



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
17 STATE HOUSE STATION AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0017

DEPARTMENT ORDER

IN THE MATTER OF

FALLBROOK COMMONS) NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT
DEVELOPMENT, LLC) FRESHWATER WETLANDS ALTERATIONS
Portland, Cumberland County)
FALLBROOK COMMONS) WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION
L-11219-TE-H-N (approval)) FINDINGS OF FACT AND ORDER

Pursuant to the provisions of 38 M.R.S. §§ 480-A–480-JJ, Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341), and Chapters 310, 315, and 335 of Department rules, the Department of Environmental Protection has considered the application of FALLBROOK COMMONS DEVELOPMENT, LLC with the supportive data, agency review comments, public comments, and other related materials on file and FINDS THE FOLLOWING FACTS:

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A. History of Project: In Department Order #L-11219-87-A-N, dated October 10, 1985, the Department approved the construction of 98 townhomes on an approximately 20-acre parcel of land off Ray Street in the City of Portland. Department Orders #L-11219-87-C-T and #L-11219-87-D-T, dated January 22, 1988 and April 3, 1989, respectively, transferred the original Order to new applicants. In 1989, only 25 of 32 townhomes proposed in phase I of the development had been constructed.

In Department Order #L-11219-87-E-A, dated December 28, 1992, the Department approved the conveyance of approximately 12.64 acres of the original parcel for the construction of a 27,600-square foot single-story assisted-care facility, known as Fall Brook Woods. Subsequent Department Orders include a transfer application that was filed and withdrawn in October 1992 and a condition compliance Order (#L-11219-87-G-C, dated April 7, 1992).

B. Summary: The applicant proposes to purchase approximately 8.24 of undeveloped land from the 12.64 acres authorized for development in Department Order #L-11219-87-E-A to construct a 90-bed nursing care center adjacent to Fall Brook Woods. The project site is located at the end of Merrymeeting Drive in the City of Portland. The proposed development includes a two-story, 58,197-square foot building, two courtyards, and two parking areas. A Site Location of Development Act (Site Law) major amendment permit is required for the proposed project. A Site Law permit application is being reviewed by the City of Portland under its delegated review authority, which was obtained subsequent to the Department’s original Site Law approval in 1985.

The applicant is seeking Department approval under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) for the alteration of 38,461 square feet of freshwater wetlands to construct the proposed project. The proposed project is shown on a set of plans, the first of which is titled "Overall Wetland Impacts of Fallbrook Commons," prepared by Sebago Technics, Inc., and dated November 12, 2019, with a last revision date of May 15, 2020.

The applicant submitted a Notice of Intent (NOI #69983) to comply with the standards and requirements of the Maine Construction General Permit which was accepted by the Department on June 1, 2020.

C. Current Use of the Site: The project site is located on the undeveloped 8.24 acres of the original 20-acre parcel.

D. Public Comment: The Department received comments regarding the proposed project from several interested persons who live in the neighborhood where the project is proposed to be built. Concerns that were raised included several issues related to Site Law review, which were directed to the City of Portland. Several persons expressed general concerns with the project and its potential impacts to natural resources. No draft requests of the Department's decision were requested.

2. EXISTING SCENIC, AESTHETIC, RECREATIONAL OR NAVIGATIONAL USES:

The NRPA, in 38 M.R.S. § 480-D(1), requires the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed project will not unreasonably interfere with existing scenic, aesthetic, recreational and navigational uses.

In accordance with Chapter 315, *Assessing and Mitigating Impacts to Scenic and Aesthetic Uses* (06-096 C.M.R. ch. 315, effective June 29, 2003), the applicant submitted a copy of the Department's Visual Evaluation Field Survey Checklist as Appendix A to the application along with a description of the property and the proposed project. The applicant also submitted several photographs of the proposed project site and surroundings. Department staff visited the project site on March 12, 2020.

The proposed project is located in forested, freshwater wetland, which is not a scenic resource visited by the general public, in part, for the use, observation, enjoyment and appreciation of its natural and cultural visual qualities.

The Department determined that based on the nature of the proposed project and its location, there are no existing recreational or navigational uses of the resource that would be unreasonably impacted.

The Department finds that the proposed activity will not unreasonably interfere with existing scenic, aesthetic, recreational or navigational uses of the protected natural resource.

3. SOIL EROSION:

The NRPA, in 38 M.R.S. § 480-D(2), requires the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed project will not cause unreasonable erosion of soil or sediment nor unreasonably inhibit the natural transfer of soil from the terrestrial to the marine or freshwater environment.

