

TO: Members of the Planning Board
FROM: Liz Durfee, AICP, Planner
Date: May 27, 2019

Subject: Comments on Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades

Planning Board Members:

I reviewed the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) Backwash Tank and Pump Station site plan. Similar to the library site plan review discussion, per RSA 674:54 the WTP Backwash Tank and Pump Station constitutes a governmental use on governmental land. Site Plan review approval from the Planning Board is not required, but the board may hold a public hearing and provide non-binding recommendations and comments to the applicant. This memo should not be considered a comprehensive site plan review.

Summary

The Portsmouth Water Division proposes upgrades to the existing wastewater treatment plant at 60 Freshet Road (Tax Map 10 Lot 12), located southeast of Route 108 and owned by the City of Portsmouth. The work includes construction of a below-grade backwash tank and pumping building and a backwash recycling water pumping station.

A formal site plan review application has not been submitted, but upon request the Water Division has provided drawings and a site map. Note that it appears that the incorrect lot number was included on the aerial map; the correct lot is number 12. Tax Map 10 Lot 12 is approximately 39.8 acres. The City owns adjacent lots in Dover.

The parcel is located within Town's Aquifer and Wellhead Overlay District and the Wet Areas Conservation Overlay District. A portion of the lot overlays stratified drift aquifer with low (<2,000 sf/day) and moderate (2,000-4,000 sf/day) transmissivity. Portions of the lot are located within the floodplain (Zone A), but proposed development is not located within this area. Johnson Creek flows south through the eastern side of the lot. The development does not appear to be located within areas identified as wetlands by the National Wetlands Inventory.

The proposed development will occur within close proximity of existing development and within the developed portion of the lot. The backwash tank will occur just south of the existing finished water pump station and clearwell on the eastern side of the lot. The recycling pumping value will be located just east of the existing wastewater treatment facility. It does not appear that removal of vegetation will be required, aside from small areas of grass.

Due to its location adjacent to surface water and above groundwater resources, attention to stormwater management and mitigation of any risk of sewage or chemical leakage is especially important. As described in the materials submitted, stormwater will be managed during construction via methods including road and slope stabilization, inlet protection, a silt fence, a concrete washout, and a portable sediment tank.

Recommendations

It does not appear that the proposed upgrades will result in greater traffic, noise, odor, light pollution, or visible impacts from the right-of-way, however the Planning Board may wish to confirm this with the applicant.

The Planning Board may wish to inquire about the anticipated start date and duration of construction, as well as how excavated material will be disposed of. Additionally, because the treatment plant is not located in an ideal setting with respect to water resources, the Board could inquire about the long-term plans for this facility. If the Town does not have an emergency operation plan for the wastewater treatment plant on file, it is recommended that the Planning Board obtain a copy.