



**City of Rochester Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday January 24, 2024**

*Rochester Police Department (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
23 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH*

*(These minutes were approved on February 28, 2024)*

**Attendance**

<b>Presence</b>	<b>Commission Member</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Members of the Public</b>	
Present	Mike Dionne, <i>Chair</i>		Christopher Berry	Berry Surveying & Engineering
Absent	Kevin Sullivan, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Excused	Miles Cook	
Present	Mark Jennings		Connor Madison	GZA
Absent	Merry Lineweber	Excused	Travis Yandow	Eversource
Present	Dan Nickerson		Matt Cardin	Eversource
Present	Dylan Dowe		Kevin Lawson	Eversource
Present	Dennis Raymond			
Present	Renée Mclsaac, <i>Planner I</i>			

**1) Call to Order:**

Mike Dionne called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

**2) Approval of Minutes:**

Review Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2023.

Mark Jennings requested minor edits to the meeting minutes and made a motion to accept the minutes with these revisions. Dylan Dowe seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Mike Dionne motioned to move the new business to the next item of discussion. There were no objections.

**3) New Business:**

- a. Potential Development with Buffer Impacts - 17 and 21 Farmington Rd (Tax Maps 0221-0164-0000 and 0216-0029-0000)

Christopher Berry of Berry Surveying & Engineering introduced himself as the representative for the proposed development. He provided a brief history of the project. He explained that previously two variances were filed with the ZBA for wetland buffer impacts associated with the project. The ZBA requested the review and recommendation of the Conservation Commission before making decisions on the variance requests related to wetland buffer impacts.

Chris Berry stated that following the ZBA meeting, the project design was modified to mitigate impacts to the wetland buffer. The proposed building at the rear of the lot is no longer within the wetland buffer and the applicant is no longer seeking this variance.

Chris Berry explained there is an existing wooden bridge that is currently used to cross the stream at the edge of the Rochester Motor Sports property (23 Farmington Rd – 0216-0028-0000) to access the abutting parcel. An aspect of the business is the service and storage of powersport vehicles. The proposed project would include additional storage space for these vehicles and the ability to move between these parcels is a priority for the applicant.

Chris Berry explained that to address some of the stormwater concerns the project is proposing grading that will direct water into a stormwater management system. This would incorporate a rain garden with a sediment forebay and treatment cell, with final discharge of treated water to the

stream. To achieve this grading there would be some impacts to the wetland buffer, however, this would result in treatment of runoff that is not currently being treated. He stated the project plan would require a Conditional Use Permit, that would be submitted at a later date.

Chris Berry stated that the project would require a wetland permit from the NHDES for the stream crossing. The project proposal is to install a box culvert that is partially buried and filled with native material.

Mike Dionne asked about the proposed grade for this area of the stream.

Chris Berry replied that it is relatively flat.

Mike Dionne asked if the excavation material would be used to bury the culvert.

Chris Berry replied yes.

Mark Jennings asked about the traffic over the bridge.

Chris Berry explained that it is being designed as a single lane bridge.

Chris Berry stated that snow storage would be away from the wetland areas of the property and plastic netting would not be used on site. A construction fence would be erected but removed when construction was complete.

Mike Dionne asked if a report from the Natural Heritage Bureau had been received.

Chris Berry replied yes, there were some rare and endangered species known to occur in the area, but these were not likely to be impacted by the proposed project.

Chris Berry stated that plant species for the project have not been determined yet, but the intent is to use native species.

Mark Jennings made a motion to support the proposal. Dylan Dowe seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

b. Y170 Transmission Line Structure Replacement Project (multiple tax maps)

Connor Madison of GZA provided a brief overview of the project. He explained that they are proposing to replace 29 utility poles and remove an additional pole. Inspections of existing structures have found delamination and cracking of the laminate wood poles. These are to be replaced with steel structures.

