

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

SITEWALK OF 12/16/18

APPROVED 01/09/19

Members Present:

Karen Mackay, Lisa Loosigian
Paul Gagnon, Ken Stanvick

Gove Environmental Services, Inc.:

Luke Hurley

Pelham Residents:

Larry Horgan
Robby Robinson
Matthew Roderick
John Masterson
Michael Maal
Derek Pomerleau
Beth and Mike Ausevich
Mike Hall
Brian Carton
Michelle Johnson
Chris Beisang

Dracut Resident:

Mark Peters

Map 31 Lot 11-33 & 11-37	64 Blueberry Circle – Site visit to view the location of wetland conservation district (WCD) impacts for an access road to a proposed cell phone tower to be constructed by American Tower, LLC – Presentation by Luke Hurley of Gove Environmental Services, Inc.
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The site walk was scheduled to view the areas of the wetland conservation district (WCD) buffer zone for the driveway to access a proposed cell phone tower. There will be no wetland impacts on the project. Impacts for the WCD will be approximately 6,585 square feet. A few months ago, the cell phone company conducted a balloon test which showed, to observers, the height and general location of the tower. American Tower has committed to place police and fire transmission safety services for the towns of Pelham and Dracut on top of the tower.

Mr. Gagnon told the attendees that we would be talking about environmental impacts and impacts to the WCD. Conservation has no control over the permitting or construction of the tower. Discussion at this site walk will not eliminate the tower. Conservation is at this site walk to view the WCD impact for the access driveway. The access driveway is on 2 parcels that abut town land. Mr. Gagnon suggested the road could go through town land in order to avoid the WCD. Mr. Gagnon had also suggested this possibility at our December Conservation meeting.

The access road on town land would have less impact because the WCD could be avoided completely and the driveway could be shorter in length. Conservation members will vote regarding environmental impacts. Conservation will not vote on whether or not the tower should or will be built.

Mr. Brian Carton told attendees that he attended a meeting in 2017 where the fire chief, James Midgley, talked about the emergency call center in Londonderry. This call center manages emergency communications in the area. Emergency management has a contract with AT&T which they have not been honoring. Mr. Carton would like to see the town press AT&T to honor the contract rather than building a new tower for emergency services.

The proposed driveway will follow the stone wall at the edge of the lot on Blueberry Circle. At the rear corner of the lot the driveway will turn and follow the stone wall along the town land. The driveway will not be in the wetland, but will be completely in the WCD at the corner of the town land. The driveway will have a steep grade, but will have swales along the edges to control the flow of water off the surface.

The WCD is a buffer of 50 feet from all designated wetlands in town. Designated wetlands are greater than 2,000 square feet. The purpose of the WCD is to protect wetlands by providing undeveloped area for water/runoff to be filtered prior to entering wetlands. The property has a lot of wetlands. This poses the problem of being unable to avoid wetland or WCD impacts. The driveway as located on the plan is the least impact to the site.

New Hampshire regulates construction work in wetlands. The state asks applicants to first avoid wetlands, then minimize impacts then mitigate impacts if necessary. The state does not have any regulation about work in the area adjacent to wetlands. The town regulates the 50 foot buffer.

Mr. Carton lives across the street from the location of the proposed driveway. He appreciates the angle of the proposed driveway because the angle may minimize his view of the tower. He does not want to be looking at the tower when he is sitting in his back yard. Mr. Gagnon stated if the driveway was situated on the town land, the driveway could be curved or angled so view of the tower by neighborhood residents could be minimized.

The driveway requires a full 30 foot wide vegetation cut. The driveway proper will be 20 feet wide. The driveway material will be gravel. There is no limit to the amount of trees the landowner can cut on his property except in the wetlands and WCD. Wetlands and WCD areas are no cut, no disturb zones, unless a permit or variance is obtained. The entire uplands of the property can be cut at any time, without restriction. The lot could be harvested for timber at any time.

The landowner owns 36 acres on multiple connected lots. This group of parcels was planned out for a 5 lot subdivision several years ago. There is a lot of wetlands on the property, but the state will allow a landowner to cross wetlands in order to build on uplands on a lot.

There is an all-purpose trail on the property that connects to town land. Town regulations require existing trails be preserved when new development is planned. The trails can be moved to a more

convenient location on the lot, but the goal of the regulations is to maintain trail connectivity throughout town.

Mr. Larry Horgan stated there was a drainage easement on the Blueberry Circle lot. This is recorded on the original subdivision plan that was filed with the Registry of Deeds. Conservation members told Mr. Horgan to bring the plan to the Planning meeting for this project.

There is a swale area on the town land where the land slopes down then back up. This is the area that would be proposed for the access driveway. This is a drainage way and could possibly be a wetland area. If the swale area on town land is a wetland, then there will be no option to cross the town land because impacts would be worse. If the town land is used in this area, a culvert will be installed to make sure water flow from the slope can drain through the site as it has historically.

Mr. Hurley does not think the swale area is a wetland because the slope is too steep for water to be held for extended periods of time which is necessary for wetland soils to form. Wetland soils take about 5 years to form. He will take some soil samples after the site walk. In order for it to be a wetland, there must be 50 percent or more of wetland plants, wetland soils and wetland hydrology. All three characteristics must be present for the area to be considered a wetland.

This project will come back before the Commission in January. The use of town land for the access drive must be discussed with the town attorney. This proposed use of town land for this type of project may have to go on the town warrant. Some town residents in attendance do not want town land used for the access road to the tower. Ms. Mackay does not think town land should be used for the tower.

Town residents present at the site visit expressed concern about the traffic to and from the tower. T-Mobile is stating there would be 2 trips a month, but other carriers will be co-located and will each have their required visits to the tower. Residents are concerned there could be 4 or 5 carriers on the tower which would considerably increase the traffic on the road.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Mackay,
Recording Secretary