

TOWN OF HIGHGATE
Village Core Master Plan Committee
September 9, 2020 @ 3:30pm
DRAFT SITE VISIT NOTES

Present were:

Steve LaFar; Clarence Miller; Evangeline (Lene) LaRocque; Woody Rouse, Richard Noel, Nick Scott-PWD, Richard Flint- SB/ Highway Commissioner, John Kiernan- Otter Creek Engineering, William Norland-Otter Creek Engineering

The Committee met in the Community Room prior to the site visit. Steve LaFar called the gathering to order at 3:35pm.

Maps of the properties were reviewed and the deeds for the properties were shared. The two sites of interest were the Municipally owned Pine Forest Lot between Lamkin Street and Mill Hill and the Wright Excavating Inc. Sandpit on Lamkin Street.

Heidi shared that she had contacted neighboring properties to request access and Claude Chevalier had responded that he was not in favor of the location and did not want the Town to pursue it. He expressed concern for impact to residences in proximity and for potential instability issues caused by development. He had requested the deed and had been provided a copy. It was clarified that there was a restriction of use on the first parcel deeded to the Town requiring it to remain a pine forest, but that had been rescinded in the second deed to the Town for the access to the property from Mill Hill Road.

Access had been granted from a residential property on Mill Hill at the southern end of the property and from the Church parking lot, so the group still wanted to view the property.

Roger Wright had also been contacted for permission to access his property. He had granted access to the group but said that he would not be able to attend the site visit.

The group left the Community Room and proceeded to the St. Louis Church parking lot at approximately 3:50pm.

The group viewed the substantial ravine from the rear of the church parking lot and then walked along the crest to the northeastern corner of the Pine Forest Lot. The area was densely wooded, and it would have been very difficult to get a backhoe on the lot to dig test pits. The ravine at the southern side of the parcel was an estimated 100' slope. Hydrogeologist, Bill Norland, did a quick soil test which revealed extremely favorable, sandy soils. Richard Noel stated that he believes the water table is approximately 45' deep in this area. These two points make it an attractive spot for a wastewater system but the percentage of the lot that is ravine makes the remaining land very limited for development. A small system to serve the VCMP Property is possible but future expansion potential is unlikely. The predominant soil composition on the Missisquoi Riverbank is sand upon clay which would likely lead to slope instability if construction was to occur on the site. The other areas of slope slide in Highgate along the river were discussed and it was agreed that it was not wise to create more infrastructure on vulnerable slopes on the Missisquoi River.

The group continued to the Wright Sand Pit and found the site to be extremely favorable because of the vast area available, the easy access and relatively level ground. The same ravine leading into the Missisquoi River is at the Southwest end of the property and this area would have to be avoided to reduce risk of riverbank instability. An approximately 10-acre parcel would allow for future expansion of the system should that become necessary in the future.

John suggested the next step would be to schedule a date to dig the 6-12 test pits, each 12' deep. Nick thought this could be accomplished in 1 day with the PWD equipment. Heidi explained that originally the budget had extra money to hire an excavator to do this work but if archaeological assessments were required it would put a pinch on the budget so were asking for the PWD for their assistance. This can be discussed at the meeting on September 29th. John also suggested scheduling the digging to have a representative from the ANR Wastewater Program present and ideally to have someone from the (Stormwater?) Indirect Discharge Program to be present as well. Hopefully, this site visit can be scheduled in the next 2-3 weeks. Dig Safe will also have to be contacted and the site marked with flags at the road and an indication that there would be digging up to 500' from the road

ADJOURNMENT – Steve ended the site visit at 5:00pm

NEXT MEETING DATE- September 29th at 6:00pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Heidi Britch-Valenta

Date

Approved by:

Steve LaFar – Chair, VCMP

Date