

Westmoreland Conservation Commission meeting  
April 26, 2022

Present: Marshall Patmos, April Ferguson, Perry Sawyer, Jeanette Hubert, Jean Rudolph,  
Doug Oatley (alternate) Guests: John Bafundi, Jason Bafundi, Steve Horton

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

Members present decided not to act on our April 7, 2022, meeting minutes until our May 5 meeting.

Due to time constraints, Marshall briefly mentioned a few issues to discuss at our next meeting including roadside cleanup, County farm timber sale, New England Native Plant Trust, proposed storage units adjacent to wetlands.

Steven Horton owner of Horton Construction Consulting Services Inc. of Walpole and the consultant hired by the town to plan the recently approved fire station met with the Commission to discuss issues relative to our concerns with building in the wetland, water runoff increase, discharge/disposal of contaminated water from clothes, equipment and vehicle washing routinely and following a fire.

The Commission was told in a 10/21/21 letter from the Fire Department advisory committee that “all laws, regulations and codes have been followed in this project” and that “gear with hazardous material on them would be cleaned by a professional cleaning contractor.”

Apparently, the plans have changed for disposal/cleaning of material, and it will be done on site including continued cleaning of equipment and vehicles. On May 21, 2021 a wetlands and non-site specific permit (2020-03040) was issued by NH Dept of Environmental Services with 49 specific provisions to be addressed. We are not sure the progress of the permit and adherence to it.

Our concerns remain with the environmentally sound disposal of contaminated water due to the washing of clothes, materials, equipment, and vehicles following a fire event. PFAs (polyfluoroalkyl) forever chemicals are a concern. While our department apparently doesn't use the foam containing this material there are other sources for contaminants including plastics, lead paint, asbestos, fiberglass insulation etc. that can be present on materials following a fire. Proper washing and disposal of contaminated water is imperative. Apparently a high percentage of firefighters contract diseases over time after working in these hazardous environments.

Our members asked Steve Horton to help explain/address our concerns with planning the construction of the fire station. He plans to address the concerns and abide by all state and federal rules and regulations applicable. Initially he intends to research exactly what kind of contaminants are present at a fire site to be sure they can properly be dealt with following the event. He provided information to address our concerns.

We have been told that an extractor has been planned to wash clothing at the station. Given the variable hazardous materials involved, a separate tank would be planned to hold the contaminated water, then as needed, pumped out by a company licensed for disposal of hazardous water and material. A separate holding tank will be available to hold contaminated water from washing of equipment and trucks from a

fire and periodically washing to remove accumulated material and normal leakage of oil and fuel. The firehouse will have a floor drain to this tank and washing should be prohibited outside of the building. This tank would also be pumped out as needed by a qualified hazardous water removal company. These tanks would be located outside/adjacent to the station preferably above ground with potential heating during winter to avoid any moving/disruption of the tanks over the years if underground.

It was noted that a working dug well associated with the house across from the proposed station is present and contains lead piping. This must be properly dealt with during construction to prevent damage to the site.

It was suggested that a preliminary soil test be taken before construction begins for a base indication of any current contaminants. A widescale /depth test would be very expensive. There might be an alternative method initially to gather baseline data followed by periodic monitoring to check for any contaminated soil. Perhaps the NH Department of Environmental Services can provide guidance or maybe even participate in the testing.

A Federal Environmental Impact Statement has not been recommended at this time. It is apparently quite involved and long term but might be necessary to avoid contamination and any legal action by downslope/downstream landowners.

Another major concern is the increased movement of water runoff down a proposed expansion of a drainage ditch flowing downslope to an open-ended box culvert and onto abutting landowners' property. Two abutters, John and Jason Bafundi are concerned with the increased direct water flow on their properties. Some of the water runoff that currently disperses onto the wetland will be directed to the expanded ditch and open-ended box culvert. Additional water runoff from rooftop drainage, resulting foundation drainage and impervious surfaces needs to be addressed. Plans should be designed to return as much water runoff and dispersal as possible to a more natural process absorbing into the broad spectrum wetland as possible.

Steve Horton addressed the concerns of those members and guests present and will do some research to clarify some of the issues he couldn't adequately address at this time. He will apparently be sharing the information discussed with us and new data that he finds with the Selectboard and Fire department officials. The Commission is very appreciative of his expertise and willingness to share it with us. We look forward to meeting with him again. We are also appreciative of information provided and input by John and Jason Bafundi.

The Commission made no decision at this meeting concerning communication with the town or others but will discuss it at our regularly scheduled meeting on May 5.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Thursday May 5 at 8:30 at the town hall.

Respectfully submitted by Marshall Patmos