

**DRAFT**  
North Hampton Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
August, 8, 2023

**Administrative:** The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. via Channel 22 from the Town Hall. The agenda was posted in Compliance with RSA 91A requirements.

**Roll Call: Members present:** Lisa Wilson, (Chair), Kathy Grant, (Co-Chair), Dave Cicalone, Lauri Etela, Audrey Prior, and Phil Thayer.

**Approval of June 13, 2023 Draft Minutes:** After review of the June 13, 2023 minutes, *a motion was made by Kathy Grant, duly seconded by Lauri Etela, to accept the minutes as written.* The motion carried.

**New Business:**

**Review Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review (Planning Board) for Wireless Telecommunications Facility.** Applicant: Vertex Towers LLC; Facility, South Road, Map 12, Lot 72; Access, Map 12, Lot 65; Property Owner, Richard E. Skowronski and Leila A. Hanna. North Hampton Zoning Ordinance: Section 501.2, Article V; Section 605.4, Article VI: to allow a wireless telecommunications facility in the Wetlands Conservation District.

The Town's Planning and Zoning Administrator forwarded the application to the Conservation Commission to give the Commission the opportunity to comment prior to the Planning's Board's review which is scheduled for its September 5 meeting.

The application proposes plans for an unpaved driveway to be located within an existing utility right of way to include a segment within the wetland buffer. Mr. Fran Paresi, a representative for Vertex Towers, LLC., noted that if the Planning Board approves the Conditional Use Permit for the project, the applicant will then submit a wetlands application to NH DES for a culvert/wetlands crossing that will be approximately 100 square feet.

In an email dated August 8, 2023, Mr. Paresi stated the following:

“The Vertex Towers civil engineers have designed many (many!) similar projects throughout New Hampshire, and given the nature of these types of facility, the requirements and limitations of telecommunications technology, and the extensive setbacks and other requirements imposed by local zoning ordinances regulating cell towers, we oftentimes have to construct sites near wetlands buffers. We engage very experienced wetland biologists to delineate wetland boundaries, and our engineers are very experienced in designing sites and access driveways to avoid impact on wetland resources. In the few instances which require wetlands crossings, our engineers and biologists have worked carefully with NHDES to ensure that all regulatory requirements are met and all impacts are minimized. Note also that because the facility will involve only a short construction period and will then be unmanned, vehicular traffic to the site will be minimal. In addition, because these types of facilities are federally licensed, we are also subject to extensive federal environmental protection regulations,

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and our engineers have successfully designed and we have constructed many similar facilities in full compliance with all local, state and federal requirements.”

In response to questions by the Chair of the Commission during a telephone conservation on August 8, 2023, Mr. Paresi stated the following:

- The width of the driveway will be 15 feet; swales and vegetation will be maintained to control storm water run-off. The area where the cell tower will be located is an upland area of approximately 5600 square feet.
- An existing easement for a Public Right of Way exists along the proposed area for the driveway.
- Most of the driveway impacts will occur during the initial construction phase. Once the construction is completed, traffic will be limited to a few vehicles per month, far less traffic than what is typical for a residential driveway.
- The gravel driveway should retain its permeability due to the limited traffic.
- If the driveway needs to be plowed for emergency access, no salts or snow melting chemicals will be used.
- Best management techniques will be employed for storm water management during construction of the driveway where there will be limited cutting to preserve the natural vegetation within the wetland buffer.
- Approximately half of the length of the proposed driveway is located within the wetland buffer.
- As a condition of approval, Vertex Towers will agree to an annual inspection of the culvert, driveway, and the storm water management elements that were implemented to ensure that they are functioning as designed.

Mr. Paresi noted that following construction there will be very little driveway traffic. The Commission discussed the need for a management plan to ensure long-term maintenance of the culvert and protection of the natural vegetation along the proposed driveway. ***A motion was made by Phil Thayer, duly seconded by Dave Ciccalone, to authorize the chair to draft a letter to the Planning Board which reflects the Conservation Commission’s discussions with the applicant. The applicant stated that best management techniques will be employed to protect the wetland buffers during and after the construction phase. In addition, the Commission recommends that as a condition of approval, Vertex Towers, LLC. agrees to an annual inspection of the culvert, driveway, and the storm water management elements that were implemented to ensure that they are functioning as designed.*** The motion carried with Lauri Etela abstaining.

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**Forest Hills Farm Management Plan:** Updates to the trail system were reviewed for submission to the Southeast Land Trust (SELT). Kathy Grant and Deborah Goard, SELT Stewardship and Land Engagement Director, conducted a site walk along the northern east/west border of the Forest Hills Farm to walk parts of an existing trail network and a prospective new trail segment. In accordance with the terms of the conservation easement, any new trail must be approved by SELT and the Forest Hills Farm management plan must be updated to reflect any new plans and work completed on the conservation land. Kathy Grant drafted an addendum to *2017 Management Plan for Forest Hills Farm* to document proposed changes to the trail system.

The Commission also discussed posting signs near the Greenland border to remind the public that motorized and wheels vehicles are not allowed on any portion of the conservation land. The Commission discussed marking the purple trail to include the western segment toward the power lines and discussed marking the northern extension to the east as the orange trail as a safety measure to avoid confusion with the purple trail to better locate a an individual if help is needed along the trail. Following discussion, ***a motion was made by Lisa Wilson, duly seconded by Phil Thayer, to authorize the Chair to submit to the Southeast Land Trust for approval "An Addendum to the 2017 Management Plan for Forest Hills Farm."*** The motion carried.

#### **Old Business:**

**Conservation Easement Subcommittee Update:** The Town Forest gate has been delivered to the Highway Department, the Fire Department will install the lock box and will be the only department in town with access to the gate key.

**Trail Maintenance Update:** The Town Forest trail is now overgrown with weeds due to this summer's humid and rainy weather. Phil Thayer reported that a volunteer from Exeter, NH has helped maintain the trail in the past and the Commission has also engaged Kate Dardinski to help clear the trail. Kate Dardinski reported that she cleared vegetation and trimmed weeds along the Oliver Brook trail and has installed an additional 20' of bog bridges near the entrance to improve access to the trail.

**Conservation Signage:** The Commission has plans underway for new signage for the Town Forest Gate to inform public that the trail is open to visitors and that motorized vehicles are prohibited, a replacement for the aging Dustin-Booker Farm road sign, and

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additional Forest Hill Farm signage informing the public that motorized and wheeled vehicles are prohibited

**Future Projects:** it would be helpful to have in writing a list of potential projects to include new culverts and potential areas to start collecting base line water samples using the water sampling kits provided by NHDES. It was noted that this summer's rains and heavy storms are responsible for much of the storm water run-off carrying pollutants from Little River to directly to the ocean.

**Other Business:** Phil Thayer reported that the cost to mow the Community Garden will be \$500 this year. ***A motion made by Kathy Grant, duly seconded by Audrey Prior, to approve an expenditure of \$500.00 for the cost of mowing.*** The motion carried.

There being no other business to discuss, ***a motion was made by Phil Thayer, duly seconded by Kathy Grant, to adjourn the meeting.***

The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Moore  
Recording Secretary

**"These minutes are prepared by the Recording Secretary within five (5) days as required by NH RSA 2,11. They will not be finalized until approved by the majority vote by the Conservation Commission."**