

Minutes of a Conservation Commission Meeting – 11 August 2021

Members present: Peter Vincent – Chairman, Christina Brown, Jeff Carlson, Lil Province, Geoffrey Kontje, [Max Gibbs, auditing after being appointed by the Selectboard, but not yet sworn in]

Absent: Bob Avakian

Staff: Lisa Morrison, Jane Varkonda

Public Hearings: (Continuations)

PFW BOATHOUSE : ALEXANDER –GAMMILL – 143 PLANTINGFIELD WAY. Kara Shemeth and the architect Eric Rochon were present for the applicant. Proposal involves adding a kayak/paddle board rack and a movable boat storage platform along the end of a previously approved walkway over a salt marsh.

Shemeth commented that rack will really not be visible from the public view as there is a significant dune that blocks the view of the rack from Eel Pond. Varkonda pointed out that the dune could be wiped out in a storm and then the rack would be very visible from the pond.

Shemeth said that rollers will be placed at the end of the walkway to assist in launching the dinghy. Butterfly brackets will be used to stabilize the platform, which are less intrusive to the salt marsh than pilings.

Varkonda and Carlson gave a report of the site visit. Carlson thought that further back on dry ground would be better place to store the kayaks, where it could be screened by vegetation.

Varkonda noted that the elevated walkway needs to be extended landward about 20 to 25 feet to adequately span the salt marsh.

Vincent asked if the property was currently in compliance. Varkonda said she did not think that it was as several 'no mow' buffers of native vegetation have not been established, nor have 19 cedars been planted as required in the Second Modification to the Order of Conditions. Varkonda suggested that the applicant provide an update on the status of the landscaping.

Brown thought the vote on the platform and the rack should be postponed until the landscape issues are resolved. Shemeth said that she would provide an updated planting plan and schedule.

Brown said she was hesitant to approve the boat platform and didn't want additional incursion into the salt marsh. She said she thought it would create a precedent. After some further discussion Brown made a motion to continue the hearing until the next meeting, 25 August, for an update on the landscape plan. Kontje seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

MNOOKIN – 10 MYOBER LANE: Request for a determination of applicability for the construction of a small addition. Joanne Gosser was present for the applicant. A brief report of the site visit was given. Gosser noted that the project has been approved by the homeowners association. Carlson said the

addition is minor, and the location far from the resource area. He recommended that the Commission issue a negative determination of applicability.

The site visit however revealed that the current view channel does not comply with a previous order of conditions.

Carlson suggested that the two issues be treated separately and made a motion to approve the minor addition. Province seconded the motion and voted to approve the minor addition. Unanimously approved by roll-call vote.

As the original permit allowing the view channel has expired, the agent will issue a cease and desist order and instruct the applicant to file a new notice of intent for the view channel. Province said she would like to meet with the individual who was responsible for doing the cutting. Vincent made the motion to authorize the agent to issue a cease and desist order, which was seconded by Brown. Unanimously approved by roll-call vote.

Other Business:

REITER – 50 OYSTER-WATCHA - Review revisions to proposed artist's studio. Carlson made it known that he is the Executive Direction of the O-W Association, but that he has no financial interest in this project. There were no objections to his sitting. Doug Hoehn and Kris Horiuchi were present for the applicants.

Hoehn said that the plans had changed from the original approval: the revised structure is somewhat smaller and further back from the pond. The Planning Board has signed off on the changes.

The revised building is 1200 s.f. and 13.5 feet high; the previously approved structure was 1600 s.f. and 21 feet high.

Varkonda commented that the revised building has a lot of glass; it was hard to tell from the original elevations how much glass was involved. Carlson commented that the structure is over 400-feet from the pond. The Oyster-Watcha Homeowner's Association has approved the structure.

Horiuchi said that she would encourage her clients to use some kind of privacy screen at night to block the light coming from the building. Kontje made a motion to approve the revised structure as presented. Province seconded the motion. Unanimously approved by roll-call vote.

AT&T - KATAMA FARM. Ed Pare, the attorney for AT&T, made the presentation. He said that after extensive examination it was determined that the existing silos were not sufficient to hold the proposed installation. AT&T would like to demolish both silos, which are in rough shape, and construct a 'stealth' silo 80-feet in height. The existing silos are 62- and 63-feet with a ten-foot camera attached on top. Mr. Pare noted that the original lease agreement was approved by the Selectmen, the Planning Board, and the Conservation Commission. This discussion is the first step in the process of amending that lease, which will expire in 2023.