The applicant submitted an acceptable erosion control plan, notes, and details for the project with NOI #69983 referenced in Finding 1. Given that the applicant intends to construct the project according to the plans, the project is not expected to be a significant source of sediment into the adjacent wetlands.

The Department finds that the activity will not cause unreasonable erosion of soil or sediment nor unreasonably inhibit the natural transfer of soil from the terrestrial to the marine or freshwater environment.

4. HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

The NRPA, in 38 M.R.S. § 480-D(3), requires the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed project will not unreasonably harm significant wildlife habitat, freshwater wetland plant habitat, threatened or endangered plant habitat, aquatic or adjacent upland habitat, travel corridor, freshwater, estuarine or marine fisheries or other aquatic life.

According to the Department's Geographic Information System database there are no mapped Essential or Significant Wildlife Habitats located at the site. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) reviewed the proposed project and confirmed that there are no Essential or Significant Wildlife Habitats at the project site.

In its comments, dated November 20, 2019, MDIFW noted that the Maine Endangered Species Act lists several species of bats as endangered or threatened. Because bats are likely to be found on the project site during the breeding season, MDIFW recommended that tree clearing be limited to the period when bats are not present. The applicant agreed to limit tree clearing outside of the months of June and July, the recognized pupping season for tree-roosting bats.

The Department finds that the activity will not unreasonably harm any significant wildlife habitat, freshwater wetland plant habitat, threatened or endangered plant habitat, aquatic or adjacent upland habitat, travel corridor, freshwater, estuarine or marine fisheries or other aquatic life provided that no tree cutting is conducted during the period of June 1 and July 31.

5. WATER QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS:

As discussed in Finding 3, the applicant proposes to use erosion and sediment control during construction to minimize impacts to water quality from siltation.

The Department does not anticipate that the proposed project will violate any state water quality law, including those governing the classification of the State's waters.

6. WETLANDS AND WATERBODIES PROTECTION RULES:

The applicant proposes to directly alter 38,461 square feet of forested, freshwater wetlands to construct the proposed project.

The *Wetlands and Waterbodies Protection Rules*, 06-096 C.M.R. ch. 310 (last amended November 11, 2018), interpret and elaborate on the NRPA criteria for obtaining a permit. The rules guide the Department in its determination of whether a project's impacts would be unreasonable. A proposed project would generally be found to be unreasonable if it would cause a loss in wetland area, functions and values and there is a practicable alternative to the project that would be less damaging to the environment. Each application for a NRPA permit that involves a freshwater wetland alteration must provide an analysis of alternatives in order to demonstrate that a practicable alternative does not exist.

A. **Avoidance.** An applicant must submit an analysis of whether there is a practicable alternative to the project that would be less damaging to the environment and this analysis is considered by the Department in its assessment of the reasonableness of any impacts. The applicant submitted an alternatives analysis for the proposed project completed by Sebago Technics and dated November 2019. The purpose of the project is to replace the nearby St. Joseph's Manor elderly care facility.

The no-action alternative was determined to be impracticable because it would not meet the project purpose.

The applicant conducted a survey of available properties that are large enough to accommodate the size of development necessary to make the project viable and in proximity to the existing Fall Brook Woods facility. Redevelopment of the existing St. Joseph's Manor property was dismissed because the current owner does not wish to have a replacement building constructed on that property. The selected parcel was the only property that met the applicant's development criteria.

The project site includes a wetland network that crosses the property. The applicant considered several design layouts. One alternative for development on this parcel included a larger single-story building, but this alternative was determined to be impracticable because the footprint of a larger building would result in greater wetland impact. The selected alternative, a two-story building, will result in the least amount of wetland alteration, while meeting the project purpose. Given the location of the protected natural resources on the site, some impact to the freshwater wetlands cannot be avoided.

B. **Minimal Alteration.** In support of an application and to address the analysis of the reasonableness of any impacts of a proposed project, an applicant must demonstrate that the amount of freshwater wetland to be altered will be kept to the minimum amount

necessary for meeting the overall purpose of the project. As noted above, wetland impacts were reduced by selecting a two-story building with a smaller building footprint. To further reduce wetland impacts, the applicant proposes to use roof drip edge filters and retaining walls, and side slopes in wetlands will be maintained at 2H:1V. Parking areas and service driveways are also located as close to the building as possible.

C. Compensation. In accordance with Chapter 310, § 5(C)(6)(b), compensation may be required to achieve the goal of no net loss of coastal wetland functions and values. The applicant submitted a functional assessment, dated December 17, 2019, that described the wetlands to be altered by the proposed project. The functional assessment documented that the primary functions and values of these wetlands would include floodflow alteration and sediment/toxicant retention.

