

CITY OF NORWALK
CONSERVATION COMMISSION/INLAND WETLAND AGENCY
February 28, 2023

PRESENT: Steve Klocke, Chair; Cheryl Brown, Vice Chair; John Moeling; Matt Pentz; Kathryn Knight; Ed Holowinko

STAFF: Alexis Cherichetti

OTHERS: Kristen DeLeo; Amy Richardson

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Klocke called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. She noted that Amy Richardson, who had recently been appointed to the Conservation Commission but not yet sworn in, was listening into the meeting.

III. MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Klocke said they would skip this item since they were running late.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public made any comments.

V. RECEIPT & DISCUSSION

a) S19-546B – 10 Willard Road- 10 Willard Road LLC – Modification of Permit to include amendment to culvert inverts, fence location, buffer plantings and removal of vegetation in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti said that the applicant was not on Zoom at this time. She suggested that they shuffle the agenda until the applicant did arrive.

***** MR. KLOCKE MADE A MOTION TO REORDER THE AGENDA AND BEGIN WITH DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION AND RETURN TO RECEIPT & DISCUSSION.**

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

***** MOTION PASSED, 6-0.**

V. DISCUSSION &/OR DECISION

a) #S23-613 – 18 Eastwood Road – Suarez – Corrective Action landscaping in and adjacent to a wetland and a watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti said that Mr. Suarez had asked this item be tabled until the next meeting. She had forwarded to Agency members her email to the applicant encouraging clarification on questions they had at their meeting in January. The applicant is still working on providing information for the application.

b) #S23-614 – 31 Orchard Hill Road – LandTech – Installation of an in-ground pool requiring a reserve septic system (B-100a) adjacent to a wetland and a watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti noted that the reserve septic system, required for the installation of a pool, was within the upland review area. The application had been received at their January meeting. She also noted that a draft resolution had been sent to Agency members to act upon at this meeting.

***** MS. BROWN MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION IN THE MEMO DATED FEBRUARY 7, 2023 FOR #S23-614 – 31 ORCHARD HILL ROAD AS WRITTEN FOR APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS.**

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

***** MOTION PASSED, 6-0.**

c) #S23-615 – 9 Princes Pine Road – DeLeo – Corrective Action landscaping in and adjacent to a wetland and a watercourse

Ms. Cherichetti gave a brief overview of the application and noted that it had been received at their January 24, 2023 meeting. There had been discussion on the landscaping plan. A revised plan had been submitted. She said she had sent them a draft resolution.

There was a discussion about the revised landscape plan.

***** MR. MOELING MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION WITH THE ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION FOR #S23-615 IN MS. CHERICHETTI'S MEMO, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS THEREIN**

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

***** MOTION PASSED, 6-0.**

Kristen DeLeo asked about next steps. Ms. Cherichetti said that she would send her the permit, as well as other necessary paperwork.

d) #S23-616 – 761 Main Avenue – iPark Norwalk II, LLC – Corrective Action landscaping in a watercourse

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Ms. Cherichetti said that the applicant had asked for this item to be tabled. Mr. Stewart told Ms. Cherichetti that the engineer that was working on this application was no longer working on it and he would have to find a new one. Ms. Cherichetti reviewed the statutory timeframes for consideration of applications.

V. RECEIPT & DISCUSSION

a) S19-546B – 10 Willard Road- 10 Willard Road LLC – Modification of Permit to include amendment to culvert inverts, fence location, buffer plantings and removal of vegetation in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

This item had been delayed from earlier in the meeting but then the Agency members returned to it at 6:16 pm.

Ms. Cherichetti gave a brief history of the approved permit. She then oriented the Agency members as to the location of the property on the site plan. She discussed the modifications of the permit that the applicant is seeking. She noted the modification application sought to align the current site conditions with the site conditions on the approved site plan. She said the culverts had not been installed at the approved height. She also discussed the proposed plantings and the removal of vegetation. She showed them a picture of an area next to the dog park.

There was a discussion about the bond which is being held in order to enforce compliance. The Planning & Zoning Department was also holding a bond. Ms. Cherichetti noted that they could approve some conditions and deny others. She then showed them pictures of the current conditions which did not sufficient vegetated coverage. There was a discussion about the conservation easement and the fire and emergency egress route.

Ms. Cherichetti was not sure why the applicant had not appeared at this meeting. She would send an email to remind him to come to the next meeting on March 14.

There would not be a motion at this meeting since this was only the receipt of the application.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) January 24, 2023 meeting minutes

***** MS. KNIGHT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 24, 2023.**

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

***** MOTION PASSED, 5-0.**
***** NO ONE OPPOSED THE MOTION.**
***** MR. HOLOWINKO ABSTAINED.**

VIII. CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Ms. Cherichetti had sent a draft letter to the Commissioners which would be sent to homeowners. Mr. Moeling suggested that the letter be shortened to one page so that people would read it. He said that to shorten it, the discussion on penalties should be removed. Ms. Cherichetti agreed it should be shortened to one page.

There was a discussion about the disclosure letter that sellers complete whether there are wetlands on the property.

Ms. Richardson then made suggestions for the letter as well. There was also a discussion about how to spread the word about the information in this letter. It was suggested to reach people through social media.

IX. COMMENTS OF STAFF

a) Report of the Senior Environmental Officer

Ms. Cherichetti asked for further comments on the draft letter that she had sent to them. She also noted that there were additional violations this week.

XI. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

a) Report of the Commission Chair

Commissioner Knight said that Greenwich had prepared an updated Open Space Plan. There had been a draft Open Space Plan for Norwalk in 2005. Ms. Cherichetti said that there had been a task force that worked on it for about one and a half years. However, the administration at the time had the work stopped. She would send the draft to the Commissioners as well as the Greenwich Open Space Plan.

There was a discussion about funding requests in the city's Capital Budget for the Conservation Commission. The Open Space Fund request was not recommended by the CFO. The Commissioners decided to write a letter requesting to have the funding restored.

Commissioner Pentz would draft it. He also asked if Ms. Cherichetti had adequate support in the Operating Budget. She said she did but she thought the city could always invest in more environmental staff. There was then a discussion about previous employees in the

Conservation Department. Prior to 2009, there had only been one employee. Currently the department is short one staff member which is also shared with Planning and Zoning.

There was further discussion about revisiting the draft Open Space Plan for Norwalk. There was a discussion about how asking for funding to be restored for the Open Space Fund. The Open Space Plan funding can be requested in the next Capital Budget cycle. It was discussed how the amount of private open space in Norwalk has decreased.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

***** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero