

INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE
SPECIAL MEETING OF MARCH 8, 2023

The special meeting of the Woodbridge Inland Wetlands Agency (Agency) was commenced at 8:00 pm on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, in the Central Meeting Room of the Woodbridge Town Hall, 11 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, by Chairman Robert Blythe.

Agency members present for the meeting were: Chairman Robert Blythe, Jack Kurek, Josh Goldberg, Enréne van Tonder (alternate), David Speranzini, Steven Sosensky, and Jean Webber (alternate).. Agency Enforcement Officer (AEO) Kristine Sullivan was also present.

PUBLIC HEARING

Town of Woodbridge: 100 Center Road

Construction of an expanded foundation to the existing storage garage foundation behind the firehouse, construction of storage garage, filling and disruption of wetlands and creation of wetland mitigation area.

The Chairman opened the public hearing on the application by the Town of Woodbridge for the construction of an expanded foundation to the existing storage garage foundation behind the firehouse at 100 Center Road, construction of the storage garage, filling and disruption of wetlands and creation of a wetland mitigation area. It was noted that all application submissions were available on the Agency page of the Town website.

Present to speak on behalf the application were Donald Smith, Project Engineer and Jennifer Beno Wetland Biologist with Soil Science and Environmental Services, Inc..

First Selectman Beth Heller read brief comments regarding the project and the history leading up to the need for the expanded storage garage into the hearing record which included that:

- The town has received a two million dollar grant to refurbish the Old Firehouse at 4 Newton Road into a Cultural and Community Center.
- In 2006 that building was damaged by a fire.
- In 2008 when the new firehouse was built at 100 Center Road, the size of the new structure was not adequate for the Fire Department's needs
- In 2010 a permit was received for the foundation of the storage garage behind the new firehouse, with the pad installed in 2011.
- The Fire Department needs to remove its remaining equipment from the Old Firehouse so that the grant for the Old Fire House can be utilized in a timely fashion, which requires the expansion of the storage shed.

PE Donald Smith then gave a presentation regarding the application. Comments in his presentation and in response to written comments from the Agency's consulting engineer, Jim Pretti of Criscuolo Engineering LLC and questions from Agency members included:

- A review of the application plans.
- That the expanded storage shed would be behind the existing firehouse.
- The existing foundation is 1800 square feet in area, with the expanded foundation the storage garage will have a footprint of 3250 square feet.
- There would be 750 sq. ft of wetland disturbance.
- A wetlands mitigation plan has been submitted.

- A total of 5900 square feet of upland area would be disturbed.
- A total of 1600 square feet of regulated wetlands would be disturbed.
- The wetland flagging has been updated.
- 1700 square feet of wetland mitigation is proposed.
- 1700 square feet of wetland buffer plantings would be done.
- There would be an additional 2500 square feet of impervious area added to the site.
- The alternatives to the proposed storage garage expansion would be:
 - Having the addition at the front of the existing storage garage foundation, but that would not give adequate access to the rear overhead doors of the main firehouse.
 - Having a second 42' by 47' storage garage off to the side where the existing patio and firepits are. This would avoid the additional wetland impacts but would involve the relocation of an existing drainage swale. It would not be prudent to have two separate storage buildings. In addition, a storage garage at that location would have a visual impact on the nearby walking trails.
- Stormwater runoff would go into the existing storm drainage system
- The applicant is willing to amend the planting plan per the recommendations of Martin Brogie if the Agency agrees.
- Grading and utility plans were submitted with the original foundation plans.
- Erosion controls, silt fence and hay bales would be installed as required.
- The original split rail fence would be relocated and replaced with a stockade fence.
- There would be no floor drains in the building.

Jennifer Beno, biologist with Soil Science and Environmental Services reviewed her report dated January 11, 2023, for the hearing record. She also responded to comments in the report dated February 13, 2023, from Agency wetland scientist consultant Martin Brogie and comments from Agency members. Her comments during her presentation included:

- She had inspected the site on December 9, 2022, and January 7, 2023.
- There currently is storage and disturbance within some of the expanded project area.
- The wetlands were originally flagged in 1999.
- Clearing and placement of woodchips has occurred in the expanded project area.
- There are some invasive species in the wetland/expanded project area.
- The Natural Diversity Data Base indicates that there are no species of concern in the project area.
- There would be 1614 square feet of additional intrusion into the onsite wetlands which would increase the amount of sunlight in the area and the potential for invasive species.
- The project includes the creation of a wetland area of 1718 square feet in area.
- The new wetland area would be planted with non-invasive species of trees, shrubs, and seed mixture.
- There would also be buffer plantings done which again would be of native, non-invasive plantings, and a conservation seed mix.
- Species substitutions might have to be made as necessary, with the approval of herself and Agency Staff.
- There would be no significant impact to the onsite wetlands, per the plans and the proposed wetlands restoration.