The applicant proposes to make a contribution into the In-Lieu Fee program of the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program in the amount of \$165,382.30. Prior to the start of construction, the applicant must submit a payment in the amount of \$165,382.30, payable to “Treasurer, State of Maine”, and directed to the attention of the In-Lieu Fee Program Administrator at 17 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333.

The Department finds that the applicant has avoided and minimized wetland impacts to the greatest extent practicable, and that the proposed project represents the least environmentally damaging alternative that meets the overall purpose of the project provided that prior to project construction, the applicant submits the In-Lieu Fee payment as described above.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

The Department finds, based on the design, proposed construction methods, and location, the proposed project will not inhibit the natural transfer of soil from the terrestrial to the marine environment, will not interfere with the natural flow of any surface or subsurface waters, and will not cause or increase flooding. The proposed project is not located in a coastal sand dune system, is not a crossing of an outstanding river segment, and does not involve dredge spoils disposal or the transport of dredge spoils by water.

BASED on the above findings of fact, and subject to the conditions listed below, the Department makes the following conclusions pursuant to 38 M.R.S. §§ 480-A–480-JJ and Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341):

- A. The proposed activity will not unreasonably interfere with existing scenic, aesthetic, recreational, or navigational uses.
- B. The proposed activity will not cause unreasonable erosion of soil or sediment.
- C. The proposed activity will not unreasonably inhibit the natural transfer of soil from the terrestrial to the marine or freshwater environment.

- D. The proposed activity will not unreasonably harm any significant wildlife habitat, freshwater wetland plant habitat, threatened or endangered plant habitat, aquatic or adjacent upland habitat, travel corridor, freshwater, estuarine, or marine fisheries or other aquatic life provided that no tree cutting is conducted during the period of June 1 and July 31 and prior to the start of construction, the applicant makes a contribution to the In-Lieu Fee program as described in Finding 6.
- E. The proposed activity will not unreasonably interfere with the natural flow of any surface or subsurface waters.
- F. The proposed activity will not violate any state water quality law including those governing the classifications of the State's waters.
- G. The proposed activity will not unreasonably cause or increase the flooding of the alteration area or adjacent properties.
- H. The proposed activity is not on or adjacent to a sand dune.
- I. The proposed activity is not on an outstanding river segment as noted in 38 M.R.S. § 480-P.

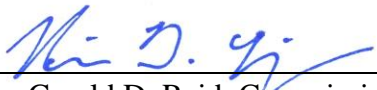
THEREFORE, the Department APPROVES the above noted application of FALLBROOK COMMONS DEVELOPMENT, LLC to construct a 90-bed nursing care center that includes a two-story, 58,197-square foot building with two courtyards and two parking areas as described in Finding 1, SUBJECT TO THE ATTACHED CONDITIONS, and all applicable standards and regulations:

1. Standard Conditions of Approval, a copy attached.
2. The applicant shall take all necessary measures to ensure that its activities or those of its agents do not result in measurable erosion of soil on the site during the construction of the project covered by this approval.
3. Severability. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision, or part thereof, of this License shall not affect the remainder of the provision or any other provisions. This License shall be construed and enforced in all respects as if such invalid or unenforceable provision or part thereof had been omitted.
4. No tree cutting shall be conducted during the period of June 1 and July 31.
5. Prior to the start of construction, the applicant shall submit a payment in the amount of \$165,382.30, payable to "Treasurer, State of Maine", to the attention of the In-Lieu Fee Program Administrator at 17 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333.

THIS APPROVAL DOES NOT CONSTITUTE OR SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY OTHER REQUIRED STATE, FEDERAL OR LOCAL APPROVALS NOR DOES IT VERIFY COMPLIANCE WITH ANY APPLICABLE SHORELAND ZONING ORDINANCES.

DONE AND DATED IN AUGUSTA, MAINE, THIS 4TH DAY OF JUNE, 2020.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

BY: 
For: Gerald D. Reid, Commissioner

PLEASE NOTE THE ATTACHED SHEET FOR GUIDANCE ON APPEAL PROCEDURES.

RLG/L11219HN/ATS#85782

FILED
June 5, 2020
State of Maine
Board of Environmental Protection



Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) Standard Conditions

THE FOLLOWING STANDARD CONDITIONS SHALL APPLY TO ALL PERMITS GRANTED UNDER THE NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT, 38 M.R.S. §§ 480-A ET SEQ., UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFICALLY STATED IN THE PERMIT.

