

**Springdale Study Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
October 22, 2015  
Dover Town House**

Attendees: Catherine White, Juris Alksnitis, Anne Reitmayer, Doug Straus, Doug Novitch, Matthew Schmid, Eric Aborjaily

Liaisons and Guests: Amey Moot, Justine Kent-Uritam, John Sullivan, Stuart Swiny, Laina Wylde Swiny, Mark Sarro, Matt Spinale, David Powers, Boynton Glidden, Jim Snyder, Carol Lisbon, Ed Dennison,

- The meeting was called to order at 7:35 by Catherine White.
- Minutes of the September 24, 2015 meeting were approved.
- Ms. White introduced Mr. Paul McManus of Ecotec, Inc.
- Mr. McManus provided a background of his work in Dover and how he became involved in the 46 Springdale Avenue parcel to help delineate and define wetland and other ecological aspects of the parcel.
- In Mr. McManus's opinion, there're three aspects of the parcel that have ecological significance: the wetlands including the vernal pool, the spring, and more significantly, the open meadow. Mr. McManus described the vernal pool as being very productive. Most pools of this nature dry up in the summer. However, this one typically stays wet but not with enough water to support a fish population. As a result there is a strong amphibian habitat with lots of fairy shrimp and a variety of amphibians.

He described the large meadow as being the more significant ecological feature. Meadows of this nature and size are not prevalent and without regular maintenance quickly become overgrown.

- The meeting was then opened to questions from the Committee and guests directed to Mr. McManus.
  - Q – What would the impact of developing the site have on the field or the vernal pool?
  - A – To sustain the vernal pool the hydrology would have to be maintained. He believes that a "Substantial" project could be developed in the front of the property while preserving the vernal pool. In his mind, the open meadow is more important than the vernal pool. The value of this meadow ecologically is related to its overall size. It is not large enough for some nesting birds but adequate for many others. In valuing fields of this nature, contiguous size

matters. Taking bites out of the field impacts it. Peripheral development is less impactful than development occurring in the middle.

- Q – What is the relationship of surface water, the aquifer, streams and other water resources as impacted by the use of water by humans?
- A – Since most of the site is predominantly flat, most precipitation will permeate into the site without much run-off. There's a vigorous spring, a perennial open water source. It is believed the vernal pool roughly intersects the groundwater level. At any time of year, the level of the pool probably represents the water table. The ecological significance of the water resources of the site would be maintained at any scale of development that he could envision the town would consider or approve on this site.
  
- Q – Does the use of water by people draw down the water table?
- A – It is not possible for me to give a good answer to this question. The stream on the left side of the property (looking in from Springdale Avenue) is recorded as perennial from the front to rear of property. However, a portion of the stream to the South is probably now intermittent. He does not believe the water table draw off is the sole cause of the stream changing from perennial to intermittent.
  
- Q – Do the Colonial wells on the other side of the tracks have an impact?
- A – There might be some effect but on a hydrological scale he doesn't think it has a major effect on the local water table.
  
- Q – Is it safe to say we don't know what the effect of development is on multiple areas? Is it fair to say a hydrological study should be conducted to determine the impact on the water resources?
- A – It is perfectly reasonable for consideration and concern as it relates to the scale of potential water use. However, he doesn't know what size development would warrant the study.
  
- Q – Please clarify your comments regarding the size of the meadow and its contiguous nature.
- A – The size of the meadow only relates to the specific property. Breaking up the field in the middle would have much more substantial impact than if the fringes were developed. Meadows of this size are unusual and therefore valuable.
  
- Q – What is the impact of human activity on the habitat?
- A – As it relates to ground nesting birds, human and related activity (humans, pets etc.) are of the greatest concern as ground birds are very susceptible to habitat disturbances.
  
- Q – Is the meadow large enough to attract ground nesting birds?