- Annually invasive species would be removed from the restoration area and buffer planting area.
- There is a five foot clearing limit behind the garage called out on the project plans.
- A visual demarcation of a fence along the wetland boundary would be installed.
- A wetland biologist would inspect the plantings after the plantings were done.
- There would be additional inspections for three years after the plantings were done to assess the planting survival rate and monitor invasive species.
- If plantings had more than a 15% mortality rate the plantings would be replaced.
- There would be no net loss of wetlands with the mitigation plantings

The Chairman then opened the hearing to receive public comment on the application. At this time the following members of the public spoke including comments as noted:

Terri Fellows Kalson: 145 Beecher Road

- Noted the site where the current firehouse is located was part of the old farm that her property known as Fellows Hillside Farm was originally part of.
- Cedar trees used to be harvested in the area of the new Firehouse. The divots from when the trees were harvested might have created the wetlands.
- Bittersweet growth chokes the trees.
- With a family history of her father and son serving in the Fire Department, and an abutting property owner she wanted to express her support for the project.

Dennis Santulli: 27 Ranch Road

- Were other options considered.
- Is the (fire) equipment temperature sensitive. Are there toxic chemicals used that citizens should be concerned about
- Is it possible to put smaller buildings behind each bay that could be specific for each storage use.
- Could the trucks be backed in since the department is not that busy.
- He hadn't been able to build an addition to his house because of onsite wetlands.
- Are there other options which would not encroach on the wetlands.
- Feared the Agency was going down a slippery slope.

Sean Rowland: 63 Center Road

- Other spots on the site had been looked at.
- A lot of the equipment is temperature sensitive ~ such as the hoses which should not experience extreme heat or cold.
- Foam ~ which is biodegradable, will freeze or gel up.
- Supplies for the generator and light trailer, such as the diesel fuel will gel
- The Hazmat supplies need to be temperature controlled and cannot be left outside.
- The "swing" for the trucks to get in the rear of the building limits how close the garage can be to the main fire house.
- The trucks carry 3000 gallons of water each.

There being no further comments from the applicant's representatives, members of the public or Agency members, the public hearing was closed based on the following motion:

- *** **Kurek moved to close the public hearing by the Town of Woodbridge for construction of an expanded foundation to the existing storage garage foundation behind the firehouse at 100 Center Road, construction of a storage garage, filling and disruption of wetlands and creation of wetland mitigation area.**
- *** **Sosensky seconded**
- *** **In favor: Blythe, Kurek, Goldberg, Speranzini and Sosensky**
- *** **Opposed: No One**
- *** **Recused: No One**
- *** **Abstained: No One**

Later in the meeting, after discussion of the comments received from both Biologist Jennifer Beno and Agency wetland scientist consultant Martin Brogie, Agency members acted as follows on the subject application:

- *** **Sosensky moved to accept and approve the application by the Town of Woodbridge for construction of an expanded foundation to the existing storage garage foundation behind the firehouse at 100 Center Road, construction of a storage garage, filling and disruption of wetlands and creation of wetland mitigation area. The approval is based on the plans prepared by Donald W. Smith, Jr., P.E. entitled and dated as follows which shall be known as the MAP OF RECORD:**
 - **“Improvement Location Plan – Proposed, Town of Woodbridge, Woodbridge Volunteer Fire Station, Center Road (CT Rt. 114), Woodbridge Connecticut, dated 1/10/23, Sheet 1 of 4;**
 - **“Improvement Location Plan – Proposed, Town of Woodbridge, Woodbridge Volunteer Fire Station, Center Road (CT Rt. 114) Woodbridge, Connecticut”, dated 1/10/23, Sheet 2 of 4;**
 - **“Improvement Location Plan – Proposed, Town of Woodbridge, Woodbridge Volunteer Fire Station, Center Road (CT Rt. 114) Woodbridge, Connecticut, dated 1/10/2023, Sheet 3 of 4; and**
 - **“Details, Town of Woodbridge Volunteer Fire Station, Center Road (CT Rt. 114) Woodbridge, Connecticut, dated 1/10/23, Sheet 4 of 4.**
- The approval is also based on the following supplementary documents :
- **A Wetlands/Watercourses and Soil Report dated December 9, 2022, prepared by Scott D. Stevens, Registered Professional Soil Scientist for Area near Proposed Firehouse Storage Shed, 100 Center Road, Woodbridge, CT;**
 - **Wetland Assessment Report and Mitigation Recommendations, Woodbridge Fire House, 100 Center Road, Woodbridge, CT dated January 11, 2023, prepared by Jennifer L. Beno, Biologist/Wetland Scientist, Soil Science and Environmental Services, Inc.**
 - **Review letter dated February 13, 2023, from Martin Brogie, Inc. Environmental Services for Woodbridge Firehouse, 100 Center Road, Woodbridge, CT.**
 - **Review memorandum dated February 13, 2023, from James Pretti, Jr. PE, of Criscuolo Engineering, LLC**

This approval is conditional upon the following requirements:

