

CITY OF NORWALK

CONSERVATION COMMISSION/INLAND WETLAND AGENCY

November 8, 2022

PRESENT: Steve Klocke, Chair; Ed Holowinko; Cheryl Brown; Matt Pentz

STAFF: Alexis Cherichetti

OTHERS: Tom Ryder; Wilder Gleason; Bill Pollack; Cristina Alfano;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Klocke called the meeting to order at 6:00 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. MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Klocke said that they are all volunteers and that they uphold the state statutes that require every town to have an Inland Wetlands Agency. The purpose of the Inland Wetlands Agency is to implement the rules as fairly as possible.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Klocke asked if anyone wanted to make a statement, not related to any of the pending applications that would be heard at this meeting. No one made any comments.

V. RECEIPT & DISCUSSION

There were no new applications to review.

VI. DISCUSSION &/OR DECISION I

a) #S22-610 – 13 Valley Road – LandTech – Removal of invasive species and replanting with native in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti gave a brief overview of the past appearances of the applicant before the Conservation Commission. She noted that she had also drafted a resolution, which the commissioners reviewed. Mr. Klocke said he would prefer to have a non-herbicide approach

first and then have that as a backup. There was a discussion about the regulation of herbicides by the state. There was a discussion about the standing water on the property.

Mr. Klocke made a suggested edit to the proposed resolution that herbicides shall be used only after non-chemical means have been deemed ineffective, which would be added as a whereas clause.

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION#S22-610 FOR 13 VALLEY ROAD WITH THE ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION IN MS. CHERICHETTI'S MEMORANDUM.**

***** MR. PENTZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OPPOSITION OR ABSTENTIONS.**

b) #S22-611 – 71 Crooked Trail – Meck – Construction of a new Single Family Residence adjacent to a wetland

Ms. Cherichetti said that this application had been received at the last meeting. They had submitted revised plans. She had been asked to provide resolutions. She said she had received revised plans from the applicant but had not been able to thoroughly review them. She explained that the applicant's representatives could discuss the revisions at the meeting for the commissioners.

Wilder Gleason, the applicant's representative, said that they had submitted a revised application on the day prior to the meeting. Bill Pollack then showed the commissioners the revisions on the landscape and site plans.

There was a discussion about voting on the resolution at the next meeting on December 13. It would give Ms. Cherichetti some time to review the revised plans and re-write the resolution. Mr. Gleason said that they would like to close this matter today, since a neighbor was considering a petition to require a public hearing. Ms. Cherichetti indicated the neighbor had no submitted any petition.

Ms. Cherichetti said she would revise the resolution.

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE ITEMS IX AND X TO BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEARINGS AT 7 PM.**

***** MS. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0.**

IX. BOND RELEASE/REDUCTION REQUEST

a) #S21-568 – 4 Half Mile Road – Alfano – Release of bond (\$966) for the corrective action landscaping and debris removal in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti gave a brief overview of the application. She showed them photos of the current conditions. There were 3 of the 12 shrubs that did not look healthy. She noted that there is some topsoil being stored on the property. The commissioners thought that since there were some issues they would like to review it again at the next meeting.

Cristina Alfano said that the pile of topsoil was from work on the leaching fields for the septic. She explained that it would be moved by the end of the month. There was a discussion about adding 3 additional shrubs. Ms. Alfano said that the shrubs were not dead but that the roots were dried. She said they were not watered because of the executive order not to water plants during the drought conditions. Ms. Brown made a couple of suggestions. There was a discussion about waiting until the spring for release of the bond. Ms. Cherichetti suggested Ms. Alfano contact her office about the topsoil pile.

b) #S20-560 – 15 Adams Lane – Dean – Release of bond (\$7,360) for the corrective action revegetation in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti explained the corrective plan. There were 8 shade trees required and all but one were thriving. The planting buffer was fine. There was a discussion about woodchips deposited within the buffer. Ms. Cherichetti said they were uphill of the wetlands.

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE RELEASE OF THE BOND HELD AS A CONDITION OF PERMIT #S20-560**

***** MS. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OPPOSITION OR ABSTENTIONS.**

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) October 25, 2022 meeting minutes

***** MS. BROWN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

***** MR. KLOCKE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** MOTION PASSED, 4-0.**

XI. ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. Cherichetti said that the public commissions had to be posted in advance of January 1. She discussed the commission's meeting dates. Meetings were not held on major

religious holidays. She showed them the draft 2023 schedule and made recommendations of which dates they should not hold meetings. There was a discussion about whether there was a minimum number of meetings, to which Ms. Cherichetti said there was no statutory requirement. There was a discussion about dates to add and remove.

