



City of Keene, New Hampshire

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, November 15, 2021

4:30 PM

City Council Chambers

Commission Members

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair
Eloise Clark, Vice Chair
Kenneth Bergman
Art Walker
Andrew Madison

Councilor Robert Williams
Brian Reilly, Alternate
Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate
Steven Bill, Alternate
John Therriault, Alternate

SITE VISIT AT 3:30 PM. MEET AT 472 WINCHESTER ST THE PROPOSED UHAUL SITE

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 18, 2021
3. Applications:
 - a. Planning Board referral -- Surface Water Protection Conditional Use Permit Application – Eversource -- A152 and T198 Transmission Line Pole Replacement Project
 - b. Planning Board referral -- Surface Water Protection Conditional Use Permit Application – U-Haul of South Keene Site Plan Review
4. Informational
 - a. Subcommittee reports
 - Outreach Subcommittee
 - Arm Fund Subcommittee
 - Greater Goose Pond Stewardship Subcommittee
5. Discussion Items
 - a. Invasive Species November 11 event
 - b. Summit Road/Summit Ridge Drive ponding
 - c. See-Click-Fix
6. New or Other Business
7. Adjournment – Next meeting date **Monday, December 20, 2021**

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 CONSERVATION COMMISSION
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Monday, October 18, 2021

4:30 PM

Council Chambers,
City Hall/via Zoom

Members Present:

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair
Eloise Clark, Vice Chair
Councilor Robert Williams
Councilor Andrew Madison
Art Walker
Ken Bergman
Thomas Haynes, Alternate
Steven Bill, Alternate (Arrived Late)
John Therriault, Alternate

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb, Community Development
Director/Assistant City Manager
Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant

Members Not Present:

Brian Reilly, Alternate

8 **1) Call to Order**

9
10 Chair Von Plinsky called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM.

11
12 **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 20, 2021**

13
14 Councilor Madison moved to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2021 meeting, which
15 Mr. Bergman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

16
17 **3) Applications**

18 **A) Planning Board Referral – Surface Water Protection Conditional Use Permit**
19 **Application – Eversource**
20

21 Mr. Lamb introduced the application that was referred to the Conservation Commission for
22 comments by the Planning Board as a part of the Surface Water Protection Ordinance process
23 required for Conditional Use Permits. This is like other Eversource submissions for transmission
24 line pole replacement projects. He introduced Lindsey White of GZA Geoenvironmental and
25 Ashley Ruprecht of Eversource.
26

27 Ms. White described the upcoming pole replacement project on the W-110 distribution line.
28 Eversource seeks to replace two existing poles (#178 and #179) that were found to have defects,
29 as is normal, and so they should be replaced. Access is proposed from an existing driveway off
30 Chesterfield Road and then through an existing breach in a stonewall that crews would utilize.
31 The buffer would be off the wetland and crews would look to do temporary impacts in the buffer
32 and temporary impacts in the wetland using timber matting to avoid wetland compaction. Similar
33 to applications past in the buffer, the proposal is to do full restoration for any impacts. Work is
34 proposed later this fall of 2021 under more favorable conditions, and access will require those
35 temporary impact to the Surface Water Protection District. Ms. White and Ms. Ruprecht attended
36 the pre-submission meeting on September 8 and no concerns arose through the Planning Board,
37 so no revised application or plans were submitted.

38
39 Chair Von Plinsky visited the site and was glad it was only those two poles and not others further
40 up the line, for which he would be concerned about impacts traversing the wetland. He saw no
41 problems.

42
43 Mr. Therriault noted that there would not be much time left in growing season when the
44 restoration is planned. Ms. White said the area would be stabilized at that point. Ms. Ruprecht
45 said seeds would be placed and they would check back in the spring to ensure regrowth. The
46 Chairman asked if it was standard procedure to check after the winter season. Ms. Ruprecht said
47 that is the hope. Mr. Therriault asked what the seed mix is. Ms. White said that it is the standard
48 wetland seed mix. Ms. Ruprecht said that in wetlands, it is usually from NE Wetland Plants Inc.
49 of MA that uses native seed mixes, and in the buffer and upland areas, it is usually a wildflower
50 mix, but Ms. Ruprecht said that if those are out of stock there are other options with similar
51 species to not limit contractors to a particular brand. Mr. Therriault was interested in reviewing
52 the intended seed mix. As a Bee City USA, the Chairman urged the use of a native pollinator
53 species friendly seed mix regardless of the type. Ms. White said the typical wildflower mix they
54 use on other projects meets that requirement. Ms. White will forward the seed mix specifications.

55
56 Mr. Bill asked how long the project would take once started. Ms. Ruprecht replied a few weeks.
57 Mr. Bill asked if there would be geotechnical material under the gravel placed for machinery
58 travel through the area. Ms. Ruprecht said there would be no material under the gravel, which
59 would not be placed within the wetland or the buffer. When inventorying rare things in the
60 project area, Mr. Bill asked whether that included plant species. Ms. Ruprecht replied in the
61 affirmative, stating that they use the National Heritage Bureau data checklist of rare, threatened,
62 and endangered plants and animals. Ms. White said the State Wetland Permit application for this
63 project was approved already, which is a statutory permit by notification (NHDES File #2020-
64 03226).

65
66 Mr. Bergman noted that the application refers to a potential vernal pool in the area. When the
67 applicants check on the regrowth in the spring, he asked whether they could check for
68 verification of the pool. Ms. White said that vernal pool season is April—June, so it depends on
69 the timing. Ms. Ruprecht said that GZA Geoenvironmental is not responsible for the restoration

70 work, so the vernal pool is not in their purview. Mr. Bergman asked if this was a right-of-way on
71 private property and Ms. Ruprecht said there is an underlying property owner and Eversource
72 has an easement on the property.

73

74 The Chairman thanked Ms. White and Ms. Ruprecht for their presentation and the Commission
75 would await the seed mix details. The Commission recommendation would be presented to the
76 Planning Board at their October 25 meeting.

77

78 The Chairman moved to recommend that the Planning Board ask the applicant to provide the
79 seed mix information and that it be native pollinator friendly, which Councilor Madison
80 seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

81

82 **4) Informational**

83 **A) Subcommittee Reports**

84 **i) *Outreach Subcommittee***

85

86 The Subcommittee did not meet during the previous month, but they hope to in November. The
87 group would be attending Mr. Bill's guided walk at Goose Pond on Saturday, October 23. Vice
88 Chair Clark reported that she continues sending Nature Nuggets to Ms. Marcou and Mr.
89 Bohannon. She has been taking a different approach by walking City properties and natural sites
90 and interpreting them so people can use the Nuggets as a self-guided nature walk. She would
91 also attend Mr. Bill's tour and create a Nature Nugget about it. She has done some in Robin
92 Hood Park already. The Chairman's friends in other city planning departments are intrigued by
93 the Nature Nuggets and the idea is spreading in New England.

94

95 **ii) *ARM Fund Subcommittee***

96

97 The Chairman recalled that this Subcommittee had not met in some time and there was nothing
98 to report. Mr. Bergman asked if there was news from the Monadnock Conservancy and the
99 Chairman said he spoke with them, and they said to "hold tight". He said that could be
100 interpreted in different ways and he left it at that for the time being.

101

102 **iii) *Greater Goose Pond Stewardship Committee***

103

104 Mr. Haynes reported that the Subcommittee met on October 8, and they have been honing
105 priorities to move forward. He said that unsurprisingly, trails and accompanying signage, kiosks,
106 etc., arose as the highest priorities and would be the Subcommittee's initial focus, with a goal to
107 present a plan to Parks and Recreation by mid-winter to begin looking for funding and hopefully
108 start implementation in summer of 2022. The Subcommittee is currently reviewing the extensive
109 trails section in the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Plan to help guide this process and
110 identifying work priorities. The Subcommittee would meet next on Friday, November 12 at 8:30
111 AM in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at City Hall.

112

113 Mr. Lamb added that this is also the time when Departments are working on their Capital
114 Improvement Plans (CIP) and the Subcommittee's work is being reflected in proposals from Mr.
115 Bohannon's office for trail kiosks, etc., which could begin the grants-seeking process. He wanted
116 the Commission to know that Staff is trying to move as much as they can that would turn into a
117 list of City investments in trails improvements into the CIP, so they get further discussion before
118 City Council and otherwise.

119

120 **5) Discussion Items**

121 **A) Invasive Species – See-Click-Fix**

122

123 The Chairman thanked Councilor Williams for leading the Japanese knotweed pull in Robin
124 Hood Park on October 11. The Chairman was grateful to the City for hauling away the 15 full
125 bags collected. He recalled that knotweed often requires more than one pull, but said there were
126 great efforts pulling the whole root systems to avoid regrowth. He said it was a good time and
127 that the invasives volunteers are increasing. Councilor Williams said there was interest in another
128 event in November and he suggested Veterans Day, Monday, November 11 but he had yet to
129 scout a location or species of focus; his concern with glossy buckthorn was growing and there is
130 a lot around Wheelock Park. He said there was a lot of Japanese barberries identified during the
131 knotweed pull as well. He will scout the next location and share the details with the Commission
132 via Ms. Marcou.

133

134 At the last meeting, Mr. Bergman initiated the concept of tracking invasive species locations
135 reported by the public on City-owned lands with the See-Click-Fix app. The app turns public-
136 reported concerns (with locations and/or photos) into Public Works Department or Parks and
137 Recreation work orders that are often resolved within 48 hours in his experience (such as a
138 vandalized memorial bench he reported recently), depending on the severity. Mr. Lamb recalled
139 that the question was how to add these invasive sightings to See-Click-Fix without alerting the
140 Public Works Department or Parks and Recreation Staff to act. He said the Public Works
141 Department was amenable to this idea and these invasive locations would be documented as an
142 item and location in their database for future reporting purposes (like a bench), while leaving it
143 out of the work order response process. The Commission would be able to access these details
144 periodically or biannually/annual. The Public Works Department is working-out the final details
145 but there was no reason to delay the process and Mr. Lamb would report back with a kickoff date
146 hopefully by the next meeting.

147

148 The Chairman was excited with this news, which would make scouting locations for future
149 invasive pulls much easier. Mr. Bergman uses the app regularly but still has some challenges
150 with pinning an exact location or he cannot upload a photo until he is back home; some parts are
151 confusing, and he asked for Staff guidance, especially on how to properly report invasive
152 species. Mr. Lamb thought it was a good observation and that someone from the Public Works
153 Department could easily come and demonstrate the app. He agreed that locations can be
154 challenging sometimes because the app is built on a database of addresses, and it might be hard
155 to specify somewhere on a trail. Mr. Bergman wondered if the system logged photo geotag data

156 and Mr. Lamb was unsure. Mr. Bergman asked if this was limited to public property. Mr. Lamb
157 did not have a specific answer but said that any time private property is under discussion, it must
158 be at minimum viewed from the public right-of-way; it is inappropriate to walk on any private
159 property to document these things, but Mr. Lamb thought that things seen from the right-of-way
160 could be reported and the response would be different. The Chairman thought this was
161 comparable to reporting a downed power line you see on someone's property from the right-of-
162 way. Mr. Lamb does not want this to turn into a public shaming tool and suggested that if
163 Commissioners have neighbors with invasives in their yards, for example, that they call and talk
164 to them. He also does not want the public to feel like they might be on a collected list and he
165 thinks this is a better solution for public invasive species locations.

