
TO: William Voelker, AICP, Planner – Town of Cheshire

FROM: Ryan McEvoy, PE, Lead Project Engineer, Civil – Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI)
Matthew J. Sanford, MS, PWS, Associate, Manager of Natural Resources Planning – MMI

RE: Site Clearing and Wildlife Habitat – Lakeside of Cheshire
50 Hazel Drive
Cheshire, Connecticut

DATE: July 24, 2020

MMI # 3519-03

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Town of Cheshire
JUL 24 2020
Planning Dept.

In response to comments raised at the public hearing regarding tree clearing and impact to wildlife for the above-referenced project, the site plan as proposed is presently located within an area of the parcel that has been subject to development, clearing, and grading for the prior convalescent home. The vast majority of site improvements are located where buildings, driveways, parking lots, underground utilities, and prior site grading have occurred. The southern portion is clearly occupied by the existing building and parking areas. The northern portions of the site have been significantly graded for a large subsurface sewage disposal area generally in the location of the northern proposed building. The historic leaching field area consists primarily of overgrown weeds with some wooded vegetation growth along the fill slope down toward the wetland areas. In total, we estimate that the clearing of wooded areas would not exceed 1 acre of clearing, similar to what may be expected for one or two single-family homes in an R-20 setting.

Based on our review of the latest maps from the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB), the project site is not located in a polygon area of concern. This indicates that the site is presumed to not provide preferred habitats for listed flora and fauna species. As stated above, the site has experienced widespread historical disturbances. These levels of disturbance have shaped the wildlife habitat within the proposed project development zone. Based on our field investigations, the wildlife habitat within the development zone would support common urban wildlife species. In areas that are not paved and/or occupied by a building, the vegetation is a mix of old field, scrub shrub, and young mixed hardwood deciduous forest. Both the old field and scrub shrub habitats are dominated by nonnative invasive plant species, including common mugwort, multiflora rose, oriental bittersweet, and autumn olive. These types of plant species supply low biodiversity and usually provide habitat for small rodent mammals, including field mice, voles, common raccoons, Virginia opossum, and rabbits. White-tailed deer and red foxes may frequent these habitats as well. Common birds associated with these habitats include northern cardinal, song sparrow, catbird, American robin, and other passerine birds. Habitat for upland- and wetland-dependent reptiles and amphibians is limited within the project development zone. Many of the species identified above are adapted to changing habitat conditions and development and will disperse to other areas within the project property. Overall, the proposed development will not adversely impact any listed wildlife species, wetland-dependent wildlife species, and/or significantly impact critical wildlife habitat and/or fauna populations.

As part of the proposed landscaping plan, we recommend robust landscaping that includes the following:

- a. 171 shade, ornamental, and screening trees
- b. 196 shrubs – to include hydrangea, holly, rhododendron, and roses
- c. 140 grasses

- d. 17,126 square feet – New England Wetland seed mix in the basins
- e. 14,142 square feet – New England Erosion Control/Restoration seed mix along basin side slopes and berms

In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the site plan as proposed maintains and allows for 16.5 acres of the site, or roughly 75% of the remaining land of the parcel, to remain undisturbed. The vast majority of undisturbed land is contiguous with large portions of protected open space owned by the Town of Cheshire.

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