

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES
July 15, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Byron Quinn, Al Alessi , Bethany Powers
MEMBERS ABSENT: Lea Kachadorian, Cyndy Kozara, Lynn Peterson, Alan Willard
OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Hayes, Cy Benoit, Sam Segal, Lorissa Segal, Joan Sterner, Michael Brands

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Chair Quinn opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.
There was no quorum.

II. MINUTES

The approval of the June 17, 2015 minutes was continued.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. V-3157-15 Samuel Lorissa Segal

Application is for Conditional Use Approval to construct a 2823 sq. ft. single family dwelling with 550 sq. ft. garage in the Scenic Ridgeline. The property is located on 3 Highland Avenue Extension and is zoned Residential Three Acres / Scenic Ridgeline Overlay.

Mr. and Mrs. Segal presented the application.

The CC reviewed a site plan and numerous renderings of the proposed home.

Applicants wish to place a 97' long, 17' wide and 16' 8" high home in the Scenic Ridge line. The home is designed to be long and narrow to fit a long and narrow lot, and also to create a home with a very low profile. The home would be built into the hillside. The basement portion would be exposed on the north side.

The parcel is forested. The entire neighborhood is heavily forested. The Billings Park borders the property on the rear and to the south. The park has a thick forest of mature red pines directly behind the home site.

The proposed site is a vacant lot located at 3 Highland Avenue Extension, a private road serving three homes currently. There are four homes within the immediate neighborhood, all of which were built within the last 30 years or so.

The parcel is fairly steep with a 40' rise over a 105' run. The home would be placed on the east side of the lot, the west side of the lot would remain forested as is. The center of the lot has an 80' x 80' no build area per deed restriction. The driveway would enter at the northeastern most corner of the lot. Owner intends to remove trees only from the driveway area, the home site and directly south of the home.

The sole vantage point is the Billings Farm and Museum service entrance located on River Road. This is 3500' distance from, and 200' in elevation below the home site.

The area immediately north of home site is heavily forested with mainly large mature maple trees. It is virtually impossible to see the home during the summer months due to the heavy foliage. The home may be slightly visible from the vantage point during winter months, but such views would be heavily screened by the numerous deciduous trees located north of the site.

The area behind the home as viewed from the vantage point is a mature red pine forest. Due to the low height of the home, the hillside, and the red pine forest located behind the home, the home would not be noticeable from the vantage point.

The home would have a metal roof. The same metal material would be applied as siding on both the north and south elevations. The material would be allowed to rust creating a dull reddish brown color. The east and west ends of the home would be sided with natural wood and left unpainted.

The proposed windows are mainly long narrow casement windows. They would be few in number on the north elevation which faces the vantage point.

Proposed lighting would be very minimal; solar path lights and entry lights at the doors for safety.

It was noted the location of home is within an established neighborhood in the Village. An additional home at this location would not be considered out of place.

A neighbor, Ms. Sterner, was present and had no objections.

After discussion, the CC agreed the proposed home meets the criteria of the Scenic Ridgeline regulations and therefore recommended approval as presented.

B. T-4581-15 Jon Rubinton

Application is for Conditional Use Approval to erect a stone patio and stairs in the Riparian Buffer, after the fact. The property is located on 4808 Cloudland Road and is zoned Residential One Acre / Riparian Overlay Zone.

Tom Hayes, attorney, presented the application. Cy Benoit, arborist, assisted the presentation.

Two Commission members, Chair Quinn and Mr. Alessi, attended a site visit directly before the meeting with Mr. Hayes, Mr. Benoit, and the Town Planner.

The CC reviewed numerous photographs and a site plan of the as-built terrace.

When asked by the CC why the terrace was built without a permit, Mr. Hayes responded. Mr. Rubinton was unaware a permit was required to build a terrace within the 50' Riparian Buffer zone. The regulation is fairly new, having been adopted in 2010.

The egg shaped terrace measures 16' by 25'. The edge of the terrace is 25' to 30' from the water surface. A 3' x 20' long set of stone steps heads south, parallel to the water. The terrace is constructed of massive dry laid field stone. Terrace placement required a minor amount of cut and fill technique. A foot of fill was added to the east edge of the terrace, whereas the west edge is cut a foot into the hillside.

The terrace is built on a high bank that sits 8' to 10' above the stream surface. The west side bank is 5' higher than the east side of the stream. The stream was 5' to 6' wide at time of site visit. The stream channel is approximately 10' to 15' wide and 5' deep in front of the terrace.

The west bank has a strong constant slope up to the home site. The home is located 100' above and 600' west of the stream. The east side bank has a very gentle slope to Cloudland Road, located 50' - 60' east of the stream. Any floodwaters would run down the road well before they rise to the level of the terrace site.

The upper slope directly above the terrace is landscaped with creeping myrtle to create a strong ground cover capable of holding the soil in place. Ferns have been planted along the terrace edges and steps. There are no other changes in landscaping immediate to the terrace.

The area between the terrace and the stream is left as is and will not be touched as it is quite steep to the water's edge.

The overall area is mainly white spruce with little undergrowth.

The total riparian area is 26,800 square feet, the parcel is 268' wide. The terrace and stone path within the riparian area measure 460 square feet thus equaling 1.7% of the riparian area.

Mr. Hayes felt the terrace complies with the Riparian Buffer regulations. The area in question is well below the 5% threshold for riparian vegetation removal. The terrace meets Section 403 B.1.e.6. which allows an outdoor recreational facility following a Conditional Use Review. The majority of the existing riparian vegetation is located on the lower sloped

east bank side and not the steeper sloped west bank side.

Mr. Hayes added there should be no negative effect on wildlife or fish habitat due to the placement of the terrace. There would be no erosion going into the stream.

After discussion, the CC agreed the proposed terrace met the Riparian Buffer criteria and, therefore, recommended approval as presented.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Taftsville Solar Farm

The developer of the proposed Taftsville Solar Farm has withdrawn his application. A group of Taftsville residents fundraised enough money to purchase the property and have donated it to the Taftsville Cemetery Association.

B. River Corridor

At the August 5th Planning Commission meeting, Ned Swanberg - ANR Flood official and River Scientist, will do a presentation on the State's model river corridor regulations. He will also discuss how the FEMA flood regulations and riparian buffer interact with the river corridor study. The CC is invited, as our regulations may be written to use the CC as an advisory body for river corridor reviews. This would be similar to how Wetland and Riparian Buffer Reviews are currently done. The Town Planner will send out additional information as the meeting approaches.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2015. **There is no meeting in August.**

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Submitted by:

Michael Brands, AICP
Town Planner