sides), then MCC strongly recommends a detailed long term maintenance plan for the marsh. Such plan must delineate a commitment to reasonable measures to manage invasive plant species, especially the very significant presence of phragmites. Phragmites pose a major fire hazard, and create a plant "monoculture" which negatively impacts diversity of plant and animal life and the environmental health of the marsh itself.
3. The Milford Conservation Commission appreciates the planting of native shrubs and plants and the extremely responsible plants to clean beyond the scope of their boundaries.

Ryan Keeler seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Bill motioned to adjourn the meeting, Dan Drago seconded. The Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Johnson
Open Space and Natural Resource Agent

These minutes have not been accepted or approved.