

TOWN OF YORKTOWN CONSERVATION BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
May 15, 2024

Board Members Present: Co-Chair Diane Dreier, Co-Chair Phyllis Bock, Justin Pruyne, Gerardo Carfagno, Minnie Dineen- Carey, Peter Alduino

Diane Dreier called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The meeting took place in Town Hall Board Room.

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting: April 17, 2024

Communications Received: None

Chair Persons Report: None

Reports from Other Committees: None

1. Homelands Cell Tower

The Conservation Board met with Robert Gaudioso of Synder & Snyder and Jan Johannessen from KSCJ Consultants to discuss a proposed location for a 130-foot cell tower on Town property off of Granite Springs Road adjacent to Hallocks Mills Wetland. The tower's purpose is to remedy an identified gap in wireless communication service in the area. The Tower will not be in the wetland or wetland buffer but the access road to the tower will require the loss of 920 square feet of wetland and most of the road will be constructed in the wetland buffer. The access Road will be constructed of pervious material and approximately 122 trees will be removed. An Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) has been submitted to NYS DEC.

The Conservation Board has the following comments:

- The EAF states no endangered species or habitat will be affected. Has the applicant done any studies to confirm this statement? The board recommends a wildlife survey be conducted.
- A Wetland mitigation plan is required for loss of wetland at a ratio of 1:1.
- A Wetland buffer mitigation plan is required due to disturbance in the buffer.
- The Board recommends screening be planted between the access road and the adjacent residential property.
- The Board recommends a gate be installed where the access road meets Granite Springs Road to limit unauthorized access to the tower.
- A tree permit and mitigation will be required.

At the meeting a resident who lives adjacent to the proposed project was present.

The Board received comments on the EAF from NYSDEC on May 16, 2024.

The Board requests the applicant return to the Conservation Board to discuss NYS DEC comments and the Board comments listed above.

2. Ryder Subdivision

Joe Riina of Site Design Consultants and Steve Marino, of Tim Miller Associates presented an updated plan for the Ryder minor subdivision, last reviewed by the board in March 2022.

Since our last review the septic fields have been approved, and a pocket wetland is proposed to mitigate the intrusion into the buffer and wetland. The proposed pocket wetland adequately mitigates the sheet flow from the drainage area and incursion into the buffer. When the plan is more fully realized, the applicant should return with a landscape plan, tree survey and mitigation plan for tree removal.

3. Jacob Road Solar Field

David Cooper and Jacalyn Cohen from Zarin and Steinmetz appeared for the applicant to discuss the changes made to the Jacob Road Solar Farm project.

The Conservation Board reemphasizes our consensus shared in previous memos on the siting of solar arrays. While renewable power sources such as wind and solar present green solutions to cutting carbon emissions, solar farms should be located on sites that have few negative environmental impacts. The ecosystem services that forests provide - carbon sequestration, air and water purification, flood and erosion control, the ability to sustain biodiversity and genetic resources, should all be taken into consideration when reviewing applications such as these.

Although the applicant has added to the buffer along the northern and western edges of the property, thereby reducing the number of trees to be removed to 1141, this is a significant woodland that links and connects to other forested areas. Opening this area fragments this wildlife corridor, changing the habitat so that wildlife that inhabits woodlands can no longer be supported.

The Conservation Board is not in favor of this application, which will result in significant adverse environmental impacts, and change the character of the abutting neighborhoods.

4. Dunkin Donuts- Crompond Road

The Board received the revised plans for the proposed Dunkin Donuts located on Crompond Road. The Board appreciates providing a mix/variety of evergreen trees to insure proper screening along rear property line.

In our previous memo, The Board suggested investigating the use of pervious pavers, especially in the wetland buffer. The board would like to know if pervious pavers were investigated.

5. Teatown Lake Dredging

The Conservation Board has no additional comments.

Our previous memo of November 16, 2023, states:

The Conservation Board at its November 16, 2023, meeting discussed the proposed dredging of the lake at Teatown Reservation. The Board believes the re-establishment of the open waterway will increase the health of the lake and surrounding environment. The Board reviewed the documents and all environmental and conservation measures have been implemented.

6. Tree Removal – Quinlan Street

The board discussed the tree permit application submitted by Michael DelVecchio of 2795 Quinlan St., Yorktown Heights. In attendance was Keith Schepart of the Yorktown Tree Commission.

We are in agreement with the memo from the Tree Commission denying the issuance of the permit, as many of the trees the applicant wants to remove are specimen trees that provide screening between adjacent properties. Removal of dead and diseased trees are permitted by the tree ordinance and should be removed.

7. Tree Removal - Field Street

The board reviewed the request for a tree permit submitted by the owners of 2474 Field Street, Cherry Hla-Htay and Rob Pierpont. The applicants previously removed trees without a permit, explaining that as new residents, they were unaware of the tree ordinance. They deemed the trees unsafe and dying and performed the work themselves. Present at the meeting was Keith Schepart from the Tree Commission, who provided an explanation of the tree ordinance, the need to protect our town's treed landscape and the fines that could be imposed for the removal of trees without a permit.

The applicant, in a letter enclosed with the permit application, and discussed during the meeting, plans to replant trees to provide screening to the rear of the property and for visual interest along the driveway. However, a landscape or planting plan was not provided.

The applicants acted in violation of the tree ordinance, and the town should consider further enforcement. The Conservation Board advises that before a permit is granted the applicant should prepare a landscape plan using the services of a certified arborist. All new plantings should be native species, that are suitable for the property.

The Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 pm with a motion from Peter Alduino with a second from Gerardo Carfagno.