166
167 Councilor Williams thought this could act as an early warning system for species like Japanese
168 stiltgrass, which he hopes to mitigate early if it arrives in Keene. The Chairman thinks the trick
169 will be word of mouth to qualified individuals for reliable observations and reporting.

170

171 **B) Summit Road/Summit Ridge Drive Ponding**

172

173 Mr. Bergman recalled this topic he initiated at the last meeting. He said that Summit Ridge Drive
174 connects Summit Road (in west Keene roughly parallel to RT-12) with Skyline Drive, which he
175 said was an approximately 30-year-old residential neighborhood, and there are hills further to the
176 west. He said that all this area drains through a property now owned by C & S Wholesale
177 Grocers. He has noticed over the last few years that if leaving Summit Road and turning left
178 heading westward that within 100 yards, there is a pond on the left with various ducks and
179 waterfowl; at times and on the right, where it seemed to be draining, there was a small brook. He
180 did not see any sedges at the brook though there might have been and he was unsure whether
181 there was wetland vegetation; it was like a small grassy meadow with a small brook running
182 through it. He said that the roadway floods when it rains with some frequency and at times with
183 quite deep water. He did not remember this being the case many years ago, so he was curious,
184 knowing there would not have been permitting for a paved road in a wetland without special
185 exemption, and he hoped to learn the history. Then he encountered a crew of many City of
186 Keene vehicles at the site approximately one week before this meeting with heavy equipment
187 and the pond was drained by a pump; leaving a muddy bottom. He spoke to the foreman, who
188 showed Mr. Bergman around and said they did not believe it was a wetland before the road was
189 constructed but that drainage was progressively blocked from going into the culvert under
190 Summit Road to the east, and water was building during rainstorms and breaching the road to
191 another property across Summit Ridge Drive. He saw them creating a drainage channel in the
192 low area to carry water to the culvert under Summit Road in a lower area. The foreman was
193 hopeful this would fix the problem.

194

195 Mr. Lamb said that Mr. Bergman accurately described the situation. Mr. Lamb was not yet able
196 to contact the City Engineer and was unaware of this ongoing work. He said this had been an
197 issue long enough that the road is deteriorating, as is the culvert under the roadway meant to
198 carry drainage to Dickinson Brook. However, Mr. Lamb said the obstruction is on private

199 property and so the City has no control over fixing blockages. He was unaware the current
200 solution Mr. Bergman described had been reached. He said this was likely a part of the former
201 tax ditch system that collected agricultural drainage. In the past, the City worked with property
202 owners' permission on the side of the road Mr. Bergman observed to remove beaver dams, but
203 that this was not the same; in this case, there appeared to be an accumulation of sediment over
204 time so the drain way could not work as intended. He said the roadway was built with a culvert
205 crossing over a stream that he assumes that was accomplished with proper wetland permitting,
206 though it might not have come through the Conservation Commission process if it were a
207 maintenance issue. Mr. Lamb offered to follow-up and get more details before the next meeting,
208 which the Chairman requested. Mr. Lamb will have more information at the next meeting. The
209 Chairman asked the standard right-of-way width on City roads like this one. Mr. Lamb said the
210 modern standard for residential streets it is 50'—55' but on older roads as narrow as 32.5 feet.

211

212 Mr. Bergman said the work to fix the issue he observed was extensive. Mr. Bergman recalled the
213 person he understood to be the foreman saying it was private property and he was unsure why
214 the work was occurring but that there had been no objections.

215

216 **6) New or Other Business**

217

218 Vice Chair Clark reminded everyone that the NH Association of Conservation Commissions
219 annual meeting would be November 6 via Zoom. The cost for Commissioners to attend is \$35
220 and in the past the Commission budget has paid for members to attend, which she assumed
221 would be the case again, and the Chairman confirmed. Members should alert Ms. Marcou if they
222 want to attend. Vice Chair Clark said that past meetings have been very informative on various
223 topics.

224

225 Vice Chair Clark asked provided an update on the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee's
226 (ARLAC) revised Corridor Management Plan. Henry Underwood of Southwest Regional
227 Planning Commission created a citizen science app with a view of the corridor. Her fellow
228 ARLAC Keene representative, Jim Holly, found a discouraging amount of invasives in the
229 corridor from the Surry town line at the golf course to Cheshire Medical Center, including an
230 understory of glossy buckthorn throughout. She suggested that Councilor Williams contact the
231 Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board about pulling glossy buckthorn in the area. The Chairman
232 asked if the app is open to the public so the Commission could spread the word; the Vice Chair
233 would find out. Vice Chair Clark hopes to have all data by the November meeting. Lisa Murphy
234 from the Southwest Regional Planning Commission is writing the plan. Mr. Bill asked about
235 erosion issues identified and the Vice Chair said there were no significant problems observed
236 beyond the natural erosion process.

237

238 Mr. Bergman recalled workshops a few years ago on options for the West Street Dam and
239 wondered if there was an update. Mr. Lamb did not have an update but could present it at the
240 next meeting. The Chairman said that at some point, the dam would make the decision and
241 hopefully it was not yet at that point. Mr. Lamb said the City had repaired almost all dams the

242 State ordered letters of deficiency on and since the West Street dam is low hazard, the City had
243 not heard from the State in a while about it.

244

245 7) **Adjournment – Next Meeting Date: Monday, November 15, 2021**

246

247 The Chairman would not be present at the November meeting and the Vice Chair would act as
248 Chair. There being no further business, Chair Von Plinsky adjourned the meeting at 5:20 PM.

249

250 Respectfully submitted by,
251 Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
252 October 21, 2021

253

254 Reviewed and edited by,
255 Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant
256 October 21, 2021

257 Reviewed and edited by,
258 Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community Development Dir.
259 November 8, 2021

260



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November 10, 2021
File No. 04.0190999.60

City of Keene
Planning Board
Attn: Pamela Russell Slack, Chair
3 Washington Street
Keene, New Hampshire 03431

Re: Conditional Use Permit Application
Eversource Energy
2021 A152 and T198 Transmission Line Structure Replacement Project
Keene, New Hampshire

Dear Chair Russell Slack:

This letter transmits a Conditional Use Permit Application on behalf of Public Service Company of New Hampshire doing business as Eversource Energy (Eversource), for the A152 and T198 Transmission Line Structure Replacement Project (see attached **Figure 1, Locus Plan**). On behalf of Eversource, GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. (GZA) is requesting consideration of a Conditional Use Permit Application for required wetland and upland buffer impacts within the City of Keene Surface Water Protection Overlay District.

The proposed project includes the replacement of 28 existing utility structures along the existing A152 and T198 Transmission Line in Keene, New Hampshire, including 20 structures on the A152 Line and eight structures on the T198 Line. Additionally, Optical Ground Wire (OPGW) is proposed to be installed to replace existing static wire on the T198 Transmission Line which will improve the transmission line by serving to shield conduct wires below it from lightning. The subject section of A152 and T198 Transmission Line ROW has a width of approximately 200 feet. The Site is located in a primarily commercialized area of Keene within a cleared ROW. Natural cover within the ROW includes upland shrublands and wetland emergent and scrub-shrub habitats.

The proposed project requires approximately 128,173 sq. ft. of temporary wetland impact and approximately 166,919 sq. ft. of temporary buffer impact in uplands for access and work pad placement. See **Figure 2 – Access and Permitting Plans** for a depiction of the proposed project and wetland buffer impacts.



The proposed project is necessary in order to support current and future electricity demands in the region. The structure replacements were selected based on inspection of the transmission line. It was determined that these structures contain defects must be replaced in order to meet current electrical standards. The existing wood structures will be replaced with weathered steel structures in order to increase the long-term reliability of the line. There are no proposed expansions to the ROW or construction of new lines associated with this project.

Wetlands were confirmed by GZA in October 2021 in accordance with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Wetlands Delineation Manual using the Routine Determinations Method, and the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual as required by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Wetlands Bureau and the ACOE. At the time of delineation GZA also photographed resources and recorded data relevant to functions and values provided by these natural resources within the right-of-way (ROW) utilizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Highway Methodology. GZA classified wetlands in accordance with the "Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of United States" (Federal Geographic Committee, 2013). The area of evaluation included approximately 1.5 miles of ROW.

In accordance with Article 11 of the Keene Land Use Code, a conditional use permit (CUP) issued by the Planning Board shall be required for a proposed use listed in Article 11.6.1 when the proposed use is located on land within the Surface Water Overlay Protection District. The proposed A152 and T198 Transmission Line Replacement Project includes the installation of replacement structures and creation and/or improvement of existing dirt/gravel access roads and work pads in the Surface Water Overlay Protection District, and would thus fall under 11.6.1 (a)(1) "*Construction of a new structure or expansion of an existing structure that expands the footprint of that structure within the Surface Water Protection Overlay District.*," and 11.6.1 (a)(3) "*Construction of new roads, driveways for non-residential uses, and parking lots within the Surface Water Protection Overlay District.*" In accordance with the Surface Water Protection Conditional Use Permit (SWP CUP) Application form, the following criteria are addressed below.

- A. *Why proposed use or activity cannot be placed outside of Overlay District.*** The proposed work area is located within the existing cleared A152 and T198 Transmission Line ROW, which is generally bordered by commercial and residential properties and forest communities. Due to these site constraints and existing structure locations, some travel through and work pad placement in the Surface Water Overlay District is required. Wherever possible, structure replacements, work pads, and access roads are proposed to be outside of wetlands.
- B. *How encroachment into buffer zone has been minimized to maximum extent possible.*** The project area is an existing ROW and therefore there are inherent limitations to significant changes in work locations. However, Eversource and the project team analyzed alternative structure replacement locations and access routes in order to minimize buffer impacts to the extent practicable. Where possible, access is designed at existing trails in the ROW. To the extent practicable, buffer zone impacts were avoided by a careful design of the project. Impacts were minimized to the extent practicable by utilizing existing access roads and avoiding permanent impacts to wetlands by placing structures outside of the wetland and buffer zone where possible. Best Management Practices (BMP) will be implemented along work areas in the ROW to reduce/limit potential effects.



- C. *How proposed use was designed to avoid adverse impacts to surface water resources.*** The least impacting alternative is to utilize the existing Eversource ROW to the greatest extent possible, which was accomplished by utilizing an existing ROW. The project has been designed to utilize existing access routes along the ROW, where possible, to prevent impacts to wetlands. Where temporary wetland impacts are proposed, the contractor will use wetland matting to minimize impacts. Disturbed wetland and upland areas will be graded and seeded with an appropriate native seed mix, as necessary. The utility structures have been sited to avoid direct impacts to wetlands to the extent practicable.
- D. *How the buffer will be maintained in a natural state.*** The proposed project will maintain the natural state of surface water buffers to the extent practicable. The majority of proposed impact is temporary, and permanent impact is limited to a small area associated with the installation of a utility structure, which is a replacement structure. The access road installed within the surface water buffer shall be restored by removing gravel temporarily placed for access and work pads. In addition, existing topsoil will be regraded to original contours to the greatest extent practicable. Seed and mulch will be applied to promote vegetation growth of disturbed areas. During construction, appropriate perimeter controls (straw wattle, silt fence, etc.) will be implemented. In addition, best management practices such as stabilized construction entrances, check dams, water bars, sediment traps, and restoration methods such as seeding with native seed mixes, and mulching, as necessary, will be utilized to prevent sedimentation to surface waters and wetlands within the project area, and promote soil stabilization. The project includes the preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and associated erosion control monitoring during and after construction, to monitor the progress of restoration. An environmental monitor will be retained to provide erosion control monitoring and advise Eversource on the installation and maintenance of erosion control measures during construction and restoration.
- E. *Whether or not the encroachment result in an adverse impact on the surface water resource.*** The project area is located in the Middle Ashuelot River watershed. The majority of wetlands in the ROW are large scrub-shrub and scrub-shrub/emergent systems. Wetlands in the project area typically drain in an easterly direction into the Ashuelot River, which ultimately drains to the Connecticut River. The proposed impacts for access roads within the Surface Water Protection District is temporary and will be restored upon completion of work. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the encroachment will result in an adverse impact on the surface water resource.
- F. *Extent to which buffer serves as wildlife habitat.*** The buffers in the proposed work area are located within the existing cleared Eversource ROW and are scrub-shrub/early successional dominated due to vegetation maintenance practices. This cover type provides wildlife habitat for a variety of early to mid-successional bird, mammal, amphibian, and reptile species. The project is not converting any large cover type areas and is in an existing maintained ROW. As a result, the project is not expected to impact wildlife utilization in the larger landscape. The ROW will continue to provide early to mid-successional habitat to a variety of wildlife. Early successional habitat provides important breeding, foraging, and overwintering habitat to a variety of declining songbird species. As a result, the ROW will continue to provide important habitat components. GZA has completed correspondence with the Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) and New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG) regarding the presence of rare, threatened and endangered species within the vicinity of the proposed project.



The project will include rare species BMPs as requested by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG). Prior to daily construction activities, timber matting will be reviewed by a monitor trained in wildlife identification and observed turtles and snakes will be safely relocated out of the active work zone, in similar nearby habitat. Observed turtles and snakes will be moved off of construction access roads to limit and prevent mortality to turtles and snakes during construction and will be reported to NHFG. Erosion control matting, if utilized, will consist of jute matting. Matting with plastic mesh will be avoided to limit unintentional mortality to snakes. In addition, common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) was identified within the vicinity of the project site. Common nighthawks are ground nesting birds that typically nest in exposed gravelly soils. GZA has coordinated with NHB and NHFG and photos of common nighthawk will be incorporated into construction plans. Observations of common nighthawk on the project site will be reported to New Hampshire Fish and Game. At the conclusion of the project, a summary report of any rare species observations will be provided to the NHFG Nongame Program.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Lindsey White at 603-232-8753 or at lindsey.white@gza.com.

Very truly yours,

GZA GEOENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

Lindsey White, CPSS
Project Manager

Deborah M. Zarta Gier, CNRP
Consultant/Reviewer

Tracy L. Tarr, CWS, CESSWI
Associate Principal

LEW/TLT/DMZ

Attachments: Conditional Use Permit Application Form
List of Abutters
Photo Log
Figure 1 – Locus Plan
Figure 2 – Access and Permitting Plans
Application Fee



Photographic Log



Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: T198 and A152 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 1	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: Southwest			
Description: View of T198 Structure 153 to be replaced.			

Photo No. 2	Date: 10/4/20		
Direction Photo Taken: South			
Description: View of proposed access for T198 Structure 152 (left) and A152 Structure 2 (Right).			



