



Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency

TOWN HALL * PO BOX 150 * 1019 MAIN ST. * BRANFORD, CT 06405

203-315-0675 * FAX 203-889-3172 * inlandwetlands@branford-ct.gov



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission Regulation Fee Review Committee

Thursday, March 18th, 2021 at 3:00 PM
This meeting was held remotely, via ZOOM:

CALL TO ORDER:

Peter Bassermann called the special meeting of the fee revision subcommittee to order at 3:04pm.

ROLL CALL:

Subcommittee Members Present: Peter Bassermann and Eric Rose

Staff Present: Jaymie Frederick – IW Agent and Abby York – Inland Wetland Associate

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a. January 21, 2021 meeting minutes

Comm. Rose made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 21st meeting.

Comm. Bassermann seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously. (Y-N-A : 2-0-0)

2. DISCUSSION:

a. Discuss possible fee revisions for recommendation to full Commission

- The subcommittee continued the discussion from the January meeting, beginning with the revenue brought in by the department versus the expense of running the department. Commissioners asked how cost recovery compares to neighboring towns. Staff stated that there is no information regarding this, but based off advice given by the finance department, it may be beneficial for the Agency to stay within the same price range as neighboring towns.
- Commissioners discussed the fees in different towns, noting that many towns have a base permit fee. Inspection fees for projects that require monitoring was also discussed. It was noted that staff can reach out to other towns and see how they implement inspection fees.
- The subcommittee discussed having base project fees. Staff noted that these fees can be difficult to assess, as even for the same type of project, the impact to the wetlands can vary.
- Staff brought up fees for activity occurring outside the upland review area and noted they have received feedback from applicants on the way this activity is assessed.
- Commissioners discussed the goals of the subcommittee, noting that the fees should be easier for applicants and staff to understand and re-adding the de minimus application fee.
- Staff discussed the use of bracketing in the current fee schedule and noted that it may be important to consider a more simplistic structuring.
- Using a menu format for the fee schedule was discussed by the subcommittee. Staff noted that an example using a menu format can be drafted. Commissioners said that all they would need for the next discussion would be a list of permit types, and that the actual cost of each fee can be determined later on. It was clarified that a menu should be drafted for

- all residential and commercial activities and the subcommittee can make a determination at a later date whether to accept or reject it.
- Staff stated that currently, fees are calculated based off of total area of disturbance, including disturbance outside of the upland review area. It was noted that there have been circumstances in which applicants have expressed dissatisfaction in this and have brought the issue to the Commission. Staff said that it is important to make a distinction about if the area of disturbance should just be considered within the upland review area. Staff also noted that for tree removal, it is important to consider if the disturbance should be assessed based on the base of the tree or the canopy cover. Commissioners asked if there is a separate fee for activity within a wetland. Staff confirmed there is.
 - It was noted that some other towns refer to the DEEP fee by the statutes, rather than the specific amount. Staff stated that is how the DEEP fee is noted in the regulations
 - The subcommittee discussed how the increments of fees based off the square footage should work. Staff shared fee schedules from other towns and discussed some examples. Staff said that as the fee schedule works now, there is no incentive to stay away from the wetlands, as the area outside of the upland review area is not assessed at a different rate from the 100' upland review area. The Commissioners questioned if the bracketing should be reformatted. Staff noted that the bracketing could be reduced, and a menu format could still potentially be implemented, but it may take some research to look at.
 - The categories of application fees were discussed. Staff noted that a new category for subdivisions could potentially be added.
 - Commissioners asked if there is a direct correlation between staff effort and the size of the project. Staff noted that some times that is the case, but it depends on the activity itself, the proximity to the wetlands, and several other factors.
- b. Schedule next meeting
- Staff noted that they have a meeting tentatively scheduled for April 15th, but suggested if more time is needed, April 29th would work as well.
 - The subcommittee confirmed that April 29th at 3pm will be the next subcommittee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Comm. Rose made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Comm. Bassermann seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**Abby York
Inland Wetlands Associate**