



Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency

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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 7:00 PM

This meeting was held remotely, via ZOOM.

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chairman P. Bassermann

ROLL CALL: Chairman P. Bassermann, Commissioners D. Goclowksi, M. Ormrod, S. Botta, C. Begemann, M. Papantones. Also present was IWEO J. Frederick and IW Associate K. Blanchette

1) **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

- a) November 14, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes-Revised-Commissioner M. Ormrod made a motion to approve the minutes of November 14. Commissioner C. Begemann seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- b) December 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes-Commissioner M. Ormrod made a motion to approve the minutes of December 12. Commissioner C. Begemann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner D. Goclowksi informed the attendees that he had watched the recording of the previous meeting as well as read over all the materials and feels that he is able to participate in the discussion of all items this evening.

Commissioner M. Ormrod recused himself from all matters regarding 1-17 Beacon Hill Road, including application IW#24.09.02 and CC#24.07.01.

2) **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- a) IW#24.09.02 | 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,9,11,15,17 Beacon Hill Rd and Beacon Hill Rd | Age Restricted Housing Development-Commissioner C. Begemann stated that in light of the letter that was written by Friends of the Farm River Estuary, she felt that she needed to inform the Commission and the applicant that she was a member and secretary of the organization, however, there was no ex parte communication regarding the application, and she did not discuss any aspect of the project or the property with the organization. Attorney Timothy Lee for the applicant voiced that he felt Commissioner C. Begemann should recuse herself as she is a member of an organization that sent a letter in opposition of the application. The Commission disagreed with that, as she is not a paid member, has no financial stake, and has indicated that there has been no discussion between her and the organization regarding this application. Additionally, the commission had consulted with town council on the matter and they do not feel it is necessary for Commissioner Begemann to recuse herself. Commissioner C. Begemann she feels that she can unbiasedly participate in the discussion of the application, and that no outside discussions were had. Attorney Tim Lee for the applicant addressed the commission and reviewed the information that was submitted for the application, including adding additional markup of the previously approved subdivision approval in the prudent and feasible alternatives analysis, wetlands mitigation, and stormwater management. Developer Doug Anderson stated that he has been in communication with John

Hoefflerle, Town Engineer regarding the sewer hook ups, and in addition to the proposed 22 units, the sewer will be able to service an additional 22 homes on the Rose Hill Rd Side, and 20 homes on the Pent Rd side, for a total of 66 homes being serviced by the sewer connection, and reiterated that this particular development is the impetus for bringing in the sewer infrastructure to this area. Commissioner C. Begemann questioned the applicants about whether a wildlife inventory had been done and what types of wildlife would be affected with the proposed work on the site. Soil Scientist George Logan explained that there would be no vernal pool obligate species as no vernal pool is present, however typical wetland wildlife in wetlands such as the ones present on the site often have green frogs and toads, as well as turtles and other reptiles and amphibians. He stated the importance of ensuring that a qualified professional is present during the mitigation work to ensure the least amount of disruption to the wildlife on site. Commissioner S. Botta suggested that, should an approval be made, a condition is added that specifies that not only is the person overseeing the work qualified to do such work, but also has demonstrated successes in past projects involving the same scope of work, as well as having meetings with IWEO prior to and during construction. When questioned by the commission regarding the timeline of the project, developer Doug Anderson projected a 3 to 3 ½ year total duration of the project completion. There was discussion on slopes and the retaining walls that are proposed on site, along with other design elements such as the pickleball court. When the public comment portion of the public hearing opened, Town of Branford Economic Development Manager Perry Maresca spoke in support of the application, citing the lack of age restricted housing available, and the benefit of adding sewers to the area. After some discussion, the applicant gave a general overview of how the sewer process would go, and how costs are calculated to the homeowners, to give the Commission a better understanding of the process. They also presented a standard Sewer Connection document for the commission to see, which was added to the public hearing record. Commissioner S. Botta stated that the applicant made so much emphasis on the benefit of adding the sewers to replace the failing septic systems to help cut down on potential pollutants that she feels it is important that the benefits and process of the sewer installation should be reflected in the record. Friends of Farm River Estuary president Jamie Flynn spoke regarding the organization's concern for increased stormwater pollutants and nutrients into the environmentally impaired Farm River, and stated it was not the intent of the letter to push the commission to a denial or stall the process, but just to be aware of the environmentally sensitive issues within the watershed. The organization has data from a number of years showing high turbidity, excessive macrophyte growth, and very low dissolved oxygen rates, sometimes to hypoxic levels as a consequence of fertilizers and pesticides entering throughout the watershed. It has been deemed one of the most impaired estuaries in the state. They think that the addition of sewers to the area to get the houses off of septic systems in that area is going to be a benefit to the watershed, however wanted applicants to take a look at more design aspects that could assist with the improvement of the water quality in the development, such as pervious pavers, more natural landscaped areas as opposed to lawn to decrease the amount of lawn that would be fertilized/treated, pre and post water treatment, etc. Due to the presence of some animal species that are critically endangered, endangered, or of special concern in the area, they are requesting that consideration be given to the nesting wildlife, and to plan the activities such as blasting in the fall and winter months to limit the disturbance of the nesting birds as much as possible. Zachary Georgina, representative of the engineering firm Juliano Associates pointed out that the property is only part of a much larger watershed that feeds into the farm river. He demonstrated within the maps the areas that would be maintained as lawn

and which ones would be natural/brush, as well as indicating in which directions those areas drain. Attorney Tim Lee made closing statements in which he thanked the commission for their time spent reviewing the application, and feels this project is the most prudent and feasible option for the site, and are requesting an approval from the commission.

Commissioner S. Botta left the meeting at 9:45 pm.

Chairman P. Bassermann made a motion to close the public hearing at 10:03 pm, seconded by M. Papantones. Motion carried unanimously. Deliberations will begin on January 23, 2025.

3) **ENFORCEMENT:**

- a) CC#24.07.01 | 1, 5 and 7 Beacon Hill Rd | vegetation removal & earth disturbance within wetland and adjacent upland area
 - i) Continuation of show cause hearing-tabled to the January 23 meeting
- b) CC#24.09.01 & NOV | 9 High Plains Rd & 40 Hickory Hill La | regrading resulting in sedimentation of the pond located on property known as 40 Hickory Hill Lane
 - i) Continuation of Show cause hearing-Soil Scientist George Logan is still waiting on appropriate storm event information. Tabled to March 27.
- c) CC#24.09.02 | 170-182 Leetes Island Rd | clearing and earth disturbance without a permit
 - i) Continuation of Show cause hearing-IWEO J. Frederick heard from the property owner that he is working on a plan for the jurisdictional ruling request. Continued to February 13 to allow time for property owner to gather the needed information.
- d) CC#24.12.01 | 175 Cherry Hill Rd, 167 Cherry Hill Rd and Hosley Rd | Non-compliance with sedimentation and Erosion Control Plan from IW#22.07.05 resulting in sedimentation into the watercourse
 - i) Status update-IWEO J. Frederick visited the site to check the status. The property owner had done a lot of work installing erosion control measures throughout the site. However, some areas still need reinforcing. Zach Georgina, representative of Juliano Associates, stated that he has been working with the property owner to develop a plan to stabilize the site. Some of the stockpiles are being spread and used to smooth grades on the rest of the site. It is recommended that silt fence is placed around the base of all the stockpiles. Straw bale check dams should be added at the toe of the spillway and halfway down the slope to minimize erosion potential. Commission questioned whether a written document was made with the recommendations outlined. Mr. Georgina indicated that he has not had a chance to do the document as he has just returned to work after the 2 week office shut down over the holiday. IWEO J. Frederick indicated that one of the requirements of the Cease and Correct order was that there was an Erosion Control inspection by a qualified individual after every rain event of .5 inches or more. For that reason, the Cease and Correct order should be kept in place for the time being to ensure that the inspections get done and it can be brought back to the commission when site is more stabilized to decide if they want to lift the cease and correct order. Agent J. Frederick doesn't think its beneficial to keep holding off site work because it is going to keep the property open for longer which will increase the probability of erosion. Seeing as the property owner is

doing the work needed to stabilize the site, the commission is allowing work to resume, with reporting done after every storm event of .5 inches and maintenance/adjustment of the control measures as needed.

- e) Notice of Violation | 301 Maple St | removal of vegetation without a permit-IWEO J. Frederick gave the commission a brief overview of the activity occurring. Property owner has hired Nafis and Young. Nafis and Young engineers are preparing a plan which should be submitted prior to the next meeting.

4) **APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW:**

- a) IW#24.11.02 | 183 Cherry Hill Road Extension | New Single-Family Residence- Commission deemed that the application was appropriate for agent approval
- b) IW#24.11.03 | 191 Cherry Hill Road Extension | New Single-Family Residence- Commission deemed that the application was appropriate for agent approval

5) **APPLICATIONS FOR RECEIPT:**

- a) IW#24.12.01 | 2 Jacqueline Way | deck replacement and enlargement
 - i) Possible Agent Review -Commission deemed the application appropriate for agent approval.

6) **AGENT APPROVALS:** none

7) **OTHER BUSINESS:** none

8) **CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a) Announcement: CT Land Use Law for Municipal Land Use Agencies, Boards and Commissions Webinar – March 22, 2025
- b) CAWS meeting March 5, 2025 at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington

9) **ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman P. Bassermann adjourned the meeting at 10:54 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Katy Blanchette
IW Associate