Photographic Log

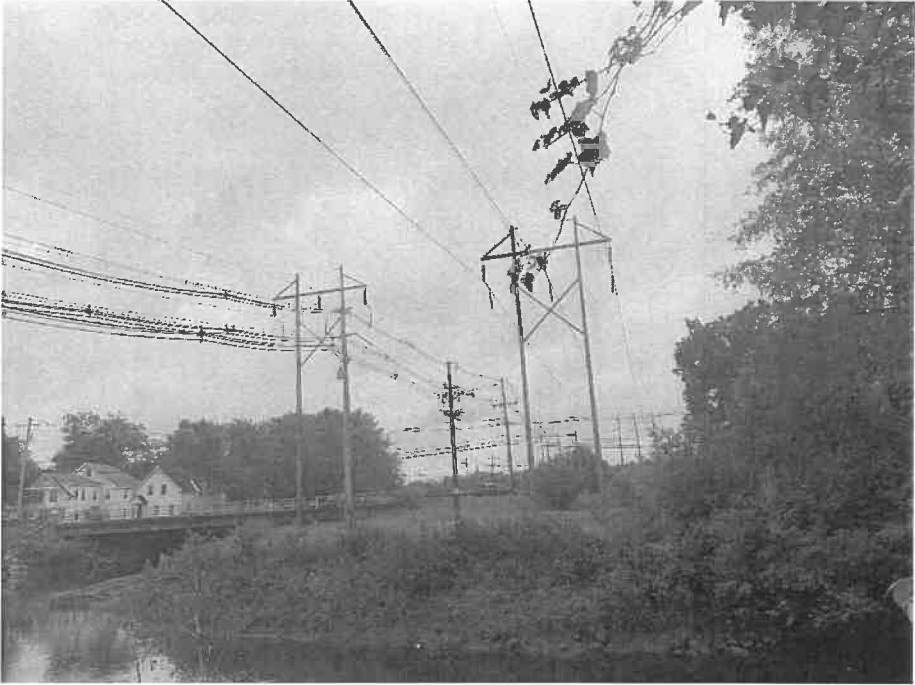
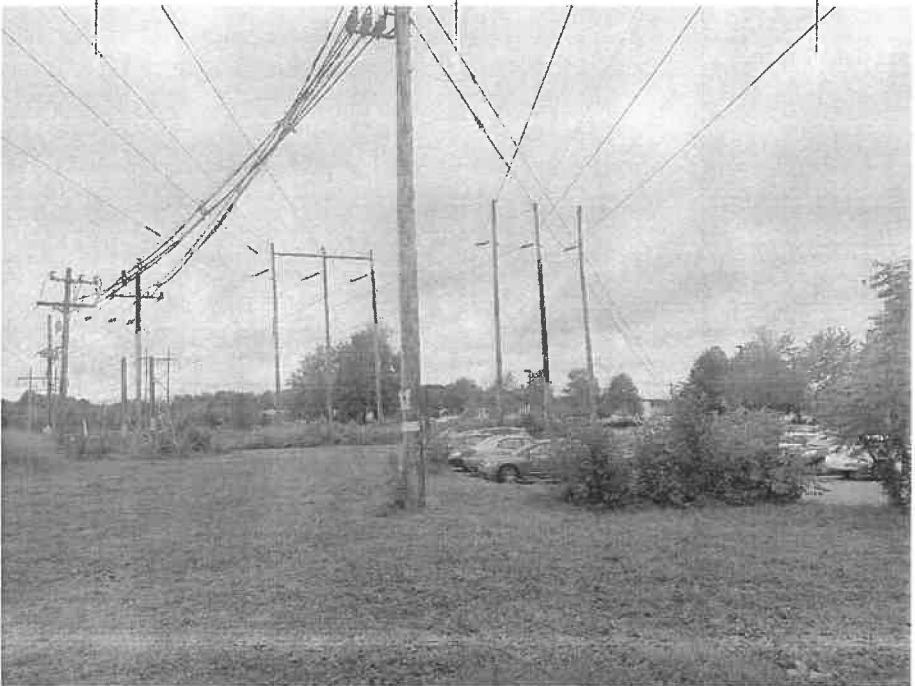
Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: T198 and A152 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 3	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: Southeast			
Description: View of Wetland KW-4 and T198 Structure 151 (left) and A152 Structure 3 (Right) to be replaced.			

Photo No. 4	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: South			
Description: View of T198 Structure 150 (left) and A152 Structure 4 (Right) to be replaced.			



Photographic Log



Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: T198 and A152 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 5	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: Northwest			
Description: View of wetland KW-7 and A152 Structure 5 to be replaced.			

Photo No. 6	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: Northwest			
Description: View of Wetland KW-9 and T198 Structure 147 to be replaced.			



Photographic Log



Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: T198 and A152 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 7	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: Southeast			
Description: View of Wetland KW-11 and A152 Structure 8 to be replaced.			

Photo No. 8	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: North			
Description: View of proposed access towards A152 Structure 9 to be replaced within Wetland KW-11.			



Photographic Log




Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: T198 and A152 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 9	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: North			
Description: View of A152 Structure 10 to be replaced within Wetland KW-12.			

Photo No. 10	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: Southeast			
Description: View of Wetland KW-12 and A152 Structure 11 to be replaced.			



Photographic Log

Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: D108 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 11	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: Northwest			
Description: View of Wetland KW-12 and A152 Structure 13 (left) to be replaced and T198 Structure 141 (right).			

Photo No. 12	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: North			
Description: View of proposed work area at A152 Structure 16 to be replaced.			



Photographic Log



Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: D108 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 13	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: South			
Description: View of Wetland KW-14 and A152 Structure 17 (right) to be replaced and T198 Structure 137 (left).			

Photo No. 14	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: North			
Description: View of Wetland KW-15 and A152 Structure 18 (left) to be replaced and T198 Structure 135 (right).			



Photographic Log



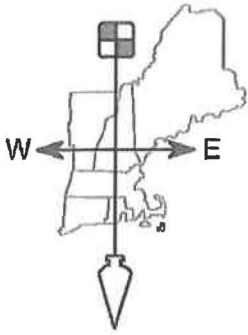
Client Name: Eversource Energy		Site Location: D108 Transmission Line Keene, New Hampshire	Project No. 04.0190999.60
Photo No. 15	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: South			
Description: View of Wetland KW-15 and A152 Structure 19 (right) to be replaced and T198 Structure 134 (left).			

Photo No. 16	Date: 10/4/21		
Direction Photo Taken: South			
Description: View of Wetland KW-15 and A152 Structure 20 (right) to be replaced and T198 Structure 133 (left).			

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Conditional Use Application Narrative

U-HAUL OF SOUTH KEENE
Tax Map Parcel 115-019 & 20
472 Winchester Street
Keene, New Hampshire

October 28, 2021

Project Narrative:

Fieldstone Land Consultants, on behalf of Amerco Real Estate Company, is submitting this application in conjunction with the Site Plan approval, for the Conditional Use within a surface water buffer. The overall proposal consists of renovating two existing buildings, constructing one new building, setting pre-fabricated self-storage units, and expanding parking to the southern side of the buildings. The site will be utilized as a U-Haul truck rental business, and a self-storage facility with both climate-controlled and dry storage units. As part of the redevelopment, a driveway will be constructed to access all sides of the building. The proposed driveway around the southwestern corner of the building will encroach into the 30' surface water buffer, based on the Commerce Limited (CL) Zoning requirements.