- A. Approval of Variations From Plans. The granting of this permit is dependent upon and limited to the proposals and plans contained in the application and supporting documents submitted and affirmed to by the applicant. Any variation from these plans, proposals, and supporting documents is subject to review and approval prior to implementation.
- B. Compliance With All Applicable Laws. The applicant shall secure and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local licenses, permits, authorizations, conditions, agreements, and orders prior to or during construction and operation, as appropriate.
- C. Erosion Control. The applicant shall take all necessary measures to ensure that his activities or those of his agents do not result in measurable erosion of soils on the site during the construction and operation of the project covered by this Approval.
- D. Compliance With Conditions. Should the project be found, at any time, not to be in compliance with any of the Conditions of this Approval, or should the applicant construct or operate this development in any way other the specified in the Application or Supporting Documents, as modified by the Conditions of this Approval, then the terms of this Approval shall be considered to have been violated.
- E. Time frame for approvals. If construction or operation of the activity is not begun within four years, this permit shall lapse and the applicant shall reapply to the Board for a new permit. The applicant may not begin construction or operation of the activity until a new permit is granted. Reapplications for permits may include information submitted in the initial application by reference. This approval, if construction is begun within the four-year time frame, is valid for seven years. If construction is not completed within the seven-year time frame, the applicant must reapply for, and receive, approval prior to continuing construction.
- F. No Construction Equipment Below High Water. No construction equipment used in the undertaking of an approved activity is allowed below the mean high water line unless otherwise specified by this permit.
- G. Permit Included In Contract Bids. A copy of this permit must be included in or attached to all contract bid specifications for the approved activity.
- H. Permit Shown To Contractor. Work done by a contractor pursuant to this permit shall not begin before the contractor has been shown by the applicant a copy of this permit.



DEP INFORMATION SHEET

Appealing a Department Licensing Decision

Dated: November 2018

Contact: (207) 287-2452

SUMMARY

There are two methods available to an aggrieved person seeking to appeal a licensing decision made by the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Commissioner: (1) an administrative process before the Board of Environmental Protection (Board); or (2) a judicial process before Maine's Superior Court. An aggrieved person seeking review of a licensing decision over which the Board had original jurisdiction may seek judicial review in Maine's Superior Court.

A judicial appeal of final action by the Commissioner or the Board regarding an application for an expedited wind energy development (35-A M.R.S. § 3451(4)) or a general permit for an offshore wind energy demonstration project (38 M.R.S. § 480-HH(1)) or a general permit for a tidal energy demonstration project (38 M.R.S. § 636-A) must be taken to the Supreme Judicial Court sitting as the Law Court.

This information sheet, in conjunction with a review of the statutory and regulatory provisions referred to herein, can help a person to understand his or her rights and obligations in filing an administrative or judicial appeal.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TO THE BOARD

LEGAL REFERENCES

The laws concerning the DEP's *Organization and Powers*, 38 M.R.S. §§ 341-D(4) & 346; the *Maine Administrative Procedure Act*, 5 M.R.S. § 11001; and the DEP's *Rules Concerning the Processing of Applications and Other Administrative Matters* ("Chapter 2"), 06-096 C.M.R. ch. 2.

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD

The Board must receive a written appeal within 30 days of the date on which the Commissioner's decision was filed with the Board. Appeals filed more than 30 calendar days after the date on which the Commissioner's decision was filed with the Board will be dismissed unless notice of the Commissioner's license decision was required to be given to the person filing an appeal (appellant) and the notice was not given as required.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD

Signed original appeal documents must be sent to: Chair, Board of Environmental Protection, 17 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0017. An appeal may be submitted by fax or e-mail if it contains a scanned original signature. It is recommended that a faxed or e-mailed appeal be followed by the submittal of mailed original paper documents. The complete appeal, including any attachments, must be received at DEP's offices in Augusta on or before 5:00 PM on the due date; materials received after 5:00 pm are not considered received until the following day. The risk of material not being received in a timely manner is on the sender, regardless of the method used. The appellant must also send a copy of the appeal documents to the Commissioner of the DEP; the applicant (if the appellant is not the applicant in the license proceeding at issue); and if a hearing was held on the application, any intervenor in that hearing process. All of the information listed in the next section of this information sheet must be submitted at the time the appeal is filed.

