

CITY OF NORWALK
MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION/INLAND
WETLAND AGENCY MINUTES
APRIL 8, 2025

PRESENT: Steve Klocke, Chair; Cheryl Brown; Paul Vinett; Ed Holowinko; Matt Pentz (left the meeting at 7:01 pm); Heather Breslin and Kathyn Knight (after the roll call)

STAFF: Alexis Cherichetti

OTHERS: Jim Kousidis; Diana Rowley

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Klocke called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Cherichetti called the roll.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No one spoke on this item.

IV. RECEIPT & DISCUSSION

**A. #S25-653 – 70 Toilsome Avenue – Magnotta – New Single-Family
Residence and associated site improvements adjacent to a wetland and a watercourse**

Ms. Cherichetti began the presentation by orienting the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. She said that the lot is currently vacant and has wetlands in the rear.

Jim Kousidis, the site engineer for the project, continued the presentation by explaining the setbacks, the driveway, and the drainage system. He showed them on the site plan where the house would be located. He also said that they would work with staff on a buffer plan.

Mr. Klocke noted that although his social circle overlaps with the owners, he did not see it as a conflict of interest.

Mr. Kousidis said that there was a small buffer on the property now. There was a discussion about the 100-foot upland review area as well as the physical demarcation between active landscape areas and those that should not be touched. Other commissioners requested a landscape plan. There was further discussion about the drainage system, as well as the silt fence.

At this point, Ms. Cherichetti summarized next steps for the applicant, including a landscape plan. She said she would be available to meet with Mr. Kousidis to discuss the plans.

There was also a discussion about Ms. Knight about the gravel in storm events and the snow removal plan. Mr. Klocke suggested that Ms. Cherichetti prepare a resolution for the next meeting.

V. ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

A. #V25-1080 – 12 Riverwalk Lane – Rowley – Show-Cause Hearing - Clearing and establishment of lawn within a wetland and designated buffer

Ms. Cherichetti began the presentation by explaining how a Show-Cause Hearing worked. She then gave a brief overview of the violation which included wetlands being repurposed as lawn. She oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. She noted that in a 2002 wetland permit the wetlands had been demarcated with boulders. She also showed them aerial photos of the property from 2024, 2021 and 2020, as well as some photos from a different angle. She showed them photos of current conditions. She discussed the 2002 site plan and said that it was noted on the land records that the natural buffer had to be maintained in perpetuity. She also explained that the current homeowner's deed includes a reference to the 2002 permit and filed map. The map notes the limit of lawn. The violation was issued since the buffer is no longer being maintained as a natural buffer. Ms. Cherichetti showed them a photo from the realtor's listing in 2021, showing the vegetation at the time.

Diana Rowley, the owner of the property, continued the presentation. She said that when she purchased the house the land was cleared, so she planted grass seed. She did not realize it was not allowed. There was a picture of the backyard, a month before she closed on the property, which showed the clearing. She also said that the river seemed dry at the time because of drought but was unsure. She also showed them flooding when the river overflowed. She said that she has lost trees due to rotting. There was a discussion about what Ms. Rowley could do if a tree falls.

There was a discussion about some of the photos that were shown. Ms. Rowley asked about the 2002 site plan. Ms. Cherichetti said that the commission would like to see the site restored to this plan, as well as a planting plan for the disturbed areas.. She said that it was to be a natural and non-maintained, non-manicured area.

Mr. Vinett suggested that she look at her neighbors' yards, as examples, in order to do the restoration. He also said that the Conservation Department could help her. Ms. Rowley said that her neighbor does have a lawn. Ms. Cherichetti said that they are aware of her neighbors' properties. Mr. Klocke suggested resources, such as a landscape architect, that could help Ms. Rowley.

There was a review of the timeline for the order of when plans should be submitted. Ms. Cherichetti said that she would work with Ms. Rowley so that she would be successful.

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO UPHOLD THE ENFORCEMENT ORDER FOR #V25-1080 – 12 RIVERWALK LANE, AS WRITTEN.**

***** MR. VINETT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** STEVE KLOCKE; CHERYL BROWN; PAUL VINETT; ED HOLOWINKO; KATHRYN KNIGHT; MATT PENTZ; HEATHER BRESLIN APPROVED.**

***** NO ONE OPPOSED THE MOTION.**

***** NO ONE ABSTAINED.**

Ms. Rowley asked if she would be able to complete the plans by May 13. Mr. Vinett gave her some advice as to what to do and what not to do. He said if she should work with Ms. Cherichetti.

VI. BOND RELEASE/REDUCTION REQUEST

A. #S15-463 – 78 Cranbury Road – White Barns – Construction of a 15-unit Conservation Development in and adjacent to wetlands and watercourses – Release of bonds (\$23,755 & \$15,100) held for construction of a 15-unit Conservation Development adjacent to wetlands and watercourses

Ms. Cherichetti gave a brief overview of the project that had been approved in 2015. She explained that the applicant was seeking release of their bond. She explained that the majority of plants required by the permit are alive. She made suggestions as to how much of the bond to release.

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO RELEASE ALL OF THE S&E CONTROLS OF \$15,000 AND 75% OF THE PLANTING BOND OF \$23,755.**

***** MS. KNIGHT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

There was a discussion about to whom the bond would be released. Ms. Cherichetti did not think that the rights to the bond had been transferred when the land was sold to the HOA. She would have to determine to whom the bond would go, either to the HOA or the developer.

***** STEVE KLOCKE; CHERYL BROWN; PAUL VINETT; ED HOLOWINKO; KATHRYN KNIGHT; HEATHER BRESLIN APPROVED.**

***** NO ONE OPPOSED THE MOTION.**

***** NO ONE ABSTAINED**

VII. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. March 25, 2025 meeting minutes

***** MS. BROWN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 25, 2025 MEETING.**

***** MR. VINETT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** STEVE KLOCKE; CHERYL BROWN; PAUL VINETT; HEATHER BRESLIN; ED HOLOWINKO; KATHRYN KNIGHT APPROVED.**
***** NO ONE OPPOSED THE MOTION.**
***** NO ONE ABSTAINED.**

VIII. CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

A. Earth Day Event - April 26th

Ms. Cherichetti said that she would not be able to attend this event. She would prepare materials for the event but asked the commissioners if any of them could be at the table for the event. She said that she could not get power so they could not show residents the GIS system while there.

There was then a discussion of how GIS worked and noted that the current wetland map had a disclaimer that the map may not show all wetlands on a property.

Ms. Cherichetti suggested having a display to show what the wetlands or buffer could look like. There could be a list of wetland shrubs that could be used. Ms. Breslin made some suggestions as to what they could do at the event, including common FAQs. She also said that she was hoping that someone else could help at the event as well. Ms. Cherichetti said she could provide QR codes. Ms. Breslin said she could make a collage. Mr. Vinett said he would help out as well.

IX. REPORTS

A. Commission Chair

Mr. Klocke did not have any comments.

B. Senior Environmental Officer

Ms. Cherichetti had no comments.

X. ADJOURNMENT

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN.**
***** MR. VINETT SECONDED THE MOTION.**
***** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Palmentiero