

CITY OF NORWALK
CONSERVATION COMMISSION/INLAND WETLAND AGENCY
JULY 9, 2024

PRESENT: Steve Klocke, Chair; Cheryl Brown; Heather Breslin; Kathryn Knight; Ed Holowinko

STAFF: Alexis Cherichetti

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OTHERS: Michelle Abbruzzese; Susan Beyman

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Klocke called the meeting to order at 6:01 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 COMMENT

Before anyone from the public spoke, Mr. Klocke said that he noticed that Michelle Abbruzzese was a neighbor to a property that they would be reviewing later in the meeting. He reminded her that the comments should be generic and not addressed to the property's violations. Ms. Cherichetti reminded them that there would be a public hearing which would allow comments on this application.

Michelle Abbruzzese, 2 Singing Woods Court, explained that at the last meeting she spoke about the wetlands in general. She expressed concern about the vernal pools in Norwalk, which are temporary wetlands. She said that a study had been done in Connecticut by the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. It discussed the importance of these pools and when they should be studied. It also studied the impact of habitat fragmentation on wood frogs. Some depend on the vernal pools. She explained how salamanders and frogs wander from their birth sites to select other places for breeding. She said landscape connectivity was important to locate alternate breeding habitats, as well as preserve the diversity of amphibian populations. She also discussed recommendations from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for the upland review area. She asked the commission to conduct a thorough vernal pool near development in Norwalk, so that they could continue to thrive.

Susan Beyman, 1 Singing Woods Court, said she applauded the work the commission was doing. She noted that they had recently amended the regulations. Since the Silvermine

River was behind their house, they had been before the commission but they had always found their dealings to be fair. She thanked the commissioners for their service and for protecting Norwalk's inland/wetlands and watercourses.

IV. RECEIPT & DISCUSSION

a) #S24-643 – Bonnybrook Trail – Norwalk Dept. of Public Works – Repair activities on bridges in and adjacent to a watercourse (Holy Ghost Father's Brook)

Ms. Cherichetti began the presentation with a brief explanation of the application.

Paul Sotnik, Sr. Civil Engineer for the Department of Public Works (DPW), continued the presentation with an explanation of a report from 2019 which inspected local bridges. The report included ratings of those bridges as well as the maintenance work that would be needed to be done. There are two bridges at Bonnybrook Trail that they would need permits to complete work on. He then introduced Weston and Samson who were the consultants for the city. The bridges also need to be in compliance with Federal and State laws.

Peter Grandy, Weston and Samson, continued by showing the commissioners a slideshow to discuss the project. He oriented the commissioners as to the location of the bridges on a site plan, which were almost adjacent to one another. He explained how the bridges would be repaired and not replaced. He showed them what was missing from the bridges. He then discussed the proposed activities to fix the bridges.

There was a discussion of the temporary and permanent impacts to the wetlands and water course. There was also a discussion about how old the bridge was. Mr. Grandy said that the culverts were in good shape. There was a discussion of streambed materials, as well as who owns the land.

Mr. Klocke asked that the staff prepare a draft resolution for the next meeting.

V. DISCUSSION &/OR DECISION

a) #S24-640 – 2 Lloyd Road – Jay Fain & Associates, LLC – Corrective Action piping and filling of a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti said that this application should be tabled until the next meeting since Mr. Fain was unable to attend.

b) #S24-641 – 4 Singing Woods Road – William Kenny Associates, LLC - Corrective Action removal of fill from a wetland and construction of a new SFR adjacent to a wetland

Ms. Cherichetti gave an explanation of the application.

William Kenny, landscape architect, said that they had reviewed the comments from the commission after the last meeting. Some improvements would be moved out of the upland review area.

Len D'Andrea, the engineer on the project, continued the presentation by showing them the site plan. He explained that there is a paper road on the property. He also explained the project on the property and the changes that they had made to the plans. These would be submitted to the commission.

Mr. Klocke noted that the upland review area was 50 ft. since the application had been submitted before the regulations had been changed. There was a discussion about the trees that would be removed.

At this point, there was a discussion to schedule the public hearing. Ms. Cherichetti said that the applicant would have to submit their revised plans by Friday which Mr. D'Andrea said they would do.

There was also a discussion about the violation on the property and the construction of the new house. Ms. Cherichetti had suggested that the matter be handled together. She said that the application did address the violation. There was also a discussion as to whether the subdivision application had been reviewed. Ms. Cherichetti said that it went back to 1956 which was prior to the adoption of the wetlands regulations.

There was a discussion about the wetland delineation as well as the testing that had been done to determine the actual line. Mr. Kenny explained how they mapped the delineation line and had done testing holes to confirm. There was also a discussion about how far the boulder demarcation was from the wetland line. Ms. Cherichetti showed them the aerial view of the property. Ms. Cherichetti said that the commissioners should go out to the property before the next meeting. She would be happy to go with them.

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO SET THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR JULY 23, 2024.**

***** MS. BRESLIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

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

***** NO ONE ABSTAINED.**

c) #S24-642 – 6 Range Road – DeBeradinis – Installation of in-ground pool adjacent to a wetland and a watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti said that she had drafted a resolution for the commissioners.

***** MS. BRESLIN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AS DRAFTED BY STAFF, DATED JULY 5, 2024.**

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

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

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

***** NO ONE ABSTAINED.**

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) June 25, 2024 meeting minutes

***** MS. BROWN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2024.**

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

***** STEVE KLOCKE; CHERYL BROWN; KATHRYN KNIGHT APPROVED.**

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

***** ED HOLOWINKO ABSTAINED.**

VII. CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

For applications, Ms. Knight asked if the city could think about using plantings to improve infrastructure. Ms. Cherichetti said that the city is looking into green infrastructure like trees and canopy replacement. However, in the case of bridge repairs, the funding is generally thought to be used solely for bridge repairs and there is not enough money to add this in. She said that she has made the same comment to DPW and would do so again. Ms. Knight said that there is funding in the general tree program. Ms. Cherichetti suggested having someone from DPW come to speak with the commission.

VIII. COMMENTS OF STAFF

a) Report of the Senior Environmental Officer

Ms. Cherichetti did not have any comments.

IX. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

a) Report of the Commission Chair

Ms. Breslin said that she had some questions on the Singing Woods application about the commission's role. Ms. Cherichetti said that she could call her the next day to discuss the issues.

Ms. Knight commented on the public comment portion of the agenda. Mr. Klocke said that he was hesitant to engage in conversation since the speakers were neighbors to one of the applicants on the agenda. Ms. Cherichetti said that she could send additional information to the commissioners.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero