

Lee Conservation Commission Minutes of Meeting of November 3, 2021

Present Members: Catherine Fisher (Secretary), Dawn Genes (Chair), Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan

Alternate member: Mark Nelson

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee

Library Board of Trustees: Thomas Coakley, Annamarie Gasowski (Chair), Katrinka Pellecchia (Vice Chair), Deb Shanda (Treasurer), Emily Woodall

Proposed addition to Lee Public Library: The Library Board of Trustees have proposed an addition to the library (57 feet at the closest point) that further encroaches on the wet soils area surrounding the Lee Hill bog, and are seeking a variance from the Town's 75' wet soils setback. A phased rehabilitation and renovation, outlined by A. Gasowski, is planned in which the schoolhouse part of the building will be refurbished, the basement finished, and a LULA Lift installed to make the basement compliant with the Americans Disabilities Act. K. Pellecchia discussed funding options for the proposed project. A. Gasowski noted that the proposal now includes features proposed in order to redirect runoff away from the bog.

Conservation Commission (CC) members and Library Trustees discussed the location of construction vehicles, how close to the bog the excavators will be working, location of the vestibule, whether upgrades to the bathroom and septic system are planned, when the services of a Civil Engineer would be employed, whether additional parking spaces will be needed, and where any future library expansions might be situated.

A. Tappan noted that the CC's chief aim with any proposal impacting a wet soils area is to avoid any impact altogether and if that cannot be achieved work to minimize the impact. If avoiding and minimizing aren't possible, the final alternative is to make efforts to mitigate the impact.

Should the variance be granted, A. Gasowski requested a site walk with the CC to make sure concerns are addressed and to identify any special trees near the library.

D. Genes thanked the Trustees for the information provided and informed them that the CC would discuss their proposal, vote on it, and then write a letter advising the ZBA.

CC members discussed the proposed addition to the Lee Public Library and its effect on the Lee Hill bog. A.

Tappan moved to not recommend that the ZBA grant a variance in accordance with Article XV, Section F2 of the Town's zoning ordinance; C. Fisher seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by CC members.

A. Tappan will draft a letter to the ZBA stating the CC's recommendation and will send it to CC members for review. A. Tappan requested that C. Fisher put together a page about the importance and vulnerability of the bog as a wetland habitat.

Property on Route 4: D. Genes reported that she had spoken with Laurel Cox about a 20 acre property on Route 4 that is likely to come up for sale. The property has frontage on the Oyster River. Though 75% of the 20 acres is zoned commercial, D. Genes reported that there are five acres of wetlands on the property, and based on soil types, the amount of developable acreage may be minimal. As the Oyster is a State designated river, it is protected under the State River Management and Protection Program. So long as the 100 foot setback (Lee Zoning, Shoreland Conservation District) is adhered to, the river is protected without having to spend funds to put the property under conservation easement. Any development done within a quarter mile of the river would involve the Oyster River Local Advisory Committee, and a soil survey would be requested should any development be proposed.

Submitted by: _____

Catherine Fisher