



Town of Amherst, New Hampshire
Office of Community Development
Building · Code Enforcement · Planning · Zoning · Economic Development
2 Main Street, Amherst, NH 03031

Site Walk Minutes

Thursday, September 23, 2021

4:30 p.m.

317 Route 101, Amherst, NH 03031

CASE #: PZ14590-080321 – EAM Amherst Holdings, LLC (Owners & Applicants) – 317 Route 101, PIN # 008-072-000 – Non-Residential Site Plan Application. To depict proposed site improvements to utilize the subject property for a proposed Agricultural Farming and Supply Operation. *Zoned Residential Rural.*

Planning Board Members: Bill Stoughton, Mike Akillian, Dwight Brew, Tracie Adams, Tom Silvia, Tom Quinn and Arnie Rosenblatt.

Applicant/Agent/Professionals: Chad Branon, PE, Fieldstone Land Consultants, PLLC, Erich and Amy Mueller.

Other Attendees: John D'Angelo, Selectman, Sean Facey, Karl Hester, Kevin Bevis, Susan Lebel, Joanne Dumas.

Staff: Nic Strong, Community Development Director, and Natasha Kypfer, Town Planner.

The site walk began at 4:30 p.m. on the site between the existing house and the wetlands to the east of the site. Chad Branon, PE, noted that, in response to a question that had been raised at the last meeting, there was no plan to cross the wetland to get to the triangular tree farm/garden area in the north east corner of the property, but that equipment would travel along the side of Route 101 on the shoulder to get there. Erich Mueller noted that was what had been done historically, what was done currently to maintain that area, and that it would continue. Chad Branon, PE, noted that there was no sign that any crossing had ever been maintained through that wetland area and none was proposed.

The assembled company looked at the area in which the future farm stand and parking would be located to the west of the existing shed. Chad Branon, PE, noted that there were proposed stormwater improvements in this area.

The group then walked to the south following the existing access road that would be improved for the proposed site development. Chad Branon, PE, pointed out wetland flagging, noting that it had been a couple of years since the delineation was done and some of the flags were gone. He noted that the culvert for the road would be designed for H20 loading and the side slopes would be stabilized. The culvert proposed was 18" and would have one to two feet of cover.

Joanne Dumas noted that this wetland fed under Red Gate Lane through a very old culvert and the water had a tendency to pond up there and stagnate and become smelly. She asked if anything would be done as part of this site plan to remedy that situation. Chad Branon, PE,

explained that the site plan established the existing flows onsite and mitigated the improvements being planned onsite. He stated that there were no proposals for any improvements on Red Gate Lane and that there would be no additional runoff in that direction. Chad Branon, PE, went on to say that wetlands can be smelly especially during very wet seasons due to the breakdown of vegetation. He noted that this site plan would have no negative impacts to the adjacent area and would meet all local stormwater management criteria. He went on to explain that there would be no increase in runoff due to the designed infiltration practices. Chad Branon, PE, stated that maintaining the fields in agricultural production would actually provide more uptake of water than leaving them as open field areas.

Joanne Dumas asked about how many trees would be cut down. Chad Branon, PE, stated that the perimeter of the open field at the south east corner of the property would be maintained but that the trees to the west of the site would be cut to open up field areas and to provide the location for the building construction. The limits of clearing were indicated on the site plan. Chad Branon, PE, stated that a 25' buffer to jurisdictional wetlands was provided as part of the plan.

Joanne Dumas asked how wide the proposed road would be. Chad Branon, PE, stated that it would be 20' wide. The floodplain elevation was discussed and Chad Branon, PE, explained that the floodplain was elevation based and the topographical information provided on the plan gave the exact elevation of the floodplain. He noted that the top of the road at the location of the wetland crossing was just above the 100-year floodplain line. Sean Facey asked if the wetlands extended to the westerly property line and Chad Branon, PE, stated that it did.

Chad Branon, PE, took the group to the proposed building location and noted that there was a proposed stormwater management area to the north east corner of the proposed paved parking area. He noted that the front corner of the building was about 50' into the woods from where the group was standing. Tree cutting would be needed to clear the area for the parking and building and to create the tree farm/garden areas to the south and west of the building. It was noted that the top of the knoll would be leveled off and the unsuitable materials removed to create the level area for the building. Chad Branon, PE, pointed out that there was a lot of natural screening to both Route 101 and Red Gate Lane.

John D'Angelo asked for the rationale for the size of the building. Chad Branon, PE, stated that the needs for storage and processing of materials had been evaluated by the owner and this was the size of the building he chose. He noted that there may be some plants started inside the building. Erich Mueller stated that he did not want to have to add on to the building or the paved area at some point in the future and in consulting with the building contractor, a building of this size with three spans was recommended. There will be overhead doors and man-doors. Erich Mueller stated they would utilize 75% right off the bat. He noted that the building was sited to maintain distance from Route 101 and Red Gate Lane.

Mike Akillian asked about tree cutting along Red Gate Lane. Chad Branon, PE, stated that the existing tree line would remain. When asked what would make sure that the trees would remain,

Chad Branon, PE, stated that the plan would follow all the Town's rules and regulations. Erich Mueller stated that he wanted the screening to be there.

Chad Branon, PE, stated that drainage swales would direct stormwater into the infiltration basins. He noted that having the paved parking area was better for long term maintenance as limited materials would be able to make their way into the basins whereas a gravel parking lot surface would lose materials from its surface.

Arnie Rosenblatt left the site walk at 5:00 p.m. +/-.

The group walked to the south of the existing open area and noted the location of Joe English Brook in the trees. Susan Lebel asked about the aquifer. Chad Branon, PE, pointed out that the line was just inside the treeline and that all the uses were compliant with the Town's ordinances and that, technically, an agricultural operation was exempt. He pointed out that it was planned that this would be an organic operation.

Nic Strong asked Erich Mueller if he planned to install any greenhouses. Erich Mueller replied that he did not.

Bill Stoughton thanked Chad Branon, PE, and Erich Mueller for conducting the site walk, and thanked the attendees for their participation. He noted that any questions and statements from the site walk should be brought up at the public hearing on the application to be heard and discussed by the full Board on the record. He further noted that the site walk was for purposes of observation and not deliberation.

The site walk concluded at 5:15 p.m. +/-

Respectfully submitted,

Nic Strong
Community Development Director

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Minutes approved: September 30, 2021, as amended