- A – Yes, for some but not large enough for all. However he has seen instances where species are occupying areas that were "too small" for them.
- Q – In considering the vernal pool or the field, what is more important?
- A – Due to its contiguous size, the meadow is more ecologically significant and more rare than the vernal pool.
- Q – With 83% of Dover's land in a natural state, is the Springdale Field, just down the street, useful habitat?
- A – It would be but Springdale Field is used more frequently, which affects its significance as a habitat. Any meadow, as a habitat, requires maintenance to preserve it.
- Q – In addition to the poor soils at Springdale Field, what other considerations diminishes its value as a habitat?
- A – The water in the field is disconnected from the topsoil due to its location in a deep trench.
- Q – Ms. Ricci of the Audubon identified the area as a wildlife corridor. What would be the impact of development around the periphery of the property?
- A – Development along the periphery prevents fragmentation of the meadow and should not impact the wildlife corridor. The forested woodland, contiguous to the meadow, is more significant as the corridor. However, maintenance of the forest corridor also relies on the adjoining properties, particularly the railroad ROW, Wylde Woods and the Power's property to the West.
- Q – Has the property been identified as a priority habitat?
- A – The property is not identified as one through the State of Massachusetts programs. However, this does not mean that species of concern, in priority habitats, aren't here. It only means they haven't been mapped. If not mapped, then assumptions are that State listed species aren't there.
- Q – Is it unusual for private property to be included in the State's priority habitats?
- A – Yes. Typically private property wouldn't be listed. During permitting, species might be identified.
- Q – What is the process to have a complete census of the property completed?
- A – A study would have to be conducted, taking up to a year. It would involve observations over different times of the year using a variety of observation and wildlife identification methods.
- Q – What is the significance of the spring on the property?

- A – The spring is perennial and since it flows at a relatively constant temperature of 55°, it is a significant source of open water year-round. It is an important habitat feature.
- Q – Is there value in the intermittent stream?
- A – Yes, there clearly is. In terms of constraints, the outer portion of the buffer zone would be developable.
- Q – Is there discretion for the Conservation Commission to determine a perennial versus intermittent stream?
- A – No, determination is non-discretionary. There are regulatory requirements to designate through analysis. If the stream is listed as perennial, there is a process to show it is intermittent by demonstration of no-flow periods.
- Q – The wetland delineation shows the stream running from the front of the property to the rear on the left side, as being perennial. Is this the case?
- A – In his opinion, he believes the stream should be classified as intermittent for the portion south of the spring running towards the rear of property.
- Q – Can you comment on the portion of the lot that abuts Springdale Avenue?
- A – Most of the area North of the barn towards Springdale Avenue is in a riparian stream area. Almost the entire frontage area is affected. There are provisions where strict compliance could prohibit development and therefore allow for consideration and dispensation by the various Authorities and Commissions.
- Q – Did you look at the site as it might relate to use as a municipal well field?
- A – Did not review the property for potential as a well field. Did look at it for possible impact on other wells. If the site were developed as public wells, the wells would require protected zones.
- Q – Are we correct in assuming that all of the area in front of the house is in a riparian area?
- A – Almost the entire frontage is within the 200-foot buffer. However, moving towards the western property line is the best option for driveway relocation. However, it would require threading it between two wetland areas.
- Q – Would State wetlands policy 88-2 for access roadways apply?
- A – If strict compliance with regulations prevents access to a buildable portion of the site, it might be applicable. However, it could also be challenged. It could be a fight on both sides.

- Q – Does this mean that, in effect, the entire Wetlands Protection Act could be overridden?
- A - No, but with mitigation and dispensation, options exist.
  
- Q – Would this be a highly litigious process for a limited development?
- A – It certainly could be. There is plenty of room for disagreement and therefore plenty of room for litigation.
  
- Q – If the property were to be developed and the meadow used as a leaching field what would the impact be?
- A – Probably not much, if any long-term, as it has been successfully done and believes it is doable. Initially there's habitat disturbance but long-term a leaching field and wildlife could cohabitate.
  
- Q – What is the impact of a leaching field/waste treatment facility on the spring and stream?
- A – If the system has been well designed, constructed and maintained it will produce clean water and therefore should not be an impact.
  
- Q – Is this parcel a consideration of the ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concerns.)?
- A – The parcel at 46 Springdale Avenue is not within an ACEC. However that doesn't mean that species of concern aren't there.
  
- With an end to the questions the committee thanked Mr. McManus.
- The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday October 29.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM

Respectively submitted by Eric Aborjaily