

December 11, 2025

TO: Casco Planning Board
Mr. John Wieseemann, CEO/LPI

FROM: Doug Webster, Acting Planner

CC: Mr. Brett Wiemken, Sebago Technics

RE: Background information for upcoming 12-15-25 PB Meeting
6:30 P.M. @ Casco Community Center in Casco Village/Rt. 121

Introduction

The agenda for the upcoming 12-15-25 PB meeting has three old business items and one new business item. The three old business items are: Review/approval of Casco Public Library CZA letter, a discussion on future Village codes, and a discussion of future road/street/driveway standards. The one new business item is a proposed zoning ordinance and map change by P & K for their Heath property represented by Mr. Brett Wiemken of Sebago Technics.

Old Business: Casco Public Library CZA letter

As the board is aware, the Casco Public Library (CPL) is in the process of pursuing a CZA as well as property deed approval at the upcoming January Town Meeting. As the board and Town representatives is also duly apprised, I am helping the CPL on this undertaking so will be respectful of the process and not weigh in within this memo. I agreed to assist the CPL prior to becoming Casco's Acting Planner.

Given that I am helping the CPL and am not functioning as the planner for this item, I do not intend to sit with the PB at the front table until after this agenda item is no longer on the table at the upcoming meeting.

Old Business: Discussion regarding proposed changes to Village Codes

Following up the discussion at the PB's 11-24-25 meeting, this item has been added to solicit any additional input the PB may have regarding the CPIC's undertaking of implementing proposed changes to Casco's villages per the guidance provided in the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). I am pleased to participate and provide input that may be helpful to the PB on this matter at the upcoming meeting.

Old Business: Discussion regarding roads/streets/driveways

Also following up the discussion at the PB's 11-24-25 meeting, the objective of this agenda item is to continue conversations regarding possible proposed changes to road, streets, and driveways in Casco. The desired timeline is to have proposed changes poised to be voted on at the June 2026 Town Meeting.

Based on input from the PB and initial guidance from the Town Manager, it is apparent that the Town would like to focus on non-subdivision (SD) roads and also consider revisiting driveway standards. In accordance with this, I have divided my comments on this agenda item into four categories:

- Background information
- Partial first draft of access standards
- Draft of administrative steps
- Questions & input to guide next steps

Background information

Adopting road/driveways standards is clearly a balance of several elements including the following: existing standards, adequate year-round access, level of PE involvement, streamlined administrative practices, practicality of access standards, input from Town Staff (Selectboard, Town Manager, and Public Works), sufficient fire/rescue access, and perhaps most importantly, the cost to residents. The ideal set up would involve PE input as necessary, but this increases the cost and complexity of administration. Sadly, there is no free lunch.

Some municipalities have found that the ideal situation for part-time PE services regarding roads is to try to find a retired MeDOT or other duly qualified civil engineer. As of this writing, I am not certain of the degree to which Casco currently utilizes professional engineering services. There may be the means to realize economies of scale if the Town already has a professional relationship with a PE and/or firm.

The information in this memo is a partial first draft. As the PB will see below, the intention is to solicit initial PB input at this formative stage to determine if additional details should be pursued per the general direction provided herein.

Partial first draft of access standards

Based on the PB's broad-brush input at the 11-24-25 meeting and existing Zoning requirements (see 215-5.3 & 215-5.6), listed below are some of the more salient elements that the Town may wish to consider requiring for non-SD accessways.

Retain existing improved width standards per 215-5.3 but be more specific including the following: (letters for reference purposes only)

- a. 1-2 lots/dwellings: 12' travel way w/2' shoulders (12/2/2) =16' wide
- b. 3-5 lots/dwellings: 16' travel way w/2' shoulders (16/2/2) =20' wide
- c. 6 -10 lots/dwellings: 20' travel way w/2' shoulders (20/2/2) =24' wide
- d. Min. grade 1%
- e. Max. grade 10% w/allowance for short sections of 12% w/standards
- f. Max grade w/in X feet of intersection 3%
- g. Sufficient stormwater provisions (need qualitative language & X year storm)
- h. Min. centerline radius for turns 150'
- i. Min. sub-base gravel (see options below)
- j. Min. finish gravel depth 3" for travel way width
- k. Crown (1/4" per foot) required unless super-elevated (w/prior approval)
- l. Min. elevation difference edge of travel way to ditch-line adj. to shoulder 6"
- m. Max. distance between turn-arounds (for public safety) 1,000 feet

Sub-base gravel quantity (cubic yards) for two depths/thicknesses and initial cost estimate (based on \$28 per cubic yard) of gravel only *per 100' of accessway*:

12/2/2: 6" depth: 29.6 yards/\$830, 9" depth: 44.4 yards/\$1,243

16/2/2: 6" depth: 37 yards/\$1,056, 9" depth: 55.5 yards/\$1,554

20/2/2: 6" depth: 44.4 yards/\$1,243, 9" depth: 66.6 yards/\$1,865

The above information has been drafted in accordance with the understandable intentions of taking residents costs into consideration. It is important to bear in mind that these are *material costs for the sub-base gravel only* and it does not include other costs.

Draft of administrative steps

Per PB input regarding the triage approach, I advocate the PB consider the following administrative steps.

- Initial on-site review by CEO & Public Works (PW) taking into account slopes, soil conditions, # of lots/DU's, road length, others as appropriate
- Initial appeal of required improvements to Access Standards Committee (CEO, PW, and Town Manager) with direct abutter notification
- Appeal of Access Standards Committee to PB
- Appeal of PB decision to ZBA, then to court

Questions & input to guide next steps

There are a host of policy matters that need to be decided before specific language can be drafted for the PB's consideration. Per my prior memo, input should also be solicited from the Town Manager, Public Works, and perhaps even legal as the parameters of the proposed new standards are more refined. The questions below are numbered for reference purposes only.

1. Should the access/driveway standards be housed in Zoning or be a stand-alone ordinance
2. Driveways-What elements should have standards; culvert size @ edge or ROW, sight distance, first 30', first 50', or entire length
3. Non-SD accessways-Connection with main road standards such as drainage, sight distance, grade, curve radii at intersection
4. Accessway standards applicable for: New development all the way to main road, only the newly developed portion, should limited improvements (such as stormwater improvements and/or adding to base gravel) be required all way to main road
5. Should standards for new accessways be administered differently than accessways existing as of the date that the revised standards are (presumably) adopted
6. Should any PE involvement have any degree of being subsidised by Town or fully borne by applicants
7. Input on triage approach trying to balance ability of CEO/Access Standards Committee to apply standards, cost of hiring a PE, practical use of the accessway. How/when would PE become involved

8. How should situations where standards cannot be met be addressed. For example, should waivers be reviewed by the PB

New Business: Proposed Zoning Map & Text Amendment for P & K's Heath Quarry

The town has received a submittal on behalf of P & K, represented by Sebago Technics, for an amendment to the zoning ordinance and map. I have reviewed the submitted materials, associated current zoning standards, and reviewed relevant portions of the Comp Plan.

It seems apparent from the submitted materials that the primary impetus for the proposed changes is to enable P & K to make informed longer-range business plans for their current operation at the Heath Quarry located off of Indian Acres Road, off Rt. 11. For the record, I was a Casco PB member in 1997 when the original CZA (20-year term) was proposed, drafted, and subsequently approved at Town Meeting. The CZA was renewed at Town Meeting in 2017 for an additional 10-year period.

While the submitted proposal to re-zone the existing CZA area (and two additional lots) to a new commercial district that already allows mineral processing would address the stated need, Casco's existing Commercial District allows a host of other uses. There may also be other options that would mitigate such unintended consequences per below in this memo.

I have divided comments regarding this agenda item into the following subsections:

- Relevant Zoning Ordinance citations
- Two possible alternative approaches
- Comp Plan notes
- Submittal notes
- Current Zoning map notes
- Questions & suggested conversation points

Relevant Zoning Ordinance citations

Section 215-3.3 addresses Zoning changes and amendments. This section outlines the manner in which zoning amendments can be brought before Town Meeting

including initiation by the PB. Notification of abutters is required for a zoning (district) change(s).

Section 215-4.6 establishes Residential District standards and allows mineral extraction, but not processing. Section 215-4.7 establishes Commercial District standards which allows mineral processing (215-4.7, subsection C.2.gg).

Three possible alternative approaches

Other than adding a new commercial district, I respectfully point out there are at least three other options that appear to address the stated needs per the submittal. One is to extend the CZA for a greater length of time to allow P & K to make their understandable business decisions per their submittal.

The second alternative is a zoning overlay district. An overlay district is a zoning tool that can either add or subtract from the standards of the “underlying district” depending upon the intended purpose(s). Casco already has two established overlay districts: the aquifer overlay, and a resort commercial overlay for some properties south of Rt. 302. For P & K’s purposes, this conceptual overlay could be a “mineral processing” overlay, or the like, and it could incorporate the proposed parcel(s). Within this overlay area, uses and/or performance standards would be applicable that could be customized as appropriate.

A third option is an entirely new zoning district that would have an appropriately descriptive title such as “Gravel & Quarry District”. As with any zoning district, there could be appropriate uses and performance standards such as those for mineral processing that were mentioned in the submittal and are presumably housed in the original 1997 CZA.

I raise these three possible additional options towards the beginning of my comments so that PB members are aware of these, taking into account the relevant background notes I have compiled below in this memo.

Comp Plan notes

As the PB is aware, the town has a recently adopted Comp Plan that the CPIC is in the process of orchestrating implementing. It is my understanding that they are starting with the villages, and then may shift to work on the balance of Casco. Any proposed new zoning should sufficiently accommodate development and existing zoning. If one or more additional commercial districts were added before there can be more comprehensive perspective on the longer-term vision of Casco, it potentially complicates the CPIC’s efforts towards implementing the Comp Plan.

Regarding the specifics of the Comp Plan, there is a map on page 14 that depicts potential areas suitable for conservation, along with other areas of Casco. On page 15, the map of Environmental Systems shows features throughout town. The Conservation, Preservation, and Development map on page 18 shows the vast majority of Casco in the “Critical Rural” area, including the subject P & K Heath area. Pages 67 and 68 briefly discuss the broad overview for amending the existing Commercial and Residential Districts.

Submittal notes

The submitted materials understandably focus on enabling P & K to make informed longer-term business decisions. When the original CZA was initially discussed, I recall the then PB not being certain how such a use would work in that portion of Casco; this was one of the elements in proposing the initial 20-year CZA term. Based on reviewing the materials, I note the following:

- The map accompanying the existing (10-year extension) for the 2017 CZA (CCRD 34178/90) shows the north-westerly parcel as being included in the CZA.
- The CZA map does not show the southwesterly parcel as being included (9-25-A)
- Portions of the proposed Commercial District area adjacent to Rt. 11 are an open/scrub shrub wetland (9-31) and do not appear to be viable for development
- Some areas of the existing CZA and/or proposed Commercial District are in the Shoreland Zone. Any changes will necessitate input and approval from MeDEP.

Current Zoning map notes

As mentioned above in this memo, Casco currently has two existing overlay districts: aquifer and resort commercial. Casco also has three commercial zoning districts: (a) a narrow area adjacent to Rt. 121 northwest of the village, (b) on Rt. 11 in the vicinity of Hancock’s Ryefield Mill, and, (c) portions of Rt. 302.

Questions & suggested conversation points

The applicant may have a presentation that they would like to present to the PB. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first submittal for P & K since the 2017 10-year renewal of the CZA. As such, it may be prudent to ensure that the PB has a thorough understanding of the needs of the applicant before there is too much discussion of the submittal or possible other options.

I have listed some questions/clarifications below for the purposes of opening a discussion between the applicant and the PB:

-Has there been any initial outreach to abutters and neighboring property owners to ensure they are apprised of the request; although not required at this stage, it may be prudent to do so

- Regarding portions of the existing/proposed expansion subject to Shoreland Zoning, are there any implications that would affect the nature and/or scope of the proposal; if so, it may be prudent to ensure that State standards can be met

-Given that the mineral processing operation started 30+/- years ago, are there any questions or concerns regarding the ability of the site to sustain/expand this use including, for example, sight distance where Indian Acres Road meets Rt. 11

-Have any efforts been directed towards determining the viability (soils, wetlands, etc.) of using areas of the proposed commercial district for non-residential purposes

-Does the PB have any input, questions, or concerns regarding possible additional uses within the requested commercial district

-Would the applicant and/or PB like to consider options other than adding a commercial district

In Closing

I look forward to meeting with the PB at the upcoming meeting.