

INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE
REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 27, 2022

The regular meeting of the Woodbridge Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) was commenced at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, in the Central Meeting Room of the Woodbridge Town Hall, 11 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge Connecticut by Chairman Robert Blythe.

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

PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUATION

Litchfield Turnpike LLC: 10 and 14 Merritt Avenue

14 Lot subdivision application construction of ± 375' of road, and fourteen duplex units with municipal water and sewer

Chairman Blythe opened the recontinuation of the public hearing on the subject application. The public hearing was recontinued from the Agency's regular meeting on March 23, 2022. Participating in the meeting on behalf of the applicant were consulting engineer, John Paul Garcia and legal Counsel, Attorney John Knuff, and Soil Scientist/environmental consultant William Kenney.

Mr. Kenny spoke and noted that he had submitted a wetland assessment report dated April 12, 2022, and a wetland buffer enhancement planting plan dated April 14, 2022. Those documents had been distributed to the Agency members and posted on the Agency page of the Town Website. In discussion, Mr. Kenny noted:

- There is a "watercourse from the pipe by the parkway to the West River
- There are two homes currently under construction based on a "free split" of the property.
- No activities related to the subdivision would be in the wetlands themselves
- Surface water "movement" is the only "effect" of the project.
- Water ponds from time to time along the base of the parkway but evaporates after a week.
- The standing water is not present long enough to be a vernal pool.
- On April 11th there was standing water in the area. This evening, April 27th there was no water present. Based on the foregoing observations there are no vernal pools on the site.
- During construction there would be sediment and erosion controls in place.
- The soils on the site are well drained.
- The site is flat
- During construction, in the event of a pending large storm event:
 - Construction equipment should be removed from the site prior to the storm event.
 - Erosion control blankets should be laid over any surfaces which are not vegetated.
 - Water velocities would be mainly in the river channel, not in the "flood plain."
- Long term impacts from the site development:
 - The storm water management plan would collect all the water runoff from impervious surfaces and in a pitched drainage system direct that flow northwest, to a vegetated detention basin.

- The detention basin would be vegetated and through biofiltration through the plants and soil in the basin settle out pollutants in suspension in the drainage water.
- A sediment sump is included in the basin and would collect heavier sediment at the southern end of the basin.
- Grades around the houses would be elevated, while at the southern end of the basin the grades would be lowered and planted with native trees/shrubs and a meadow mix
- To provide protection a split rail fence would be installed between the ornamental landscape around the houses and the “natural landscape of the basin area.

Project engineer John Paul Garcia stated that in response to comments received from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection regarding the area being developed in the flood zone, that he would address all comments in one set of revised plans. He also noted that:

- DEEP identified an additional 9 yards of fill in the flood zone
- The need for a change in the spillway elevation.

The Agency’s wetland/biologist consultant Martin Brogie, noted that:

- More specific information should be provided on the wetland assessment.
- There are a lot of invasive species on the site.
- The need for access to the forebay to remove sediments from the forebay.
- Suggested that the site be inspected biannually, with a report furnished back to the Agency that the storm management plan is working.
- The basin floor elevation is 76’. What impact does that have on infiltration?

PE John Paul Garcia responded that the standpipes installed on the site show that the static water level is a foot below the proposed basin floor elevation.

In response to questions from Agency members Attorney Knuff, Mr. Kenny and Mr. Garcia noted that:

- The plantings in the compensatory storage basin area would be okay with having “wet feet,” and would provide shade for the river
- The “trail” along the river would most likely be a grassed path, not gravel. There will be a meeting with the Conservation Commission on May 19th to discuss that issue.
- In the event that the development is not “ownership in common,” a homeowner’s association would be created for maintenance of the storm water management system.

Agency member Sosensky submitted actual copies of the photographs he had taken with his phone of the property, since they did not print accurately from the pdf’s sent to the Agency staff.

Agency member Kurek noted that the proposed house on lot # 9 is close to the identified wetlands, and if it were rotated 90 degrees, it could be pulled forward away from the wetlands.

Mr. Brogie noted the following for the hearing record:

- The upland review areas can provide good wildlife habitat including food sources
- They can also provide shade to keep water temperatures down.
- They can provide a visual buffer from “humans”

- At the particular site, the vegetation along the highway slope is not composed of native species.
- The wetlands along the toe of the highway slope are not of high quality.
- The trees along the river are important for providing shade to the river.
- In some cases, there can be dewatering impacts to wetlands

In general discussion between the applicant and his representatives, members of the Agency and the Agency’s consultants the following was noted:

- Low foundation plantings would be done around the houses, suggested types of plantings will be provided.
- The banks of the West River are currently stable.
- Invasive species should be removed.
- Dead trees should be removed.

Agency member Sosenky noted his concern that the development will disrupt stormwater flow on the site and might impact wetland values and functions.

The Chairman then asked if any member of the public wanted to speak for the hearing record. At this time Mr. Frank DeLeo spoke, noting that he is a member of the West River Water Coalition. In his comments he expressed concern with:

- Structures proposed in the immediate upland review area.
- If any alternate studies of the flood plain would be done, given the concerns of people living in the area.
- The density of the project being “overdone.”

There being no other public comment at this time, it was the consensus of the Agency members to again recontinue the public hearing to allow for additional review and comment by the Agency’s soil scientist/environmentalist, Mr. Brogie.

The Chairman then recontinued the public hearing to the meeting of the Agency on May 18, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

Diana Blythe: 1218 Johnson Road aka First Cut of 49 Rimmon Road

Residential Site Development of New Lot

The application submitted by Diana Blythe for the residential site development of the first split of her property located at 49 Rimmon Road, the new lot to be known as 1218 Johnson Road, was formally received by the Agency. The application was accompanied by site plans showing the development of the first lot split, proof of notice to the abutting property owners and checks for the application fees.

The property is not on a public water supply watershed.

Chairman Blythe recused himself from consideration of this application. Mr. Kurek chaired this portion of the meeting on Mr. Blythe’s behalf.

Michael Ott, of Summer Hill Civil Engineers & Land Surveyors , P.C., was present to discuss the application with the Agency members. In discussion he noted:

- The undeveloped lot is a first split of 49 Rimmon Road.
- There is a pocket of wetlands in the northeast corner of the lot.
- The leaching field would be located above a perched water table.
- The house would have a circular driveway.
- Two existing structures, a barn and well house already exist on the lot.
- The new residence would be serviced by the well in the existing well house.
- The septic plans have been sent to the Quinnpiack Valley Health District for approval.
- Final approval from QVHD has not yet been given.

It was the consensus of the Agency members to defer action on the application until approval has been received from QVHD. No site walk of the property was deemed necessary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

***** Kurek moved to approve the minutes of the following meetings of the IWA, subject to corrections as noted by Agency members Webber and Kurek:**

- **Regular meeting of December 15, 2021**
- **Regular meeting of January 19, 2022**
- **Regular meeting of February 16, 2022**
- **Site Inspection of March 14, 2022**
- **Special meeting of March 16, 2022**
- **Regular meeting of March 23, 2022**

***** Speranzini seconded**

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

***** Opposed: No One**

***** Recused: No One**

***** Abstained: No One**

Approved 5-0

OTHER BUSINESS

Agency member Jean Webber noted that she would be out of state for the Agency's regular meetings in May and June.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

***** Kurek moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 pm.**

***** Speranzini seconded**

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

***** Opposed: No One**

***** Recused: No One**

***** Abstained: No One**

Approved 5-0 vote

Accordingly, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Sullivan, Acting Recording Secretary