The southern border of the property is defined by the Ash Swamp Brook. The majority of the site is located within the 100-year floodplain, with the 100-year flood elevation at 471.2 feet. The proposed building, display area, rear parking and storage unit areas all fall within the Floodplain. The fill required to develop these areas will be offset by a flood compensatory storage area. This was done along the southern end of the property and provides a total volume of compensation to offset the volume of fill in the floodplain. The Floodway also crosses the south-southwest border of the property as depicted on the plans. There is no fill proposed within the floodway, although there is flood compensation cut proposed within the Floodway. A portion of the site is also in the City's Surface Water Overlay Protection District with a 30' buffer requirement. The work proposed within the buffer is for floodplain compensatory storage grading, as allowed under Section 11.5.L of the Land Development Code, and the paved driveway around the southwest corner of the existing building. The proposed driveway is 24' in width and will encroach the 30' buffer by 25' at the greatest extent into the buffer. The buffer is based on 30' from the delineated wetland line, which is approximately the top of the stream bank.

The section of driveway adjacent to the surface water buffer will be curbed to prevent runoff and sediment from the pavement from entering the surface water resource. Erosion and sediment controls are specified on the Grading Plan and Erosion Control Details. These will consist of silt fence along the work limit and silt socks installed in nearby catch basins. All catch basins will have deep sumps and oil/debris separator hoods installed as a pretreatment method. The slopes for the flood compensation area will have erosion control matting installed, as the slopes are designed at 2:1.

The current vegetation along the bank of the brook will be maintained in a natural state. The floodplain compensation area will be seeded and allowed to grow into a natural state. Only woody vegetation and small trees will be trimmed at the drainage structures, such as the overflow spillway, and rip rap aprons. Ultimately this area will become a natural buffer and wildlife habitat adjacent to the Ash Swamp Brook.

Below is an outline of the LDC permit standards, followed by the permit criteria and how each item has been addressed.

LDC Section 11.6.2: Conditional Use Permit Standards:

A. The proposed use cannot be located in a manner to avoid encroachment:

Due to the proximity of the existing building to the Ash Swamp Brook the 30' overlay buffer restricts the use around the southwest corner of the building. The driveway is being proposed for fire truck access to all sides of the building, along with providing access to the rear parking lot. If the driveway cannot be placed within the buffer, there would be a dead end to the display area and rear parking lot. The fire truck access would be eliminated, forcing emergency vehicles to back up and go around the entire site to reach the rear of the buildings.

B. Encroachment into the buffer area has been minimized: The driveway width starts at the building wall and is wide enough for fire truck access and vehicle passage.

C. The nature, design, siting, and scale of the proposed use will avoid the potential for adverse impacts to the surface water resource: The paved driveway will be curbed along the southern side to collect stormwater runoff and direct it away from the bank of the brook. The catch basins on site will have oil/debris hoods installed and deep sumps to collect sediment.

D. The surface water buffer area shall be left in a natural state: The encroachment area will be permanently altered; however, the remaining buffer area will have existing vegetation. The floodplain compensation area will be an upland buffer to the water resource, and natural vegetation will grow into this area.

E. The Planning Board may consider the following:

1. The size, character, and quality of the surface water being encroached upon: The Ash Swamp Brook runs west to east in the southern portion of Keene. It was originally part of the City Tax Ditch system, used to drain water from Keene's lowlands. The brook winds through many of the commercial developments and flows into the Ashuelot River.

2. The location and connectivity of the surface water in relation to other surface waters: The area of encroachment is approximately 4,200 feet upstream of where Ash Swamp Brook intersects the Ashuelot River.

3. The nature of the ecological and hydrological functions served by the surface water: The proposed project will not have an adverse impact on the ecological or hydrological function of Ash Swamp Brook. The floodplain compensation will offset any fill within the floodplain and allow floodwaters to back up in a similar fashion as the existing condition, with no increase to flood elevation. The floodplain area will provide wildlife habitat to maintain the ecological balance around the site. The drainage systems have been designed to reduce the stormwater runoff volumes and velocities during the 2, 10, and 50 year storm events.

4. The nature of the topography, slopes, soils and vegetation in the buffer: The slopes, soils and vegetation within the buffer area will not change, only the where the pavement encroaches the buffer.

5. **The role of the surface water buffer in mitigating soil erosion, sediment and nutrient transport, groundwater recharge, flood storage and flow dispersion:** The drainage systems will support groundwater recharge and the flood storage will equal the volume of the current storage on site. The soil erosion, sediment and nutrient transport will be mitigated by using proper erosion control measures and the installation of the proposed stormwater drainage system.
6. **The extent to which the surface water buffer serves as wildlife habitat or travel corridor:** The buffer area is directly adjacent to NH Route 10 and the bridge. The travel corridor is the edge of the brook and the banks on either side of the brook. These areas will not be altered.
7. **The rate, timing and volume of stormwater runoff and its potential to influence water quality:** The rate, timing and volume of stormwater will be mitigated by the use of deep sump catch basins, oil/debris hoods, and interconnecting perforated pipe and stone drainage trenches. The outfall of the subsurface drainage will be into the floodplain compensation area, that also provides detention of stormwater in large storm events. There will be no adverse influence to the water quality from the site development.
8. **The sensitivity of the surface water and the surface water buffer to disruption from changes in grade, or plant and animal habitat in the buffer zone:** The grades for the floodplain compensation will allow for floodwaters to inflow and recede from the site in a more controlled manner than the existing condition. The floodplain compensation will provide habitat for native plants and animals.

