

Minutes of a Conservation Commission Meeting – 4 December 2013

Members present: Peter Vincent – Chairman, Stuart Lollis, Christina Brown, Jeff Carlson, Bob Avakian

Absent: Lil Province, Edo Potter

Staff: Jane Varkonda, Lisa Morrison

KERNOCHAN – Golf Club Road. Request for a determination of applicability under the local bylaw only. At its closest point, the proposed guest house will be 180-feet from resource area in an area that is currently lawn. Agent recommended a negative determination of applicability. She will ask the agent to supply a stamped plan. Lollis made the motion, which was seconded by Carlson. Negative #3 – unanimously approved.

Continuations:

LANDRY relocate pool and construct additions, Planting Field Way. Bruce MacNelly, David Burgess – contractor, and Doug Hoehn present for the applicant. A report of the site visit was given. The additions are all within existing lawn area. Abutters Blum and Allen are okay with the project. A silt fence will be put in place around work area. New pool is adjacent to the old pool. A septic tank will need to be removed from the proposed pool location. Details on the filtration system will be provided for the file. Pool is out of ground water. Avakian made a motion to approve the project as presented. Lollis seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

MAJOR'S COVE clearing for views. Richard Barbini present for the applicant. A discussion of the site visit occurred. An immediate neighbor, Carl Sherr, is vigorously opposed to the project. A letter from the president of the MCPOA, Ron Shilakes, was also read – indicating that they will return for approval at a later date. A more detailed site plan will be required. Brown made a motion to continue the hearing. Avakian seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. All statutory time limits waived.

SCHIFTER/WASQUE Kris Horiuchi, Josh Kochin and Fred Fournier from Landscape, all present for the applicant. Ms. Horiuchi reported that Keene has completed the rough grading of the site and they are ready to initiate a winter-erosion control protocol. Horiuchi said that at the last meeting the Commission asked for more details on the process and the materials to be

used in the hydro-mulch. There were questions about whether or not the material will perform well on an exposed, windy site. Horiuchi said that the goal of the restoration is to restore the site to sandplain grassland, and they too want to make sure that the material will be compatible with that long-term goal. Ms. Horiuchi submitted a memo from the manufacturer that outlined the composition of the mulch and cited several instances of its use in exposed and windy sites, such as airports. Ms. Horiuchi said the product binds with the soil and can be used as a seed bed in the spring. Initially, they were thinking of removing the product before planting, but they are now thinking that they will just till it in. The company that produces the mulch has been around for 50 years, and the product has been used internationally.

The actual mulch is a processed sterilized wood fiber appropriate for environmentally sensitive sites. The product itself is inert – all bacteria and seeds have been killed. The recommended rate of application for this site is 3-inches.

In the spring, the intent is to bring back the stored topsoil, which will be deposited to a depth of 4-inches over the site. Some additional soil will be brought in for the lawn and the planting beds if they run out of stockpiled soil.

Landscape submitted a protocol of the proposed seeding process. Carlson asked how long it takes the mulch to degrade. Ms. Horiuchi said approximately 18 months. Carlson asked how well it will perform if it is a dry winter and whether or not it will effect soil drainage after it is broken up in the spring.

Brown asked if there would be any effect on the groundwater as it breaks down.

Carlson said he was concerned about how the product will perform later. He said he would like to review the project in the spring before the stockpiled soil is brought back. He said that it may be necessary to remove the mulch then. He said he did not think that putting jute netting all over the property was a good solution because of the wind.

He suggested that the applicants devise a Plan B, in case the mulch impedes the replanting and needs to be removed. He suggested that some patch testing could be done as well as an analysis of the soil

Horiuchi said that they were not planning on screening the soil before replacing it as they do not want to risk losing any of the good stuff in the soil. There will be no irrigation after the first season.

The discussion then turned to proposals for breaking up the architectural massing of the house as viewed from Dike Bridge. Horiuchi said that they have extended the proposed tree buffer by 15 feet and added an additional 25 trees. A revised plan was submitted. She noted that the

increase in buffer has lessened the amount of sandplain slightly. Avakian proposed that the Commission reserve the right to revisit the screening in two growing seasons. He said that he regrets that the Commission's decision to allow the applicants to remove so many trees in order to stockpile soil on the site and cut down on trips to and from the site.

After some further discussion, a site visit was proposed. Sourati will place six-foot stakes at the upland edge of the planting area.

Horiuchi noted that the large trees saved from the initial site will be planted behind the house, because they are more protected. She said that experience has taught them that planting small trees and letting them acclimate is the way to go. Anything planted on top of the bank will get battered and will struggle to survive.

Because of time and weather constraints, the Commission moved to approve the application of the mulch, but to continue the discussion of the landscape plan until the next meeting on 18 December.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Approved: _____

