

Memo

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To	Ed Cotter	Date	August 18, 2020
From	Mark G. Johnson, PLA	Project No.	18076
Subject	City Draft Findings of Fact (#4) Response	Project Name	Nordic Aquafarms - Belfast

The following addresses selected site design items identified by the city in Draft #4 FOF (July 15, 2020 meeting) as discussed. City text is italicized with color emphasis per their file. Responses follow. Please refer to pdf's sent with this memo.

5. *Highway of public road congestion.*

The Board concurred with a recommendation in the traffic study dated ----- prepared by Diane Morabito, Nordic traffic consultant, that the speed limit on Route 1 southbound of the current entrance to the Water District property should be reduced by 10 mph so that the traffic speed is consistent with the speed limit northbound of the entrance, and that the applicant and the City should both request that MDOT approve a reduction in speed limit. The Board also recognized her recommendation that Nordic regularly mow vegetation near the entrance to maintain sight distance.

The Board requested that Nordic Aquafarms, in its Final Site Plan application, examine potential adjustments in the lay-out of the entrance to the site to enhance truck traffic movements entering and exiting the site and visibility from the entrance. This request also could have some impact on the lay-out of the temporary bypass road, such as the regrading of the bank on the southerly side of the entrance.

Response: The currently designed entrance is the existing Belfast Water District drive with modification (enlargement) of the outbound curb radius on the south side. This cuts significantly into the existing embankment, impacting mature tree growth there. A typical tractor trailer truck pulling up to the stop bar to turn onto Rt. 1 will position the driver at an eyelevel height approximately 7-feet above grade. As can be seen, the result is that more than adequate sight lines are afforded exiting trucks (please see attached diagram entitled Route 1 Sight Line – South dated 8/18/2020).

20. *Buffering of adjacent uses.*

The Board found that the Preliminary Plans and supplemental information submitted by Nordic substantially provide for the buffering of adjacent uses where the Nordic project will abut several residential uses on Perkins Road and near the Nordic Water Treatment facility that is adjacent to Route One. The Board, in its May 2020 review and deliberations on the Nordic application, requested that Nordic submit additional information in its Final Plan application regarding the amount, type and size of tree species and understory plantings that would be planted along the lot lines that it shares with several residences on Perkins Road. Continuing, in its Final Plan application, the Board requested that Nordic more definitively identify when replanting will occur during the construction process. The Board's stated that its goal is to have the bufferyard planted as soon as practical during the construction process. The Board also encouraged Nordic to more fully explore opportunities with abutting property owners to plant trees on their private properties, if such are desired by the respective property owner,

to increase the amount of buffering.

The Board, in its review of the Nordic application, also found that Nordic is complying with City requirements regarding the minimum amount of bufferyard, reference Sec. 102-684c)(1) and all structure setbacks from lot lines, reference Sec. 102-684(b)(2) established for the Route One South Business Park zoning district. The Board noted that most of the Nordic lot line that directly abuts several residential properties on Perkins Road now consists of open fields and intermittent trees, and that Nordic, in its application, is proposing to plant new trees to create a buffer as required in City Ordinances. The Board requested that Nordic, as part of its Final Plan application, better identify the species of replacement trees that will be planted near the new Water Treatment building and Route One to satisfy planting requirements for that buffer yard. The main issue is the number of existing trees that will be removed during construction of the temporary bypass road and the need for replacement plantings to restore the existing tree-line in this area. Continuing, the Board determined that the Nordic application complies with buffering/landscaping standards in the Chapter 98 Technical Standards regarding the screening of parking areas; reference 98-249(1). The Board also noted that the City of Belfast has an Agreement to purchase a 250 foot wide forested strip of land, nearly 24 acres, that will serve as a buffer between the Nordic development and the Lower Reservoir, an area that includes the Little River Trail.

The Board based its Findings on the following: information in the Nordic application (Attachment 28) and supplemental information submitted by Nordic; presentations by Nordic representatives at the Board meetings of ----- and -----; the review of the Nordic plans by Wayne Marshall, Director of Code and Planning and his assessment of City standards; and comment provided by Parties in Interest and the general public at the public hearing conducted by the Board on -----. The two main issues raised at the hearing were the amount of bufferyard plantings adjacent to residential properties on Perkins Road and the amount of bufferyard plantings on Route One.

Response: The proposed development addresses planted buffering in the areas identified as follows.

As discussed in the original Site Plan application, a mix of plant species and sizes are proposed for the perimeter buffer areas that are native and are intended to restore disturbed vegetation and enhance existing (please refer to sheets LP101, LP106 and LP107). The planting plans identify individual plants (larger nursery stock) as specified in the main plant schedule (please refer to sheet LP501). These are used to establish a more immediate planting presence and range from 5' + (evergreens) and 12' + (deciduous). In and around these plants a reforestation mix (please refer to "Plant List – Reforestation Areas" on sheet LP501) is introduced to further the revegetation of these areas. Defined as Zone 1 and Zone 2, the mixes of plants are based on the species types and percentages identified for their respective locations in "Timber Inventory Prepared for Nordic Aquafarms, Inc., 159 High Street, Belfast, ME 04915" prepared by Comprehensive Land Technologies, Inc., South China, Maine (dated January 2019). This was done to most closely approximate the forest tree population that exists or existed prior to disturbance. The restoration plantings are intended to be smaller liners or whip stock typical of those used for paper land reforestation and are roughly a 25 evergreen/75 deciduous percentage mix. These plants are typically anywhere from 1 to 3 feet in height and are planted at densities as noted in the schedule which equates to approximately one plant every 10 feet on-center (total rate is 450 per acre or one for every

96.8 square feet, or 9.84 feet on-center). Further vegetative treatment to quickly stabilize disturbed areas with an herbaceous cover includes a variety of seed mixes as noted on the plans.

It should be noted that the existing vegetation along Rt. 1 is largely “top heavy” (lower limbs bare or nonexistent) and many trees appear dead or dying. At present, edge-condition vegetation (exposed to more sunlight along Rt. 1) tends to be younger and fuller, as is typical of forest edges where abutting cleared areas. The proposed development will remove existing vegetation, but the open area will be exposed to more sunlight, enhancing the growth of restoration plantings, and allowing them to fill in the lower “dead zone” of the remaining trees for an effective visual buffer.

The plantings described above shall be installed as early in the project as practicable as soon as final grades are established and in accordance with best planting practices with respect to season.

NOTE: Revised sheet LP101 (attached) shows additional large nursery stock to be located in areas cleared of trees for the temporary Rt. 1 bypass. It also shows treatment of a temporarily filled wetland for the same purpose. These edits are shown in red.