INFORMATION APPEAL PAPERWORK MUST CONTAIN

Appeal materials must contain the following information at the time the appeal is submitted:

1. *Aggrieved Status.* The appeal must explain how the appellant has standing to maintain an appeal. This requires an explanation of how the appellant may suffer a particularized injury as a result of the Commissioner's decision.
2. *The findings, conclusions, or conditions objected to or believed to be in error.* The appeal must identify the specific findings of fact, conclusions regarding compliance with the law, license conditions, or other aspects of the written license decision or of the license review process that the appellant objects to or believes to be in error.
3. *The basis of the objections or challenge.* For the objections identified in Item #2, the appeal must state why the appellant believes that the license decision is incorrect and should be modified or reversed. If possible, the appeal should cite specific evidence in the record or specific licensing requirements that the appellant believes were not properly considered or fully addressed.
4. *The remedy sought.* This can range from reversal of the Commissioner's decision on the license or permit to changes in specific permit conditions.
5. *All the matters to be contested.* The Board will limit its consideration to those matters specifically raised in the written notice of appeal.
6. *Request for hearing.* If the appellant wishes the Board to hold a public hearing on the appeal, a request for public hearing must be filed as part of the notice of appeal, and must include an offer of proof in accordance with Chapter 2. The Board will hear the arguments in favor of and in opposition to a hearing on the appeal and the presentations on the merits of an appeal at a regularly scheduled meeting. If the Board decides to hold a public hearing on an appeal, that hearing will then be scheduled for a later date.
7. *New or additional evidence to be offered.* If an appellant wants to provide evidence not previously provided to DEP staff during the DEP's review of the application, the request and the proposed evidence must be submitted with the appeal. The Board may allow new or additional evidence, referred to as supplemental evidence, to be considered in an appeal only under very limited circumstances. The proposed evidence must be relevant and material, and (a) the person seeking to add information to the record must show due diligence in bringing the evidence to the DEP's attention at the earliest possible time in the licensing process; or (b) the evidence itself must be newly discovered and therefore unable to have been presented earlier in the process. Specific requirements for supplemental evidence are found in Chapter 2 § 24.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS IN APPEALING A DECISION TO THE BOARD

1. *Be familiar with all relevant material in the DEP record.* A license application file is public information, subject to any applicable statutory exceptions, and is made easily accessible by the DEP. Upon request, the DEP will make application materials available during normal working hours, provide space to review the file, and provide an opportunity for photocopying materials. There is a charge for copies or copying services.
2. *Be familiar with the regulations and laws under which the application was processed, and the procedural rules governing your appeal.* DEP staff will provide this information on request and answer general questions regarding the appeal process.
3. *The filing of an appeal does not operate as a stay to any decision.* If a license has been granted and it has been appealed, the license normally remains in effect pending the processing of the appeal. Unless a stay of the decision is requested and granted, a license holder may proceed with a project pending the outcome of an appeal, but the license holder runs the risk of the decision being reversed or modified as a result of the appeal.

WHAT TO EXPECT ONCE YOU FILE A TIMELY APPEAL WITH THE BOARD

The Board will formally acknowledge receipt of an appeal, and will provide the name of the DEP project manager assigned to the specific appeal. The notice of appeal, any materials accepted by the Board Chair as supplementary evidence, any materials submitted in response to the appeal, and relevant excerpts from the DEP's application review file will be sent to Board members with a recommended decision from DEP staff. The appellant, the license holder if different from the appellant, and any interested persons are notified in advance of the date set for Board consideration of an appeal or request for public hearing. The appellant and the license holder will have an opportunity to address the Board at the Board meeting. With or without holding a public hearing, the Board may affirm, amend, or reverse a Commissioner decision or remand the matter to the Commissioner for further proceedings. The Board will notify the appellant, the license holder, and interested persons of its decision.

II. JUDICIAL APPEALS

Maine law generally allows aggrieved persons to appeal final Commissioner or Board licensing decisions to Maine's Superior Court (see 38 M.R.S. § 346(1); 06-096 C.M.R. ch. 2; 5 M.R.S. § 11001; and M.R. Civ. P. 80C). A party's appeal must be filed with the Superior Court within 30 days of receipt of notice of the Board's or the Commissioner's decision. For any other person, an appeal must be filed within 40 days of the date the decision was rendered. An appeal to court of a license decision regarding an expedited wind energy development, a general permit for an offshore wind energy demonstration project, or a general permit for a tidal energy demonstration project may only be taken directly to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. See 38 M.R.S. § 346(4).

Maine's Administrative Procedure Act, DEP statutes governing a particular matter, and the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure must be consulted for the substantive and procedural details applicable to judicial appeals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions or need additional information on the appeal process, for administrative appeals contact the Board's Executive Analyst at (207) 287-2452, or for judicial appeals contact the court clerk's office in which your appeal will be filed.

Note: The DEP provides this INFORMATION SHEET for general guidance only; it is not intended for use as a legal reference. Maine law governs an appellant's rights.

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