

**Conservation Commission
Staff Application Review**

**Review 6/25/2024
Site visit 6/25/2024**

Project Name: Pocket Park and parking lot expansion

Location: 0 Warren St.

Type of Filing: NOI

DEP File #: Pending

Overview:

The Town of Upton (owner/ applicant) has filed an NOI for the creation of a pocket park and enlargement of a parking area. The Representative/Engineer is Matt Burne from BSC Group.

Project Details:

The pocket park with consists of a handicapped accessible walking path and circular sitting area denoted by pavers and natural boulders. The path will be comprised of stonedust. In addition, the parking lot next to town hall is being expanded.

Stormwater: For the new development (park area) the stormwater will be collected by a grass swale and be directed to a bioretention area. The paver area and stonedust path allow for some infiltration. The parking lot is considered redevelopment. They have reduced the impervious area by 200 sq. ft. reducing peak rate flows. The existing catch basins in the parking lot will be sufficient because of the lower flows.

Site Characteristics:

Two lots are involved in this project. The pocket park is located on a 0.3 acre lot adjacent to the stream and the parking lot is located on an .013 acre lot next to the town hall. The pocket park parcel is currently wooded (mostly sugar maple) and has a stream flowing through it. The land drops steeply from Warren St. to a flatter area next to the stream. The stream enters a historic stone channel at the southern edge of the property. Along Warren St. there has been some obvious dumping of landscape debris, brush and boulders.

Wetland Resource Areas Present:

Wetland resource areas present include Riverfront area, Bank, Bordering land subject to flooding and Bordering Vegetated Wetland. The stream has been determined to be perennial from a USGS map (although from my reading of the map it is intermittent). In Stream stats the area is too small at .27 sq. mile watershed. However, the flow rate does qualify as a Perennial stream. The applicant has considered this area to be Riverfront area, even though the stream may qualify as an intermittent stream. The elevation of the floodzone at this property is 298 ft. The Bordering vegetated wetland is characterized by skunk cabbage, Sugar Maple American Elm, and Jewelweed. There were no issues with the wetland delineation.

Other Resources/Constraints:

The stone lined trench (1850) is on the National Register of Historic places.

Application Considerations/Deficiencies:

NA

WPA Considerations:

1. Applicant has stated that there are no alterations within the flood zone, but it appears that there is grading within the flood zone, although it may not change the flood storage capacity. Most of the walkway and paver area are at elevations below the 298 flood level. If the area is flooded the trail may wash out.
2. Erosion controls follow the limit of work on the stream side. How will the limit of work be delineated on the uphill side? Erosion controls consist of straw wattles (noted on plans) narrative mentions compost filter sock as well. Recommend using Compost filter sock, considering how close the work is to the wetland.
3. Alternatives Analysis – Applicant has suggested that there is no practical alternative to the project with less adverse impact. Not building the project at all would be less impact. However, the goals of the project to provide a handicapped accessible trail and park area in the center of town provide a huge public benefit. The Commission should determine if the benefits of an accessible path outweigh the Riverfront area impacts, keeping in mind that this stream could be argued to be an intermittent stream.
4. Applicant has provided for a planting plan. The plantings are Native Species- trees, shrubs and ground covers, as well as seed mix. Planting plan is missing a summary of totals.

Bylaw Considerations:

This lot is subject to the bylaw. Most of the path is within the 30 ft. no disturb. The disturbed area comes as close as 2-3 feet from the wetland edge at a few places. Most of the time it is 5-10 ft. from the wetland. The parking lot is proposed to extend slightly closer to the stream (which is at this point within the stone channel). At it's closest point will be about 10 ft. from the stream. The project will require a waiver from the 30 no-disturb zone and the 50 ft. no- build zone.

Other Questions/Issues:

The parking lot portion of the project will probably go before the planning board for site plan review. They may get a peer review for the Stormwater.
Consider cleaning out dumped materials (landscape waste) as a part of this project.

Recommendations:

Wait for DEP #

Consider if the benefits of the proposed park outweigh the impacts to the Riverfront area
Vote on waivers for the two buffers separately from issuing an Order of Conditions.

Photographs:

Photograph 1: Wetland and stream



Photograph 2: Boulders and landscape debris next to Warren St.



Photograph 3: Existing parking lot



Photograph 4: area between parking lot and stream

