



**RYE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
10 CENTRAL ROAD
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03870**

October 24, 2023

RE: 60 Wentworth Road Tax Map 24 Lot 61-26 Owner: WBTSCC Limited Partnership

The Rye Conservation Commission (RCC) conducted a site walk at the Wentworth by the Sea Country Club (WBTSCC) on May 28, 2020, to review a project on the 3rd and 9th Holes that proposes to build a retaining wall to keep the salt marsh on Witch Creek from encroaching further onto the fairways. The marsh has been flooding over time and has rendered the marsh side of the fairway into a wetland. Corey Colwell presented and explained the history of the two holes and the conversion of the fairways into wetland and marsh which then become the property of the State of New Hampshire.

The RCC issued recommendation letters on December 8, 2020, and February 21, 2021, stating its opposition to the project as proposed because the commission felt that the creation of a Living Shoreline was a better solution to the problem since it would have a lesser impact on the wetland resource.

Mr. Colwell attended the October 12, 2023, Rye Conservation Commission meeting to present an update on this project. The project has been approved by both NHDES and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Living Shoreline recommendation made by the RCC was not implemented in these approvals. Mr. Colwell noted that the golf course has been in existence for 125 years. Over time, the course has lost portions of its private land to the increase in the Mean High Tide (MHT), which dictates that all land below the MHT becomes public land and reverts to the State of New Hampshire. The proposed retaining wall will prevent additional land from being taken in this way. The permits for this project allow for sand and loam fill to be added on the fairway side of the retaining wall to level off what is currently a steeply sloped area. In addition, the retaining wall will prevent human disturbance in the marsh area. The applicant notes that some lawn that is currently mowed will be taken over by salt water when the wall is in place. All area on the marsh side of the wall will be no mow.

The retaining wall is proposed to be 780-feet long, 2-feet wide and +/- 3-feet high with a total permanent impact of 1,561 S.F. The Living Shoreline option would have a permanent impact of 10,915 S.F. The NHDES requires that the least impactful version of a project be implemented. In this case, installing a Living Shoreline was determined to be more impactful than installing a retaining wall.

The applicant requires a variance for surface alteration in the 100-foot wetland buffer for this project.

Mr. Colwell discussed the progress the Wentworth by the Sea Country Club (WBSCC) has made on the recommendations made by the RCC in the previous letters. He mentioned that the club has created a 5-year plan for removing invasives in this area. The work is currently being done by hand.

Work on this project and another, previously approved, adjacent project will be completed between November 15 and March 15.

The Rye Conservation Commission does not oppose this project subject to the following recommendation:

1. The ongoing 5-year plan to remove invasive phragmites in the project area continues.
2. A minimum of two (2) signs stating, 'Environmentally Sensitive Area – Do Not Disturb.' to be installed along the wall.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Susan Shopcaro', followed by a horizontal line.

Susan Shopcaro, Clerk