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CRSE · Concerned Residents of Southeast

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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>

Date: Wed Apr 28, 2004 1:08 pm

Subject: Conservation Commission Recap

Hello All,

Below please find a recap of last night's Southeast Conservation Commission Meeting.

Apparently the location of last's night meeting was the world's best kept secret. Although the 'disclosed' location (according to the agenda) was the Civic Center it was dark when I got there. As was the Town Hall. After a phone call or two (how convenient...) I headed to Lakeview Manor where my Odyssey ended and the meeting was long underway.

I did so enjoy the delicious irony of wasting gas trying to find the Conservation Meeting.

Although 'The Campus' was by far the most important item on the agenda the most interesting part of the evening was the Tonetta Rink. Because, for once, it wasn't 'business as usual.' If you're short on time skip to #2 under New Business.

As always official minutes will be available thought the CC. The comments that follow are strictly my own observations.

MEETING:

1. Review and approval of February and March minutes- Sorry, missed it.

2. NORTHWATER GROUP: Fields Lane- Sorry, missed this one too.

3. SURACE LOT: Update. You guessed it, I missed it.

4. THE CAMPUS AT FIELDS CORNERS: Michael Zarin is the attorney representing this project. There is .08 acre disturbance in the wetlands. And an 8.03 acre disturbance in the wetland buffer. .32 Acres will be disturbed to install underground utilities. A wetland specialist spoke briefly. The DEC is in the processes of remapping wetlands throughout Putnam and has walked the site because of these new boundaries.

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Don Cuomo said that a more detailed plan of the Barrett Road crossing was needed to ensure that no wetlands be lost. There will be site walks for the CC in May.

Mr. Zarin mentioned to the CC that he and the applicant were meeting with local environmental groups re. 'Open Space' acquisition on the remaining Rural/Commercial parcel. A Public Hearing will be held on May 25th.

5. ROSS ALLEN, Engineer: Harry Nichols. Salmon's Daily Brook Farm: Problems with a curtain drain that froze. Don Cuomo and Mary Ellen Tiernan had been to the site but had not been given the site plan so need to go back. The engineer will meet them there.

6. SARKAS, Enoch Crosby Road. House that was 'built' (modular) last fall has both part of the driveway (a large part) and septic system in the wetland buffer. The PC Board of Health sent this to the CC go through the formal process so that they can sign off on it.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. JONKE, 128 Joes Hill Road. Paul Jonke (Former Southeast Tax Assessor) wants to use an old driveway on property that he owns. By leaving the driveway unpaved and with no fill brought in the CC voted 6-0 that the application was complete. They also voted that the project was an 'Activity of minor significance'. 6-0

2. TONETTA INLINE SKATING RINK: Engineer: Terri Hahn from LADA.

Located on 3 acres in Tonetta Lake Park 1.6 acres are within the wetland buffer and 1000 yards of fill will be needed. Two thirds of the rink itself is in the buffer.

Don Cuomo asked how the CC could approve a Town project such as this and then be able to turn down other applicants.

Terri Hahn said that the Town didn't have to turn down projects within the buffer but could 'regulate' them.

She was asked to come back with a revised plan showing soil types, slopes and 130 ft. buffers. Ms. Hahn said that at '130 ft. I might have to withdraw the application.'

The application was noticed as complete (when the revisions are made) 6-0.

COMMENTS:

Note to the Town Board: About these late agendas, last minute location changes and meetings held on Monday afternoons... FIX IT. This isn't brain surgery. Get the web site done. I mean, dear God, how difficult can this be? This has been an ongoing problem for over a year and a half. Enough with the excuses.

THE CAMPUS: It will be interesting to see how the site walks go. And the Public Hearing will be important as well. Although the subdivision sits on a large parcel, 8.03 acres of buffer disturbance is a big number and all of it drains into the (you guessed it) already impaired Middle Branch.

As Mr. Zarin mentioned CRSE, Riverkeeper and several environmental groups have met with the applicant to discuss the additional parcel. We are hopeful that these talks will be productive.

SARKAS, Enoch Crosby Road. Just one question: How does a house (occupied since last year) get a C/O from Southeast and yet has no County BOH approval?

JONKE: One quick comment of note. When Mr. Jonke was asked why he couldn't move the driveway Mr. Jonke noted that since Joes Hill Road had been paved 'it's become a highway' and that the proposed cut would be too dangerous. So much for the 'guaranteed safety' of Paved vs. Dirt roads.

TONETTA IN-LINE SKATING RINK;

It was the dynamics here that were great. Don Cuomo raised an extremely important question. Although everyone is for increased recreation opportunities how can the CC approve a town project that is more than half in the wetland buffer? Needs 1000 yards of fill and has 2/3rd of the rink's impervious surface within the buffer? So, when and if an applicant is ever turned down by the CC and litigation ensues how will this play in a courtroom?

Ms. Hahn clearly bristled at this and made the comment that the buffers incursion could be 'regulated'.

Here's the thing. Other towns clearly DO hold the line. They have regs. in place that they strictly enforce. So when taken to court their consistency pays off. Developers take the hint and move on to greener (or formerly greener) pastures. Probably somewhere in Putnam County.

Ms. Hahn seemed visibly annoyed when she said that she might have to 'withdraw the application.' Could this be because LADA usually gets projects through in Southeast?

As always please feel free to e-mail me with any questions you may have.

With best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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