XII. CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Ms. Cherichetti said that she had applied for a grant for a flood resiliency plan.

She then asked them to add an item to the agenda, under the category “Assessment of permit need.”

XIII. ASSESSMENT OF PERMIT NEED

- a) #S95-562 - Discussion of one of the conditions. She asked them to allow the staff to make a modification to one of the conditions for a single family residence at 8 Leslie Lane.**

Ms. Cherichetti explained the Commission in the 1990’s often required, for new construction permit applications, that the driveway remain gravel. Over the years since, she noted, the City has adopted much more robust stormwater management requirements. The owner would like to pave their driveway, which bisects a wetland. A previous owner would add new additional gravel to the driveway every three years.

Ms. Cherichetti asked the Commission to allow staff to administratively strike special condition of the permit. There was a discussion about the runoff calculation. Everyone agreed to allow staff to modify the existing permit with oversight.

At this point the commissioners took a 3 minute break before the public hearings.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS (begins at 7:00 p.m.)

- a) #S22-609 – 556 & 558 Westport Avenue and 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, & 14 Renzulli Road – Coastal Luxury Homes – Demolition of existing and construction of new mixed use multi-family development with associated stormwater management and landscaping in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse**

Mr. Klocke opened the public hearing. Ms. Cherichetti explained the goal of the public hearing as well as the process. She explained that members of the public were given one opportunity to make comments. She also confirmed notice in the newspaper and to abutting and adjacent property owners.

Craig Flaherty, principal engineer at Redniss & Mead, began the presentation on behalf of the applicant and introduced the project team. He oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He then showed them the site plans proposed for the property. He explained where the existing drainage pipes and watercourses were located. He discussed the project including parking, the pet run area, proposed drainage management and water quality improvement. He also noted that there is another related application that the commissioners will be reviewing soon. He discussed the boardwalk through the wetlands.

Bill Kenny, landscape architect, continued the presentation with a discussion about the landscape plan as well as plans for the construction of the boardwalk. He explained the plantings and the removal of invasive plants. He discussed the signage that the applicant was proposing. There was a further discussion of the materials to be used for the boardwalk.

Mr. Flaherty continued the presentation with a discussion of alternative plans.

There was a discussion of wildlife in the wetlands. Mr. Kenny said there was the typical suburban wildlife species, but nothing rare or significant.

Mr. Klocke opened public comment. Ms. Cherichetti explained how members of the public should indicate they wish to comment on this application.

Chao Lu, 10 Rivard Crescent, had questions about the fence on the property near his property line. Mr. Flaherty showed the commissioners where the fence met Mr. Lu's property line.

There was a discussion about the timing of the Commission's decision on this application. Mr. Flaherty stated the applicant would have to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission on December 8, prior to the Conservation Commission's meeting in December.

***** MS. BROWN MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

***** MR. HOLOWINKO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** MOTION PASSED, 4-0.**

VIII. DISCUSSION &/OR DECISION II

a) #S22-609 – 556 & 558 Westport Avenue and 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, & 14 Renzulli Road – Coastal Luxury Homes – Demolition of existing and construction of new mixed used multi-family development with associated stormwater management and landscaping in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Brown said that she thought it was a well thought out plan and thought the boardwalk was fine. Mr. Pentz said that he had reservations on the boardwalk but was fine with

the rest of the application. Mr. Holowinko said he was fine with the boardwalk but had concerns that there were too little buffer between the building and the wetlands. There was a discussion about having the building sit back farther so that there is more of a buffer to the wetlands.

The commissioners discussed whether to vote at this meeting or hold off until the next meeting. There was also a discussion about the materials that were submitted by the applicant. There was a further discussion about boardwalks that had previously been installed in wetlands within Norwalk.

Ms. Cherichetti said that the commissioners should review the materials that had been submitted and asked them to review the draft resolution she had sent.

XIII. COMMENTS OF STAFF

a) Report of the Senior Environmental Officer

Ms. Cherichetti said she did not have any comments.

XIV. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

a) Report of the Commission Chair

The commissioners did not have any comments.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero