



Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency

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APPROVED MINUTES

Thursday, March 14, 2019 7:30 PM
Canoe Brook Senior Center
11 Cherry Hill Road, Branford, CT

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Chairman Peter Bassermann called the regular meeting of Branford's Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency to order at 7:31 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Chair Peter Bassermann, Suzanne Botta, Richard Greenalch, James Goggin

Commissioners Absent: Jim Sette, Rick Ross, Sandra Kraus, Eric Rose

Staff Present: Inland Wetland Enforcement Officer Diana Ross, David McCarthy

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 14, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes (corrected from agenda)

- Comm. Goggin motioned to approve, Suzanne second, Comm. Goggin abstained as he was not present during last month's meeting. Motion passed (3-0-1)

4. APPLICATIONS FOR RECEIPT:

IW# 19.03.01 45-55 Alex Warfield Rd | Invasive Species Management / Control

- Luke Johnson of All Habitat Services with owner/applicant John Proto are looking to conduct invasive species remediation on the site of The Shore Line Trolley Museum. Luke stated that the previous owner of the property received a Notice of Violation (NOV).
- EO Ross confirmed
- Luke Johnson informed the Commission that he and the owner would like to remove the Phragmites (invasive species) and do some work in the meadow.
- Chairman Bassermann asked the date of the NOV
- Luke Johnson: Believes the cease and correct was issued in 2013
- Luke Johnson walked the Commission through their plan to remove the invasive species (*Phragmites*, *Autumn Olive*, *Mugwort*), restore a pond area, and to then see what vegetation reestablishes before they decide on a native planting plan
- EO Ross asked if they were trying to improve the land for visitors
- John Proto informed the Commission that they are trying to improve the land for picnicking and educational programs such as monarch releases
- Chairman Bassermann sought clarity on the lack of a planting plan

- Luke Johnson went into further details about the what the plantings might look like, that they would remove the invasive species from the field and replant using a northeast pollinator seed mix
- EO Ross asked if they'd be native seed mixes
- Luke Johnson: Yes
- Chairman Bassermann asked if this hand removal?
- Luke Johnson: no, if we could do this when the land was frozen it would be low ground pressure machines. The land will most likely not be frozen, so we will do it by hand with commercial trimmers and heavy-duty weed wackers
- EO Ross: Will you remove the Norway Maples?
- Luke Johnson: Yes, there's a few
- Comm. Botta asked if they will include a long-term plan for maintenance
- Luke Johnson: Yes, we will do an initial multiyear management plan to get started, and then develop a maintenance plan as we move forward to stay on top of the invasive species
- The Commission: The application was continued to the next regular meeting of Thursday, April 11th at 7:30 P.M.

IW# 19.03.02 119 Cedar St. | Installation of Retaining Wall

- Joshua Onofrio (building owner): "We had a good plan going in for the retaining wall, layout, and the handicap ramp." However, the site is very tight and the elevation of the existing building made it difficult to get the proper - and code compliant - rise and run for the handicap entrance. To be code complaint, we had to turn the corner with the handicap ramp and come down the back of the building into the parking lot, this caused us to lose 5 feet of the parking lot so we extended out retaining wall.
- EO Ross reminded the Commission that this is an after the fact application
- EO Ross handed the Commission the approved plans along with as-built surveys for review
- Joshua Onofrio: "By extending the ramp we had to come around the corner."
- Chairman Bassermann stated that the distance of the retaining wall to the watercourse had been reduced because the retaining wall was built farther out than what was originally proposed
- Josh Onofrio informed the Commission that he walked the property with the State and that they said that they have no issues with it, but asked him to maintain the splash pad. EO Ross suggested planting that included elderberry
- Chairman Bassermann asked if would the plantings be different to protect the bank now that the retaining wall is closer to the watercourse than originally proposed
- EO Ross: Yes
- Josh Onofrio informed the Commission that the original planting plan only called for two elderberries and the new plan is to plant seven along the waterway. The thought is that the Elderberries will stabilize the hill and the Phragmites will be cut down.
- Comm. Botta suggested a Site Walk
- Chairman Bassermann: The concern is that the bank eroding over time will fill in the watercourse and change its hydrology
- EO Ross asked if fill was ever applied outside the property
- Josh Onofrio: No
- The Commission: The application was continued to the next regular meeting of Thursday, April 11th at 7:30 P.M. and decided to organize a Site Walk for April 10th 5:00 P.M., (later changed to 5:45 P.M.)

IW# 19.03.03 30 School St. | Construction of Garage – Filling of Wetland

- Attorney Christopher J. Smith, (land use attorney) with Walter and Pearson appeared before the Commission with Peter Hentschel of the Peter Hentschel Revocable Trust (owner/applicant) and David Lord of Soil Resource Consultants to propose the filling of a wetland and the construction of a garage to be built on the property of 30 School Street
- Attorney Chris Smith introduced the Commission to the proposal packet and guided it towards its visuals for where they would like the proposed garage to be built
- Attorney Chris Smith: “This is a historic lawn area. Mr. Hentschel bought this property back in the mid-1970’s, and this has been lawn the entire time.”
- Attorney Chris Smith informed the Commission that the area does not show up on the Town’s wetland map, but David Lord of Soil Resource Consultants determined that the grass is growing in wetland soils
- Attorney Chris Smith: Informed the commission that David Lord’s report suggests that this is a low functioning wetland that serves as drainage heading in a southeasterly trajectory
- Attorney Chris Smith: “There will be wetlands filling,” but asked the Commission to remember that it’s a lawn area over wetland soils
- Chairman Bassermann: “How much fill?”
- Attorney Chris Smith: It’s about 635 square feet of garage with 109 square feet of grading, for a total impact area of 744 square feet
- Attorney Chris Smith informed the Commission that the garage had been designed so that the water flow underneath will continue to flow as it does today, and that there will be no impact to the drainage patterns that are currently on the property
- Chairman Bassermann asked about the materials intended to be used for the foundation
- Peter Hentschel (owner/applicant) described the materials and design concept to the Commission. “The concept is to have the area below the slab down to the footing line to be crushed stone,” and the foundation will have ports that will allow for the migration of the water table underneath the garage. “There’d be no change in that particular characteristic of the wetland.”
- Chairman Bassermann asked if the hydrology effects pre and post build were listed
- Attorney Chris Smith guided the Commission to the details of the proposed garage’s foundation within the proposal packet and informed the Commission that the project’s engineer overly designed this garage to ensure that the drainage function of the wetland continues
- Attorney Chris Smith: There is an extensive 6:1 enhancement plan developed to compensate for filling the wetland
- The Commission reviewed the proposal packet
- Comm. Botta asked the applicant to speak to the enhancements
- David Lord Soil Scientist for the Applicant informed the Commission that the enhancement plan is to introduce woody trees, woody shrubs, spread a wetland seed mix, and to get rid of a stand of Phragmites
- David Lord: What ends up being preserved post construction, we are looking to turn from a low functioning wetland into a high functioning wetland
- Comm. Goggin: “Will the crushed stone be compacted underneath the slab of the garage?”
- Peter Hentschel: Yes, it will be compacted
- Comm. Goggin: Will impact the wetland?
- David Lord: No, it will be clean stone and uniformly graded with porous space
- Chair Bassermann: What size stone?

- David Lord: We don't have those specks
- Chair Bassermann: Will it pack without much compaction? Will there be many voids?
- David Lord: Yes, it's a hard material that will not compact as soil does. It will form a dense solid substrate that allows the water to come up through the stone and flow in the manner that it does.
- David Lord: There were other places on the site that we could have chosen for the garage, but they were not selected because they would bisect the wetlands
- Chair Bassermann asked if the wetlands were based on soil type only
- David Lord: Yes, there somewhat classifiable in a natural situation but have become massaged over the years. It's eight to nine inches of topsoil with fine loamy sand underneath.
- Resident Linda Reed: Stated that even though she does not have a written letter, that she was here on behalf of her Stoney Creek neighbors. She stated that "even though this might be considered a small wetland in the area, we believe it's a significant wetland in this area." She stated that this particular wetland flows to a series of larger wetlands to the east.
- Resident Linda Reed noted that she had not seen the plans, so she cannot comment, but believes that there more feasible alternatives in terms of size and location
- Comm. Botta: Because 744 square feet of fill is being proposed, this is considered a significant activity
- The Commissioners reviewed Branford's Regulations and discussed the application
- Chair Bassermann: For the sake of consistency, we need to take this to ...
- Comm. Goggin agrees
- Comm. Botta agrees
- Comm. Botta: The Commission needs to be uniform in its process so the public knows what to expect. It's been our standard practice to go to a public hearing when there is a filling, this needs to go for a public hearing.
- Attorney Christopher J. Smith: Will that be on April 11th?
- Comm. Botta: Yes
- The Commission decided to include a Site Walk of 30 School Street along with their Site Walk of 119 Cedar St. on Wednesday, April 10th
- The Commission decided to change 119 Cedar St.'s Site Walk from 5:00 P.M. to 5:45 P.M. and scheduled 30 School Street for 5:00 P.M.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS ISSUED:

IW#19.01.02 – 26 Lomartra Lane - Lot 6

- EO Ross reviewed and approved the Permit

IW#19.02.01 – 27 Lomartra Lane - Lot 15

- EO Ross reviewed and approved the Permit

6. CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Review of Farm River Watershed Project meeting held February 21, 2019

- David McCarthy informed the Commission about the newly forming Farm River Watershed Project and its goals to reduce microbial loading in the watershed
- David McCarthy requested to be on its steering committee and will continue to update the Commission
- Chairman Bassermann reported on the Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists (CAWS) 2019 Annual Meeting and the use of LiDAR and powerful GIS tools that can be used to better evaluate wetland applications

7. OTHER BUSINESS

- None

8. OLD BUSINESS

None

9. ADJOURNMENT

- Comm. Goggin motioned to adjourn at 8:14 P.M.; Comm. Botta seconded. Motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,



David E. McCarthy