

CITY OF NORWALK
CONSERVATION COMMISSION/INLAND WETLAND AGENCY
July 12, 2022

PRESENT: John Moeling, Chair; Matt Merluzzi; Cheryl Brown; Jennifer Balliett; Steven Klocke; Matt Pentz; Kathryn Knight

STAFF: Alexis Cherichetti

OTHERS: Joseph Canas; Marlene Cohen; Chris Mead; Jason Enters

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Moeling 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. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IV. RECEIPT & DISCUSSION

a) #S22-602 – 285 Rowayton Avenue – Cohen – Reconstruction of existing retaining wall, with associated grading, filling and sediment management, in the Five Mile River

b) #S22-603 – 283 Rowayton Avenue – Sadik-Khan – Reconstruction of existing retaining wall, with associated grading, filling and sediment management, in the Five Mile River

c) #S22-604 – 291 Rowayton Avenue – Weisheit – Reconstruction of existing retaining wall, with associated grading, filling and sediment management, in the Five Mile River

Ms. Cherichetti began the presentation by noting that there were 3 properties adjacent to each other. She asked the applicant to discuss all three during their orientation. There were retaining walls which collapsed during a storm. All three property owners were present.

Joseph Canas, the engineer for the properties, introduced the project members and then oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property on an aerial map. He noted that the three properties had similar issues. During Hurricane Ida a tree on this property fell and caused the retaining wall to collapse which affected the wall on all three properties. It will be

reconstructed to pre-storm heights. He explained the changes on the other properties. All three property owners had hired the same contractor to do the work at one time over the properties.

Mr. Canas explained the construction process to the commissioners. He also said that summer is a good time to do this construction due to water heights, etc. He showed them the site plans for the reconstruction with a quick overview of what would be happening on all three properties.

There was a discussion about replacing some of the plantings. Mr. Canas said that they would follow any suggestions from the commission. There was also a discussion about the materials that would be used for the wall. Mario Goncalves said that the timeline for the construction would be about 1 month once the applicants had received their approvals. They would like to begin in August.

Mr. Moeling asked if any of the other applicants would like to speak. Marlene Cohen noted that it was the strength of Hurricane Ida and not flooding that caused the tree to fall.

Ms. Cherichetti asked the commissioners to look at the site. Mr. Moeling asked whether the adjacent municipality, Darien, had received a notice of this application which Ms. Cherichetti said they had. The application would not need the approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission but would need a zoning permit.

d) #S22-605 - 8 Leslie Lane – Mead - Construction of a retaining wall adjacent to a wetland

Ms. Cherichetti oriented the commissioners as to the location of the property. She noted that there had been a violation on the property in 2019 but it had been rectified. There is now a new owner that would like to add a retaining wall to slow the erosion on the property

Chris Mead, the current owner, continued the presentation by discussing the current property as well as the proposed project. He had noticed that there is a lot of erosion already on the property. They hoped a retaining wall would stop this. They did not want to see the wetlands destroyed. He then showed them where the retaining wall would be. He showed them the type of wall that would be built. He also discussed some alternatives that they had considered. Mr. Mead then showed them the proposed site plan. There would be no effect on the trees and they would like to add plantings, especially in the wetlands.

Mr. Klocke asked for more drawings/schematic with details before he could decide on this application. Mr. Mead asked for specifics and Ms. Cherichetti said she could meet with him to discuss this further.

V. DISCUSSION &/OR DECISION

a) #S22-596 – 75 Witch Lane – FC Engineering LLC – Dredging of existing pond in and adjacent to wetlands and watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti began the presentation by noting that the commissioners had asked for a wetland expert but she has had a difficult time finding one. However, earlier today she had received a bid for a wetlands expert who would begin working on this application. She then explained the approval process. The commissioners then discussed the possibility of adding a second meeting in August. They cannot ask the applicant for another extension. Other options were discussed as well. Ms. Cherichetti asked which commissioners could be at a meeting on August 23. Most said they were available.

b) #S22-599 – 20 Lancaster Drive – Goldman – Dredge pond in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti said that the applicant had not submitted new materials. He would also try to find a wetlands expert and did give the Commission an extension of time so he could get quotes.

c) #S19-546A – 10 Willard Road – Willard Road LLC – Modification of Permit to install culvert pipe, replace headwall and install drainage in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Mr. Moeling noted that this had been discussed in detail at their previous meeting.

***** MR. MOELING MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION IN THE MEMORANDUM BY MS. CHERICHETTI AND APPROVE THE APPLICATION.**

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

There was then a review of the application and discussion of the resolution. Ms. Cherichetti showed them pictures of the watercourse, culvert and previously approved bridge. There would be a pedestrian path and drainage improvements.

Jason Enters then explained the landscaping plan. There was a discussion about the erosion control plan. Mr. Enters explained why the erosion controls were moved because there was a fire lane being put in. He said the pictures are old. Ms. Cherichetti explained the in-stream work.

***** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

d) #S22-601 – 198 West Norwalk Road – Baker – Corrective Action removal of vegetation and revegetation of a slope adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Mr. Moeling noted that this had been discussed in detail at the previous meeting. He said that he had visited the site and it was different from what he expected. There was a review of the pictures of the current plantings, as well as a discussion of the different types. There was a discussion about how to trim a tree. Bruce Baker gave an explanation of the sassafras trees, as well as other smaller trees.

Ms. Cherichetti said that she had not drafted a resolution since she had not received much direction from the commissioners. There would be a resolution for the next meeting.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) June 28, 2022 meeting minutes

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES.**

***** MR. MERLUZZI SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** MOTION PASSED.**

VII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Cherichetti noted that there had never been a nominating committee. She suggested that the commissioners should nominate a chair, and then vote on that member. She also suggested nominations from the floor. Mr. Klocke said he would nominate Ms. Brown.

Mr. Pentz nominated Mr. Klocke to be the chair, seconded by Ms. Knight. The motion passed.

Mr. Klocke nominated Ms. Brown for Vice Chair which was seconded by Mr. Moeling.

Mr. Moeling noted that he cannot be chair again and has opted not to be vice chair. He can stay another 4.5 years.

VIII. COMMENTS OF STAFF

a) Report of the Senior Environmental Officer

Ms. Cherichetti noted that there had been some turnover in the office of Planning and Zoning. She explained that they are now looking for a Land Use tech that does inland wetland work. Amelia has a new title as she now has a new position in the Planning and Zoning office therefore, she will be attending less meetings.

Ms. Cherichetti discussed about written notice to property owners that intersect wetlands. The GIS has not been working for a couple of weeks so it has not been possible to work on a variety of projects.

IX. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

a) Report of the Commission Chair

There was no report from the Chair.

Mr. Klocke asked if there could be two different categories as to inland/wetland as well as conservation. Ms. Cherichetti suggested adding a "Conservation Initiatives" to the agenda after the minutes but before the comments. There was also a discussion about having a mission statement and whether it would be for both conservation/inland wetlands. Ms. Cherichetti noted that a previous Chair had written a similar statement and would try to find it. There was a discussion about the purpose of the statement.

X. ADJOURNMENT

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN.**

***** MR. MOELING SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero