

Town of Pelham, NH
Pelham Conservation Commission
6 Village Green
Pelham, NH 03076-3723

SITEWALK OF 09/24/22

Members Present:

Karen Mackay, Paul Gagnon,
Christine Kamal (alt), Al Steward
Ken Stanvick

Applicant:

Joseph Maynard of Benchmark, LLC.
Bill Renaud of The Reno Companies.
Pat Gendron property owner

Members of the Public:

Scott Ludwig
Ali Ludwig
Sarah York
Lisa Corbin, abutter

APPROVED 10/12/22

Members Absent:

David Abare, Mike Gendreau,
Kara Kubit (alt), Lisa Loosigian
Scott Bowden (alt)

Map 22 Lot 8-85-1	579 Bridge Street – Discussion of a proposed multi-unit apartment building – Presentation by Joseph Maynard of Benchmark Engineering
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Al Steward called the site walk to order at 8:02 a.m. This property is 44+/- acres in size. The proposal is to subdivide the lot into a 14 acre lot that contains an existing house and a 30 acre lot for the proposed apartment construction. The apartments are proposed to be rented for \$2,500.00 to \$3,000.00. There is no other road to access the back land on this lot. There will be no access to that land other than through this developed area. The parcel has had accurate surveys of wetlands, wildlife, soils, boundaries and elevation.

The road to the development will enter the site at the current location. Town regulations require the road to enter the site at a perpendicular and a distance of 100 feet before it turns, as a safety measure. Mr. Maynard will request a distance of 50 feet until the turn, as the plan describes. The turn at 50 feet will require a dredge and fill for a wetland on the site. The location of the dredge and fill is an elevation drop of about 10 feet. If the town does not allow this reduction in road length to a turn, then the wetland impacts will increase by roughly double.

Mr. Gagnon would like to see the entrance road moved to the east to avoid the wetland. Mr. Maynard said the road may need to be moved to the west in order to make sure the flare, at the driveway/highway interface, does not sit in front of the neighboring property. NHDOT does not allow the flare of a driveway to cross in front of a neighboring property. Mr. Gagnon would like Mr. Maynard to push for the movement eastward and to explain to NHDOT that we can reduce

or eliminate the wetland impact if we move the driveway entrance. Mr. Gagnon asked if Mr. Renaud could buy a small corner of the neighboring lot in order to move the driveway to the east. Mr. Renaud is in discussions with the neighboring land owner about several issues.

Ms. Kamal commented on state regulations that say you cannot use wetland soils for septic load calculations. Mr. Maynard said he can use poorly drained soils but not very poorly drained soils. He needs 3 acres for the first 10 bedrooms then 10,000 square feet (sf) for each additional bedroom. Mr. Maynard used 30+/- acres for the calculations for the number of bedrooms. He asserts 222 bedrooms could be built on this site. This development will have 65 units with 2 bedrooms each for a total of 130 bedrooms. The soils on the site can handle the septic load of the development. The soils on site are group 1, 2 and 5. Mr. Gagnon felt it did not make sense to use the back land for septic calculations because the land is separated by a wetland and is not contiguous. Mr. Maynard can use the land area on the other side of the wetland as a reserve septic location. He said most likely if a septic failed, it would be removed and rebuilt in the same location.

The development will have multiple septic systems. These small, separate systems allow the development to meet the nitrate setbacks on the lot. The septic systems can be located where they are proposed because there will be no wells on site. They are proposing to extend a public water line from Main Street. They will directional drill under Beaver Brook then run the water line up Bridge Street to bring the water line to the site. There is no need to calculate the well radius on site as the water will be piped to the site.

The detention pond will be located between Bridge Street and the proposed driveway on site. It will be located alongside of the driveway as cars drive into the site. The basin will be designed to completely infiltrate a 2 year storm and will be calculated to handle a 50 year storm as required by town regulations. Mr. Maynard said the basin should be able to manage up to a 100 year storm though that is not what it will be designed to do. The outflow for the basin will be under the driveway and into the wetland to the west of the building area. The development will take a small amount of water off Bridge Street as required by rules and regulations. The water will be treated in the detention pond.

The elevation of the building will be 40 feet above grade. The building site will be elevated from the current elevation. The landscape at the present time is hilly with a steep drop off from Bridge Street. This will need to be mediated as the project is constructed. Mr. Renaud wants the site to have green space with trees and landscaping. He appreciates the character of Pelham and wants the design of the building and site to fit into the town seamlessly. Members requested any WCD areas be allowed to revert back to natural conditions and not be mowed or maintained. Landscaping along the road outside the WCD seems reasonable to the Commission members. All roads and parking lots will be curbed.

Mr. Steward is concerned that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will see this project, use it as an example and allow more developers to construct this type of intense building. He is concerned about the water line coming from Main Street and the development that may follow. He asked about the cost of bringing the water line to the site in comparison to building a road across the wetland to the back land. Mr. Maynard and Mr. Renaud felt it may be a similar cost.

Mr. Gagnon, Ms. Kamal, Mr. Stanvick and Ms. Mackay mentioned, at different times, that all the land on this lot will be used for the calculations for the septic and bedrooms. They asked the developer in various ways to lock up this land permanently with an easement or agreement of some sort to never develop any further land on this parcel. The land in their opinion has been used and cannot be used at a later time if zoning rules change. Wetland and wetland conservation district (WCD) has been impacted with no mitigation. Mr. Renaud does not want to lock the land up. If zoning changes, they want the ability to come back at a later date and ask for more development. He asserted that quality housing is necessary in Pelham and more housing may be needed in the future which may prompt a change in zoning. Ms. Mackay said the land had already been used and she was a no vote for this project if the back land was not removed from any consideration in the future. She said she may be a no vote even if the land was removed from further development. Mr. Renaud felt that current zoning prevents that development and he would not put further restrictions on the land. Ms. Mackay explained the Commission was an advisory board. The developer can listen to our recommendations and perhaps get some support for the project or does not have to listen to our recommendations and may not have our support. Any developer can ignore our suggestions and take their project to Planning and/or Zoning and maybe have the project approved without our recommendations, but we will look out for the environmental impacts to a project and make recommendations accordingly.

Ms. Mackay asked Mr. Maynard if the configuration of the parking area in the north-east corner could be adjusted or shaved down so a thicker barrier of vegetation could be planted between the development and the neighboring house. The back yard of the house currently faces thick vegetation and trees. When this development goes in, the vegetation will be stripped away and leave the neighboring back yard fully exposed to a parking lot. More vegetation or a wider barrier needs to be considered between the existing house and the development.

Steve Keach, the town engineer, will be reviewing the plan and all calculations to make sure all regulations are met.

Mr. Maynard plans to be in front of Planning in October. He would like to finalize the plan before Christmas then send the plan to Mr. Keach for review. As Mr. Keach reviews the plan, it will be sent to Alteration of Terrain (AOT), NHDOT and Department of Environmental Services (DES) subsurface (septic) review. Mr. Maynard expects to have a final meeting with Planning in February.

Mr. Maynard requested to be on our next meeting agenda which will be October 12, 2022.

Motion: (Mackay/Stanvick) to Adjourn

Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Adjourned 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Mackay,
Recording Secretary