

STAFF MEMORANDUM

Date: August 11, 2021
To: Planning Board
From: Jason Cleghorn, Town Planner
Subject: **Ryan A. Hood (owner/applicant)** – In accordance with NH RSA 231:158, The Milford Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing for a proposed driveway location, potential previous removal of stone walls, and vegetative cutting on Mason Road. Tax Map 41, Lot 74-1.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant is before the Planning Board seeking to construct a driveway for a previously developed lot, Map 41, Lot 74-1. The lot is located on Mason Road, a designated Scenic Road, and the construction of the driveway disturbed existing stone walls and vegetation within the Town Right of Way (ROW). In accordance with NH RSA 231:158, the disturbance of the stone walls and removal of vegetation within the Mason Road ROW and along the frontage of the lot, require the applicants to receive written consent of the planning board following a public hearing.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The driveway in question has already been constructed and this process is considered somewhat after the fact. The driveway is currently still dirt and the final overlay of gravel has not been completed as the applicant was notified by Staff via mail that he needed to cease work because of the Scenic Road status of Mason Road. The property is currently accessed via an easement a couple hundred feet down Mason Road which makes sort of an L shape into the applicant's property. The applicant explains the desire/impact of having their own driveway versus using the existing easement.

There is some question/disagreement over whether or not there was a stone wall at the frontage of the lot as there is an existing stone wall to the adjacent lot to the applicant's lot that looks historic (visually it does not look 'modern') but the Google street view pictures provided by the applicant are too blurry to really show for certain. For what it's worth, the state has an inventory/GIS map of stone walls in New Hampshire that was taken via LIDAR that does not show stone walls in this area.

The applicant has provided pictures and staff also took pictures onsite showing the impacted ROW area and location of the proposed driveway. If stone walls were disturbed, the applicant is strongly encouraged to incorporate the disturbed materials into the entrance to the property and minimize the additional amount of tree removal on Mason Road other than what is necessary for line of sight and visual triangle purposes as part of the Driveway Permit from the Department of Public Works.

The Heritage Commission did not object to the construction of the driveway and is satisfied with the method of driveway construction here.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

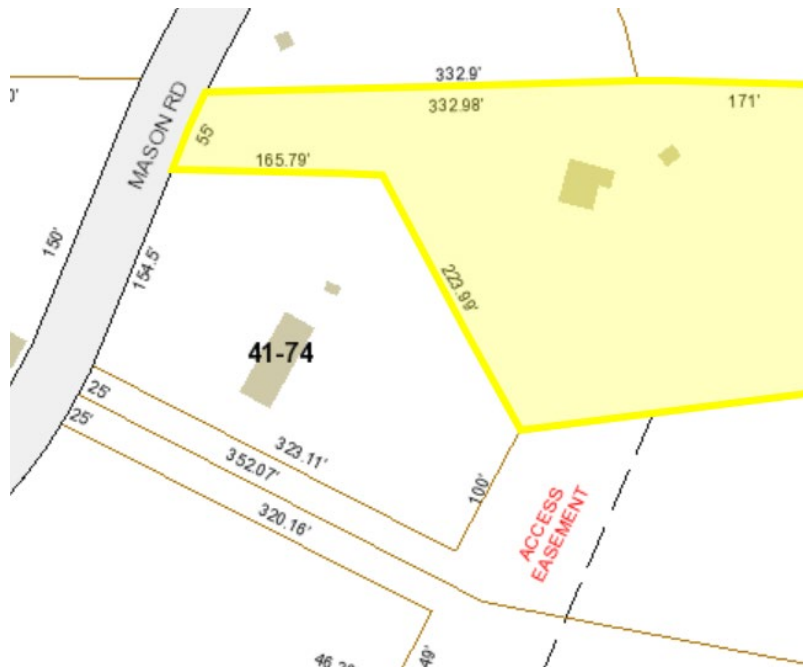
The applicants should be prepared to address all of the comments raised by the Planning Board, Staff, and public pertaining to the removal/disturbance of the stone wall and vegetation. If the Planning Board finds that the proposed construction of the driveways would not significantly impact the scenic quality and character of Mason Road, the Board should grant approval of the (potential) removal of the stone walls and impacted vegetation. One condition of approval should be that the applicant obtains an after-the-fact Driveway Permit from the Department of Public Works.

July 14, 2021

Request for Driveway Permit

My name is Ryan Hood, I live at 390 Mason Rd in Milford NH with My fiancé Alexandra Mack and daughter Grace. I am a Diesel Technician by trade, and I served In the United States Marine Corps for 4 years, 2 of which I was deployed to Afghanistan. I moved to Milford in 2017 to appease my fiancé who has been a Milford resident for 31 years. I enjoy living in Milford and I am incredibly pleased to call this town my home.

I purchased my home on Mason Rd in 2020, and I have slowly been transforming it into our forever home. I am looking to develop a new driveway from the west side of my property for two main reasons. (1) Currently I do not own a driveway from Mason Rd to my home. The driveway I currently use is jointly owned by two of my neighbors. I do however have a section of driveway that is under easement, but it does not connect directly to the main roadway. Below is a property map from the town showing the boundary lines:



(2) The second reason for the new driveway is esthetics and function. The current driveway leads up to the rear of the house which means we must use the side door for ease of entry. It may not sound like a big deal but as someone who takes pride in the hard work that I put into my home, I would much rather myself and all visitors enter through the front door. Anyone can understand that the work we put into our landscape is to appeal not to just ourselves but to anyone who visits.

I regrettably began this driveway project without undergoing the permit process and for that I apologize. I will not continue the process until I have completed the all the steps needed to acquire the permit. My plan is to enter the driveway from the 55ft section of road frontage

on the west end of my property. The entry will be 24ft wide which is the max allowed, this is to help with visibility of incoming and ongoing traffic. I did not remove any trees or existing rock walls when cutting in the driveway, I only removed overgrowth and thorn bushes. The driveway is 15ft wide and is an "S" shaped pattern to allow for a more gradual grade since the driveway is being developed on a slope. I brought in extra natural stone to make retaining wall features on both corners. I believe it the retaining walls accent the existing rock walls nicely. The driveway will not be paved, I plan to use 3/4" crushed stone as a base, and everything around the driveway will be seeded to grow grass.

I appreciate you taking time to read this letter. If there are any other questions, I would be happy to answer them. Attached are some before pictures of the driveway location and what has been accomplished so far.

Sincerely,

Ryan Hood



(before)



(after)



(after)