

Blue Hill Planning Board
January 8th, 2025 – Meeting Minutes

Location

18 Union Street Blue Hill, Maine

Attendance

Present: Matthew Martin (Vice Chair), Scott Blanchard, Diana Page, Marcia McKeague, Emily Cushman, Gavin Riggall

Public: See attached sign-in sheet

The meeting began at 5:30pm and a quorum was recognized - 6 board members were present

1. **Approval of November 13th, 2024 minutes**– Diana motioned to approved the minutes of the November 13th meeting. Scott seconded. Approved 5-0, 1 abstained (Emily).

New Business:

1. **Briefing on Public Comment protocol** – Matthew noted that the “Public Comment” item has been removed from the Planning Board meeting agenda. He clarified that general public *comment* about town-related issues is meant for Select Board meetings rather than Planning Board meetings. Public *hearings* provide the forum for people to voice their opinions/concerns regarding a specific project with an application before the Planning Board.
2. **Aquaculture Ordinance Proposal** – Bailey Bowden of Protect Maine’s Fishing Heritage Foundation raised concerns about the negative environmental and economic impacts of larger-scale aquaculture development in the state. He explained that the Maine Department of Marine Resources has authority over aquaculture leases, but that municipalities can regulate aquaculture activity within their boundaries. He provided the Planning board with a model ordinance for consideration.

Business:

1. **Salt Pond Subdivision Application – Third Party Review Material Discussion** – The Town of Blue Hill hired Stillwater Environmental Engineering (SEE) to conduct a site visit and third-party review of the Salt Pond subdivision proposal. It also received some input from state agencies on the issues of stormwater permitting, groundwater availability, and pesticide residues. The Board addressed each of the topic areas below, discussing whether any outstanding questions or concerns were sufficiently addressed by this third-party input, and identifying any remaining tasks for the Applicant/further third-party review entities.
 - a. Sufficient Water – The Board agreed with SEE’s comment that the groundwater availability calculations be revised to account for the impervious cover of the final, fully built-out site. The Board also requested that the Applicant adjust the calculations to reflect the worst-case scenario based on peak water usage for all nine homes at the same time, including

landscaping usage (as suggested in a letter the Board received from from Alex Pugh, a hydrogeologist with the state).

- b. Erosion – SEE identified a number of poorly stabilized drainage channels at the site and noted that the issue is likely to worsen with increased impervious surface and the limited stormwater management proposed. The Applicant noted that they share those concerns, and asked if they could revise the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan to enhance the stabilization design. The Board agreed, noting that this revised plan should also be reviewed by SEE.
- c. Sewage Disposal – The Board agreed with SEE’s assessment that the application adequately addresses this issue, as long as the disposal systems are designed and constructed following Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules. The Board expects that this will be the case.
- d. Groundwater –
 - o Pesticides – Marcia shared that she received an email from Alexander Peacock, Director of the Maine Board of Pesticides Control, who said that most pesticides (including Velpar) degrade after two or three years and are unlikely to cause issues at this site. The Applicant suggested that the Board make it a condition of approval that all well water be tested upon drilling, and mitigated as appropriate.
 - o Saltwater Intrusion – Matt noted that experts have communicated that it is extremely difficult to determine whether there will be saltwater intrusion in the new wells. Marcia suggested the Board acquire an email attesting to this fact for the record. The Board determined that any saltwater intrusion issues would be the responsibility of future property owners to mitigate.
- e. Stormwater – SEE notes that the submitted application does not account for final impervious surface in the project’s post-development state and that if it does, the project “would require a full Chapter 500 Permit application” through the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The Board agreed that, because it must consider the post-development state of the project in evaluating stormwater, it is appropriate for SEE to review it against those standards during its next review. Marcia noted that many of the issues identified are likely to be addressed in the revised Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan.
- f. Blasting – The Applicant noted that, though Blue Hill does not have a blasting ordinance, they will include a summary of the practices they plan to follow in the application update.

Matthew noted that, once all the new materials are submitted, there will be a third public hearing for this project focusing on new information only.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Next Meeting: February 12th, 2025.

Signed:



Date:

2-12-25