The applicant is in the process of submitting a Standard Dredge and Fill application with the State. They have met with various State and Federal agencies regarding the project. During site surveys they found many protected plant species in the Heath Bog area. These plants were widespread throughout the site. To mitigate potential impacts to the bog and these plants, the applicant has agreed to only work in these areas between December 15<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mike Dionne asked if there were any other restrictions recommended.

Connor Madison replied no, just the timing restriction to protect the bog and the plants. He stated work in the upland areas will be started this summer. Their permitting requires that timber mats only be allowed to be in place for one growing season (May – September).

Mark Jennings asked about where structures will be accessed.

Connor Madison indicated the yellow dotted line on the plans show the anticipated access path.

Matt Cardin explained there has been a shift in the way that NHDES is permitting these types of projects. They are conducting more comprehensive reviews of proposals with very poorly drained soils and areas that are sensitive to development. For the current application they allowed the applicant to parse out the Statutory Permit by Notification areas and those that might require a standard dredge and fill permit. These areas have been noted on the plan. He stated that this process is still evolving.

Mike Dionne asked if poles being removed were pulled out or if they were cut and the pole butt left in place.

Travis Yandow explained that in upland areas the poles are pulled out. In wetland areas the poles are cut flush and the pole butt is left in place.

Matt Cardin explained that black racer snakes tend to use these as hibernacula and this is the recommended practice.

Mike Dionne asked if members had any other questions. There were no additional concerns.

**4) NH DES Applications:**

- a. Tier 2 Stream Crossing; Tax Map 216 Lot 9; Application 2024-00005

Mike Dionne questioned why rerouting of the stream is being proposed. He stated concerns that the proposed channelization would increase the slope of the stream bed, increase stream velocity, and lead to bank erosion. He also did not agree with the statement that offsetting mitigation was not necessary for the project.

Commission members concurred with the expressed concerns.

Dan Nickerson made a motion that Mike Dionne contact NHDES regarding the application and express the Commission's concern. Mark Jennings seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Underground Storage Tank Facilities; Tax Map (287 North Main Street)

Commission members did not have concerns about the above application.

**5) Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber / Intent to Excavate:**

Intent to Cut: Tax Map 233 Lot 1 (Sheepboro Road); 23-389-06-T  
(anticipated start November 2023, received 12/27/23)

Notice was received after the timber harvest. There were no additional concerns.

**6) Reports:**

- a. SELT – Rochester #3 Property

Commission members did not have additional concerns with the report.

- b. Technical Review

Renée McIsaac gave a brief overview of a proposal at 303 and 305 North Main Street (Tax Map 0114-0008-0000). She expressed some concerns with proposed wetland buffer impacts and potential impacts to the Cocheco River. She indicated that the current plan does not appear to be ready to go to the Planning Board but would keep the Commission informed on the progress of the project.

- c. Planning Board Review

Renée Mclsaac stated there were no concerns from recent meetings.

**7) Old Business:**

- a. Update on ongoing initiatives  
Renée Mclsaac gave the following updates.

For the Cocheco River clean-up postcards had been sent to residents in the area and a release form for the event had been finalized.

Coordination with the Seacoast Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) continues. There was a recent conference call that included the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests to discuss potential trail access at the Champlin Forest property. Due to poor weather conditions NEMBA was not able to map the Route 11 easement area, but they are still interested in this site.

The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions has announced this year's photo contest.

If anyone is interested in participating in the NH Coverts Project Training offered through UNH Cooperative Extension, applications are now open.

She stated that a portion of the outreach budget for this fiscal cycle could be used for the Coverts training. Currently funds could also be allocated for the river clean-up, and materials for the Lilac Family Festival. She asked Commission members to consider other potential outreach opportunities.

Dennis Raymond suggested that we could get some custom printed t-shirts for an upcoming event and would investigate the potential costs.

Renée Mclsaac stated she was notified of a real estate listing for a property that was under consideration for conservation. Commission members briefly discussed potential actions, but felt more information was needed.

**8) Adjournment.**

A motion was made by Dan Nickerson and seconded by Mike Dionne to adjourn at 8:35pm; the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Renée Mclsaac  
Planner I