

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WAREHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Date of Meeting: March 29, 2021
(Via Zoom Remote)

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Sandy Slavin, Chair
 Mary Taggart
 Elissa Heard
 Carol Malonson
 Michael Mercier
 Ron Besse
 Kwame Bartie
 David Pichette, Agent

Also Present: Ken Buckland, Town Planner

III. DISCUSSION RE: TWO WETLAND BYLAW CHANGES PROPOSED FOR TOWN MEETING

Mr. Buckland discussed the downtown area & investments made to the WVI District. The Wareham Development Authority is advancing zoning changes for the downtown area & trying to attract developers.

Mr. Buckland spoke re: the current no activity zone/50 ft. buffer for commercial properties in the WVI & OVI District which could restrict access to developing commercial properties along the waterfront. One article proposes eliminating the 50 ft. buffer for commercial properties in the WVI & OVI District.

Mr. Buckland explained the second article deals w/ municipal project restrictions w/out exemptions. The proposed Bylaw change would allow exemptions provided by the State regulations, in particular when dealing w/ stormwater on the waterfront & wetland resource areas exemptions. This would allow the Town to save money in not having additional reviews & paying fees. Exemptions under State regulations would apply to municipal projects.

ConCom members expressed concern re: ConCom not being notified of these proposed Bylaw changes from the beginning & having no input.

Mr. Buckland spoke briefly re: potential development of three properties in the WVI District (one near Besse Park & two on Merchants Way). In the OVI District, the Onset Pier work.

Brief discussion ensued re: setting precedent for other projects, making a Bylaw change for one particular project & process for new projects/developers to proceed.

Mr. Buckland explained the Wetland Bylaw can apply to wetland values & resources that are there. All the Bylaw change does is take out the absolute restriction on the 50 ft. buffer. Ms. Slavin stated the ConCom has the ability to place a waiver on the buffer if warranted. Mr. Buckland agreed, but the goal is

to make these properties attractive for developers & level the playing field for them for their projects. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Pichette explained the reasons for setbacks near resource areas & provisions in Bylaw for projects to be done at properties that have previously been developed, such as the Onset Pier. He spoke re: the language to be added to the Bylaw in which there are already provisions in the Bylaw for.

Brief discussion ensued re: not having OVI included in the Bylaw change. Mr. Buckland stated he can take that out of the change.

Discussion ensued re: the second Bylaw change re: municipal project exemptions. Mr. Buckland discussed the State law exemptions re: stormwater structures/improvements w/in wetland areas. Mr. Pichette feels the explanation is misleading & not correct. He spoke re: exemptions w/in the State law & there is no exemption for new projects. The only exemption is something that is currently in place. Discussion ensued.

ConCom members expressed various concerns re: the proposed Bylaw changes.

IV. DISCUSSION RE: PRESERVATION ASSOCIATES TRUST – PIER DESIGN

Ms. Slavin gave a brief history of this proposed project that was denied by the ConCom, appealed by the applicant & hence, a new pier design. Brief discussion ensued. This matter will be brought up at a future meeting.

NOTE: Discussion continued re: concerns relative to the proposed Bylaw changes, such as inaccurate explanations/language, no ConCom input, the rush to get these changes in place, etc.

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Malonson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Besse seconded.

VOTE: Unanimous (7-0-0)

Date signed: 8/19/2021

Attest: SSS (w)

Sandy Slavin, Chair

WAREHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Date copy sent to Wareham Town Clerk: 8/19/21