

**Commission Committee Reviewing
Valley Motorsports Dredge and Fill (Wetlands) Application**

NOTES of MEETING (draft—to be approved at next meeting)

March 15, 2004

7:30 - 10:00 p.m.

Tamworth Town Office

Present:

Committee Members:

John Mersfelder, TCC Chair

Ned Beecher

Charlie Townsend

Chris Conrod

Don Johnson

Others:

Irene Garvey, Abenaki Environmental Services

Joe Binsack

Katy Thompson

Donna Veilleux

Willie Farnum

and others

This meeting was audio and video taped by MotorSports Holding, LLC
Meeting started at 7:40 p.m.

Agenda - The agenda items were reviewed: 1. items of interest/concern and questions to be put on the list of topics and/or dealt with in the field; 2. plan for field site walk on Friday from 9-5; 3. structure of public hearing; and 4. communications update.

Site walk plans

Ned reviewed discussions with Susan Duprey re the plans for the Site Walk on Friday, April 9th. He tried to arrange an earlier start, but the plan is to be there 9 to 5. Duprey is expecting 2 groups; the wetland and soil scientists will go off in one group and others of the Committee in another. Ned emphasized we don't know how long it will take to do our job on the site and has continued to stress that if more time is needed, he expects us to be granted more time. John noted that the wetland regulations specifically give Conservation Commissions the right to "inspect" the site. We are interested in vernal pools; they may not be definitively identifiable on Friday, but we will mark possible ones and leave it to the ACOE and DES to determine later. Mark Bergeron sent Irene a one-page overview map that includes everything from the track to the topography, Irene has marked the wetlands, wetland impact areas, and areas to check on it. Ned said he would make a smaller copy for everyone. She will check delineations and also plans to look at functions and values of wetlands as they go. Maybe the rest of group should go to the top and work their way down while Irene and her group start at the bottom. Ned suggested that we also take pictures and keep a list of suggested places that we think Irene's team should visit before the end of the day (will check in with each other mid-afternoon). Don and Chris noticed a

few areas where wetlands abut but don't touch: Irene thought they might be where old roads have been put in with culverts. Irene will bring flagging to mark, if it will be allowed; John, Ned, Don, Chris, and Irene--with her soil scientist--agreed to meet at the site at 9 Friday.

General

There are 3 wetland outlets from the site flowing under Route 25, all with culverts; Chris noted that the double 48" culverts—the largest--has the smallest projected flow. Ned noted on Friday morning (9 a.m. or so), April 2nd, that the flows under Route 25 after an inch of rain runoff and snow melt had each culvert about 1/3 – 1/2 full. Chris and Ned had both expected more water at that time (Chris looked at it later that same day). All the flow was quite clean at that time (clear water, little sediment).

Ned offered copies of the schedule/postings of upcoming meetings, including the hearing.

TCC Public Hearing

John said that today was the date we requested Motorsports Moldings let us know whether or not they will participate in our informational meeting and public hearing. I have not heard, but our plans are to go ahead with or without them. Ned and John have told Susan Duprey that we would put together a list of questions by Wednesday for ESS scientists to address in the first part of the meeting (6:30 – 8:00 on Monday). The question was asked, should we put the effort into it if we're not sure they are going to be there? Irene said that Mark Bergeron of ESS sounded pretty definite about being there. Duprey had previously said they would probably be there throughout the meeting.

Ned has copies of the 20 questions that he will get out around town and bring to the hearing to guide people's comments. We will need a table in the auditorium to seat the ESS and subcommittee and commission members for the 6:30 – 8 meeting. Then just Committee members will sit at the table to take notes and listen to public input for the hearing. Susan Duprey wanted to know who would be sitting at the table with ESS for the first meeting; it will be John, Ned, Irene, Don, and Chris. John will finalize details for venue and microphones. We will see if the soil scientist working with Irene should be at the meeting. We may ask ESS to present on some more general areas, then some specific questions. Ned will finalize this listing of items in a letter to Motorsports Holdings by Wednesday. Chris defined what he thought would be the best format for public hearing: we're here to listen to what you have to say. John suggested a sign-in sheet for people who want to speak to the issues. How will any debates be dealt with? Just use the sign in; mention/advice that the comments need to be restricted to comments on the project and should be directed at the Commission/Committee, and not so much toward other people's comments. Public will speak toward the Committee members at the table. We will also request written input to supplement verbal comments. ESS will not be sitting at the table during the hearing part, but we could call on them for clarification if that was appropriate and they did stay. The 20 questions/topics are guidelines for questions and comments; they are areas that are required to be addressed in the permit process, according to DES regulations.

Compiled list of topics and questions

As we discussed these, Ned took notes on his copy and will make the changes and deletions and circulate a new draft later on. He will also compile the list of questions for ESS scientists by Wednesday for next Monday's meeting. The following topics were discussed:

Need: Chris noted that he questions the need for each of the components i.e. track and all the lodging—if the number of people expected at the largest track events are put into the total number of lodging units, the lodging rate is around 36% based on numbers they projected. If no hotel was built, they still have more than enough space already and could impact fewer wetlands. Similarly, is there need for all the parking lot space? Irene reminded us that there is no impact on wetlands from the hotel except the access road, which according to Chris, crosses in at least 3 places. The restaurants and garagemahals could also be looked at the same way. The hotel will have to be marketed on its own accord to get higher occupancy than 36%; you don't need the hotel to make the race track work. Ned also mentioned the overall need for the facility; Don said there is no way to address that in any way other than argumentative—i.e. we can only state that there are plenty of people who believe the argument can be made that there is only a small part of the general public whose "needs" are served by the track. Lori also said that there didn't seem to be a local or regional survey of public interest or need, that she knew of. Chris also said that there are existing lodging and dining and that the plan overdevelops the site. It was suggested that we will compare the level of need of a racetrack to that of other similarly large construction projects such as highways, powerplants, etc. Irene stated that DES often won't allow wetland fill for further lot development, but only for access and basic development.

Alternatives: Site in Ossipee - there are regulations that don't allow for racetrack; in Albany site, it was a rural residential site; thus, these sites may not have been realistic alternatives. What happens if MSII has not presented viable alternatives? Irene suggested they could have broadened the horizon into Maine and Vennont. Chris said this lot is more steep than they want - it must have been something they had to settle for.

Other: Some topics can only be dealt with after onsite visit. Interest in knowing what is the distance to prime wetlands across Route 25 from site? Topic #7: areas of concern might be mountain ridges or seeps. John suggested maybe corridors to get to areas of high interest (i.e. wetlands). There will be changes in the ecosystem. Is it worth putting air quality study on our list of concerns? We don't think so, but if people can show that it is worth being concerned about then we will include it. Recreation/aesthetics: Noise might take fun out of camping on White Lake or boating on Bearcamp River, but it may increase use of Ossipee businesses. There was a comment on how it might impact hiking in Sandwich or the Ossipees ranges. Topic #20: what are the contingency plans goes awry with construction or operations? Concern about logistics of sewage system and underground waste treatment – septic systems will have to go in undisturbed land, if the perc rates are going to be understood well? Ned asked what the largest priorities of concern we feel we have at this time. They are increased volume of water (flood control), effects on aquifer (recharge and contaminants), aesthetics (noise and light), and habitat (e.g. vernal pools). What are we going to do with these questions and comments? Ned suggested that we will lay out each topic into paragraph format which will turn into comments for the DES.

Another Committee meeting was scheduled for Friday, April 16, at 4:00 p.m. in the Town Offices. We will compile final comments to DES at that time.

Meeting adjourned at 10:32 p.m.