- 1. Staked hay bales or other suitable filtering device be installed as per Map of Record or at the direction of the Wetlands Enforcement Officer per the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.**
- 2. Onsite sediment and erosion controls shall be maintained in good working condition until permanent vegetative cover of disturbed areas on the site has been established to the satisfaction of the Agency or the Wetlands Enforcement Officer.**
- 3. Sediment barriers shall be cleaned as needed or at the direction of the Wetlands Enforcement Officer.**
- 4. The Wetland Creation and Buffer Area Planting plan set forth in The Wetland Assessment Report and Mitigation Recommendations prepared by Jennifer Beno dated January 11, 2023, shall be implemented under the direction of Ms. Beno or a qualified wetland biologist/soil scientist. As part of that plan a visual demarcation of a split rail fence shown on the Map of Record shall be installed, and extended if needed, to forestall any further encroachment to the wetland boundary.**
- 5. As recommended in Ms. Beno's January 11, 2023, Wetland Assessment Report and Mitigation Recommendations, the plantings areas shall be inspected by a biologist immediately following the plant installation to document the placement and vigor of the tree and shrub plantings. Additional inspections of the planting areas shall be conducted during the growing season for three subsequent years to ascertain survival rates, soil stabilization and invasive species maintenance. Copies of the reports documenting the findings from the inspection shall be provided to the Town of Woodbridge Inland Wetlands Agency (the Agency). If the mortality rate of the planting is greater than 15%, the plantings shall be replaced in kind.**
- 6. As recommended in the Report by Martin Brogie, LEP, dated February 13, 2023:**
 - o Since the invasives species are prominent throughout the project area, a more vigorous and well-documented invasives control plan shall be implemented and overseen by a biologist and included in the annual reports to the Agency.**
 - o The disturbed area behind the existing concrete pad shall be restored and included in the buffer planting scheme.**
- 7. As recommended in the review memorandum dated February 13, 2023, from Agency Consulting Engineer James M. Pretti, Jr., the roof drains shall be**

connected to the existing drainage system.

8. A member or representative of this Agency may be present while work under this permit is performed.

9. The Woodbridge Inland Wetlands Enforcement Officer is to be notified once construction is complete so that a follow-up site visit may be made.

10. This Permit is not transferable without the permission of the Agency.

11. Notice of this action by the Woodbridge Inland Wetland Agency shall be recorded in the Land Records of the Town of Woodbridge in such form as prescribed by the Agency.

The Agency has granted this permit because it is in accordance with the regulations of the Town of Woodbridge Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, and with the implementation of the Wetland Mitigation Plan and required three year post monitoring of the wetland and buffer plantings, the direct wetland impacts should be mitigated.

***** Speranzini seconded**

***** In favor: Blythe, Kurek, Goldberg, Speranzini and Sosensky**

***** Opposed: No One**

***** Recused: No One**

***** Abstained: No One**

NEW BUSINESS

Bryant Esparo: 220 Seymour Road

Application to relocate the existing garage to the originally proposed location for the garage closer to the house.

The Agency formally received the application submitted by Bryant Esparo to relocate the existing detached garage to the location closer to the residence that was originally approved by the Agency. The application was accompanied by a site plan showing the location of the proposed garage, checks for the application fee and recording of the Agency decision on the land records and proof of notice to the abutting property owners. The site is not on a public water supply watershed.

Mr. Esparo was present to discuss the application with the Agency members. In his presentation to the Agency, he noted:

- The garage would not have a basement.
- A new foundation would be installed for the garage.
- The “new” location had originally been approved by the Agency.

After a brief discussion the Agency members acted as follows to defer action on the application to the Agency’s Duly Authorized Agent

***** Goldberg moved to delegate action on the application by Bryant Esparo to relocate the existing garage to the originally proposed location for the garage closer to the existing house.**

- *** **Kurek seconded**
- *** **In favor: Blythe, Kurek, Goldberg, Speranzini and Sosensky**
- *** **Opposed: No One**
- *** **Recused: No One**
- *** **Abstained: No One**

PLH Vineyard Sky LLC: 57 Park Lane

Application for modification of permit for solar farm regarding relocation of stormwater basin.

The application submitted by PLH Vineyard Sky LLC for a modification of the existing permit for the construction of a solar farm at 57 Park Lane was formally received by the Agency. The application was accompanied by a check for the application fees, proof of notice to the abutters, revised site plan and drainage report.

Due to the presence of ledge, the location of the proposed stormwater basin had to be relocated. In addition, the original access drive to the back had been shortened because permission has been received from UI to interconnect the solar farm on Park Lane, instead of at the transfer facility downslope on June Street.

It was the consensus of the Agency members to refer the revised site plans and drainage report to the Agency's consulting engineer for review and comment.

Accordingly, action on the application was deferred until the Agency's regular meeting on April 19, 2023.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

- *** **Sosensky moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 pm.**
- *** **Speranzini seconded**
- *** **In favor: Blythe, Kurek, Goldberg, Speranzini and Sosensky**
- *** **Opposed: No One**
- *** **Recused: No One**
- *** **Abstained: No One**

Unanimous approval

Accordingly, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Sullivan, Acting Recording Secretary