SWP CUP Application Section Four: Conditional Use Permit Criteria (per application form):

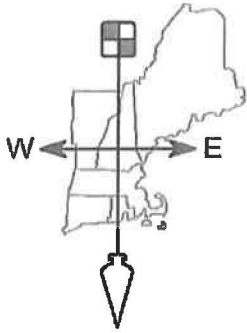
1. **Proposed mitigation measures** – The bank adjacent to the buffer encroachment will be left in a natural state, which consists of small trees and mixed brush. The floodplain compensation area will be allowed to return to a natural state, following grading and stabilization practices. This area will ultimately become a habitat for natural flora and fauna to propagate. The area will serve as an upland buffer to the Ash Swamp Brook.
2. **Disclosure of State & Federal Permits** – The overall impact of the project will require an Alteration of Terrain Permit from NHDES and a General Construction Permit with a Notice of Intent with the EPA. Upon completion of floodplain compensation grading, a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) will be filed with FEMA.
3. **Why proposed use cannot be placed outside of the Overlay District** – Due to the proximity of the existing building to the Ash Swamp Brook the 30' overlay buffer restricts the use around the southwest corner of the building, as addressed above.
4. **How encroachment has been minimized** – The encroachment has been minimized by paving up to the building wall and providing a 24' wide drive aisle, enough to pass vehicles and allow for firetruck turning motions.
5. **How proposed use was designed to avoid adverse impacts to surface water resources** – The proposed driveway was designed with asphalt curbing to collect stormwater runoff and pavement sediment prior to reaching the water resource. The stormwater is collected in a catch basin, fitted with a deep sump and oil/debris separator hood. The stormwater is infiltrated back into the ground via a subsurface drainage system. The bank of the Ash Swamp Brook will remain in its natural state and will have silt fencing installed to protect the resource during construction.
6. **How the buffer will be maintained in a natural state** – The bank of the brook will be

maintained in its natural state. The existing buffer that is being impacted is currently a maintained grass lawn. The encroachment area of 25' will be permanently paved.

7. **Location and connectivity of surface water in relation to surrounding watershed** – The Ash Swamp Brook flows to the east and connects to the Ashuelot River.
8. **Extent to which buffer serves as wildlife habitat** – The existing buffer is not a high value wildlife habitat due to its proximity to NH Route 10 (Winchester Street) and the concrete abutment of the NH Route 10 bridge. There is no proposed change to the banks of the brook or the stream course, so those existing habitats would not be impacted by this project. The NHDOT is planning on replacing this bridge within the next year, and this area of brook will be impacted at that point. We do not know the extent of the NHDOT bridge impact, but it will likely impact the banks of the brook in this area.

Wetland Certification:

The wetlands shown on the plans were delineated in accordance with the US Army Corps of Engineers, 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual Y-87-1 and Regional Supplements for Northeast and Northcentral Region and field indicators for hydric soils in New England by Christopher A. Guida, Certified Wetland Scientist, on August 19, 2020.



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October 29, 2021

Rhett Lamb
Community Development Director
City Hall - 4th Floor
3 Washington Street-
Keene, NH 03431.

**RE: Wetland Report
UHaul of South Keene
472 Winchester Street
Keene, NH**

Background:

In August 2020 field work was performed on the above referenced property located off Winchester Street at the former Clarke Distributors site. The project area consists of existing commercial buildings and associated paved parking lots and driveways. The existing commercial development is located along the northern portion of the property at the intersection of Winchester Street and Krif Road. The southern border of the property is defined by the Ash Swamp Brook. The areas directly adjacent to the brook are vegetated with small trees and brush in the southern portion of the lot, and grass lawn near the intersection of the brook and Winchester Street. The majority of the site falls within the 100 year Floodplain, as defined by FEMA mapping, with a flood elevation of 471.2 feet above sea level.

Wetlands Delineation:

Jurisdictional Wetlands within the project area were delineated by Certified Wetland Scientist Christopher A. Guida, CSS, CWS in August 2020. Wetlands on site were located along the bank of the Ash Swamp Brook with the delineation line being approximately the top of bank of the brook.

Under the US Fish and Wildlife Classification System (Cowardin System), the wetlands would be classified as Riverine, Lower Perennial, unconsolidated bottom, sand (R2UB2) associated with Ash Swamp Brook. The entire parcel appeared to have been previously cleared and altered throughout history with some re-grading including filling and ditching for drainage purposes due to the level topography. The underlying soils are typical very fine-sandy flood plain soils which are well drained; however due to level topography and previous alterations there are some areas that may have slower drainage rates than unaltered sloping sites. Previous reference plans have referenced "National Wetlands" which are typically generated using NRCS soil data based on the scale of 1:24000 which was prepared for county level planning purposes and is not suitable or accurate for site specific development. Field verification of the on-site wetlands was based on the US Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual Y-7-1 and Regional Supplements. Jurisdictional Wetlands on the site were limited to the area immediate to Ash Swamp Brook and banks of the brook. Upland areas adjacent to wetland areas are general level topography and overgrown with pioneering species such as Staghorn Sumac, Eastern White Pine with sapling and shrub understory dominated by same along with Quaking Aspen and Eastern Cottonwood.

Functions and Values:

Ash Swamp Brook flows west to east in the southern portion of Keene. The brook crosses many commercial developments and ultimately flows into the Ashuelot River. The brook intersects with the Ashuelot River approximately 4,000 feet southeasterly from the subject parcel. Functions and Values of the wetland area and adjacent upland areas would have to do to with stormwater treatment and flood attenuation as well as recreation associated with the riverine system.

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Wetland Report – UHaul, Keene, NH



Photo from the Winchester Street bridge along the Ash Swamp Brook

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Wetland Report – UHaul, Keene, NH



Typical Upland area towards rear of property

Sincerely,
Fieldstone Land Consultants, PLLC

Christopher A. Guida, CSS, CWS
Certified Soil & Wetland Scientist