In the revised proposal the antennas will not be attached to the outside of the silo(s), but be contained in the interior of the stealth silo. Also proposed is a WHIP antenna that was requested by the island's emergency services for enhanced public safety. Verizon has also expressed interest in adding some antennas as well.

AT&T had initially proposed building a small structure at the base of the silo to house equipment; this will no longer be necessary as the equipment can be stored in the base of the new silo. AT&T will provide a generator for the farm to provide back-up for their freezers. The generator will be screened from public view by the existing buildings.

Pare said the project will be reviewed by the FAA, and additional information will be provided during the Planning Board's special permit hearing. Pare presented a number of photographs and studies comparing the existing silos with the proposed one.

Kontje asked what materials would be used to construct the new silo. Pare replied that it would be fabricated from fiberglass. He noted that all the details had not yet been worked out.

The town's IT Director, Adam Darack, asked about increased coverage. Pare said that the new installation will increase the capacity of the existing system and provide some additional coverage, especially on parts of Chappaquiddick.

Jonathan Sweet, a resident of Katama and past president of the Katama Association urged the Commission to reject the proposal for a number of reasons such as the proximity to the protected sandplain grassland and the flight path of the adjacent airfield. He said he was concerned about the project's effect on the ecosystem and believed the proposal was at odds with the commission's principles and the aesthetics of the area. He said that it has not been conclusively proven that cell towers do not pose an environmental threat. He said that the tower is not needed, that there is no reason to provide enhanced service for homes that are uninhabited for 9-months of the year. He said that he gets fine cell service in Katama with the existing system.

Johanna Hynes, who lives adjacent to the farm, was concerned about the long-term effects of 5G on children. She said she was concerned about the possibility of airplane accident because of the taller tower and the ubiquitous fog in the area. She said she was also concerned about climate change and the importance of protecting a unique and rare habitat. She said the birds and bees will certainly be negatively affected by the project. She said she did not think that a children's camp was compatible with a cell tower. She said that the silos are now iconic, and that people are used to seeing the sun set between the silos. She asked if any shadow studies had been done. She said she believed the town should explore alternative locations for the tower.

Philip Harold Theilhelm was concerned that the new stealth silo could cause problems with inexperienced pilots.

Ken Michel, President of the Katama Association, was also concerned about the height of the new silo and its affect on the flight patterns. He said he found the timing of this meeting odd as the town and

the association are currently working on the new leases and use plans for Katama Farm. Michel said that it would seem that AT&T will need to do a lot of work that could impede work that needs to be done on the farm.

Max Gibbs asked if any thought given to another type of structure other than a silo.

Pare commented that this meeting is just a beginning. The project will need to go through both the FAA and the FCC as well as satisfy the Natural Environmental Policy Act requirements. Pare said that AT&T has been working on the project for some time, and that it takes time to put the meetings together. Covid also put them further behind than they thought. He noted that AT&T has a 30-year lease with the town, made up of three ten-year terms. The upcoming ten-year extension would require the approval of the Selectboard as well as a town meeting vote.

Pare said that AT&T could put up any kind of structure, but they knew they had to be creative in this case, which is why they chose the stealth silo. AT&T would be happy to put up a monopole with attached exterior antennas, as that would be the cheapest option, but he said he imagines AT&T would be run out of town.

Vincent asked if anything more was necessary at this time. Varkonda said that she had encouraged the newspaper to do a story as a way of reaching out to the public, so the change would not come as a surprise. She said the next step would be for the Selectboard to hold a public hearing prior to the Planning Board's hearing, or allow the regulatory process to play out.

Vincent thanked AT&T for the discussion.

FISHERMAN'S LANDING The agent noted that the committee had discussed hiring a landscape architect to develop a plan for the property and had reached out to Kristen Reimann and Kris Horiuchi. Province made a motion to approve the hiring. Carlson seconded the motion. Unanimously approved by roll-call vote. Varkonda said that Doug Hoehn had not yet had a chance to amend the plan to show the boundaries of the 50-foot easement. She said she had not yet priced out an electronic gate

TTOR PROGRAM PRICING AT KATAMA FARM. Varkonda said that she has made staff aware that they cannot have separate pricing for TTOR members for farm programs. The camp may have a discount for TTOR members (as well as island residents), but because the farm was bought with self-help funds and TTOR does not own the property, TTOR cannot give TTOR members a discount for farm programming.

Orders of Conditions for Mann and Neubert were approved as were the minutes of 28 July 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Approved: _____