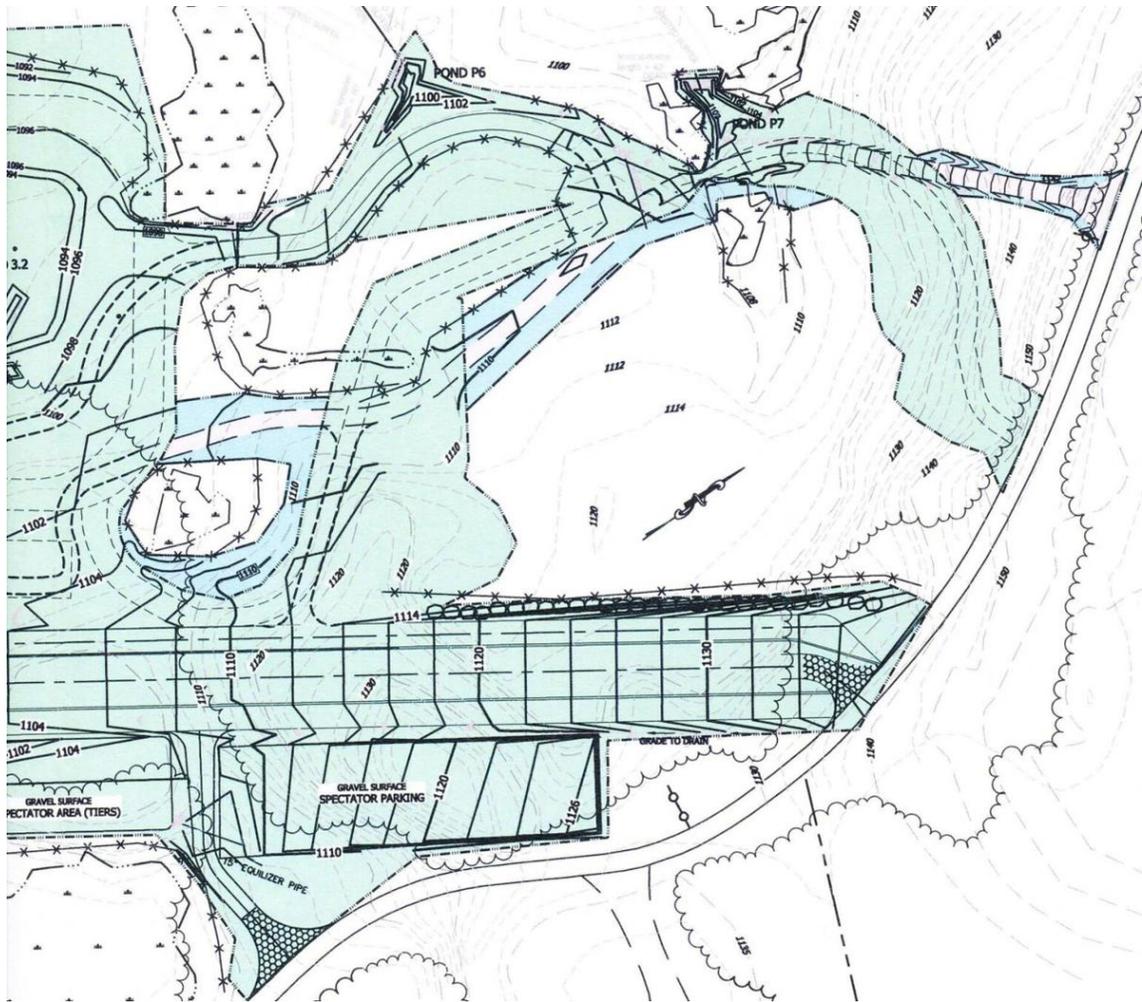


https://www.caledonianrecord.com/news/local/dalton-property-owner-moves-ahead-with-drag-strip-new-campground-proposal/article_b6db3522-1c95-5225-834b-7c50a410d182.html

Dalton Property Owner Moves Ahead With Drag Strip, New Campground Proposal

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The proposed drag strip in Dalton, now with a 500-site campground in the mix, is advancing as planned, said the property owner who went before the Dalton Planning Board on Wednesday. Pictured here is a map from December 2016. (Courtesy image)

Thirteen years after the project was first pitched, a property owner says he is still moving forward with a drag strip in Dalton, and on Wednesday, before the Dalton Planning Board, he also proposed a 500-site campground nearby beside Forest Lake.

Douglas Ingerson Jr, owner of Chick's Sand and Gravel off of Route 116 near the Bethlehem-Littleton town line and owner of the 1,900 acres that could be sold to Casella Waste Systems for a new landfill if it is approved, asked town planners to sign off on what he said is a complete package for the work planned so he can get another five-year extension for his alteration of terrain permit from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, according to an audio of the meeting.

Planning Board Chairman Carl Lindquist said contrary to what Ingerson's documents state about the alteration of terrain permit not yet expired, it appears the permit has expired and any extension would not be the first time the permit was extended.

"The permit has not previously been extended unless the subdivision plat or site plan has been deemed substantially complete, in which case subsequent extensions of the permit are allowed," said Lindquist.

Planners said they don't know if what Ingerson gave them is complete.

Ingerson said in his view it's a full package because he spent money on Horizons Engineering to make sure it's complete.

He said he will be going for a third five-year extension, and the second extension and the work and scope planned for the third is the same as for the second.

Lindquist said planners need to get confirmation from Ridgely Mauck, administrator for DES's Alteration of Terrain Bureau, or someone from the DES office, stating that what Ingerson is presenting is the complete package.

"Then we can look at it and say yes it is or no it isn't the same," he said.

Planners spent several minutes going over the plans, documents, and maps.

Ingerson said if the planning board needs more information, he can get Mauck on it.

"I just need to have someone say, okay, that I was here tonight," he said. "I'm trying to proceed with the project because the timeline is the timeline."

“If [DES] are the ones asking, they can call us and then we get everything straight and most likely for me a copy of that original submission that we can compare to what you’ve got here,” said Lindquist. “I can have a dialogue with [Mauck] and figure out what exactly the ask is and what do we have, and at the next meeting [in February], we can sit down again and go through it ... Right now, we have a lot of questions.”

Ingerson then asked who he needs see about developing a 500-site campground by the lake, on a parcel of 294 acres.

“I’m trying to make the town something,” said Ingerson.

He was told he can file an application with the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Since it was first proposed in December 2008, the drag strip project became controversial and galvanized a group of residents, who argued that negative impacts would be noise, pollution to nearby waterways and the Ammonoosuc River, heavier traffic along Route 116, and an overall reduction in the area’s quality and life.

Those residents would go on in 2012 to appeal the first alteration of permit at the New Hampshire Water Council, which would remand the matter to DES after the discovery of wetlands in the site area.

In February 2020, DES issued Ingerson a letter of deficiency following an aerial inspection that showed earth disturbance violations of more than 265,000 square feet that Mauck, in the letter, said occurred after 2015 when there was no record that a permit was issued for the land alterations.

According to DES records, the permit expired in December 2015, after being amended in 2010 and originally issued in December 2008.

In May 2020, Don Bouchard, with Horizons Engineering, sent a letter to Mauck stating that the project was a little behind on getting an “after the fact” alteration of terrain permit for the post-2015 land disturbance and is working on coordinating wetlands areas and an amendment request for DES’s request for more information.

A letter from Bouchard in April 2020 references remediation work that had to be done and included an earth stabilization plan at the site so Ingerson, he said, could proceed as soon as possible on the project.