

From: Lois Laczko February 10, 2012 10:14:31 AM
Subject: Conservation Commission Minutes 12/20/2011 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_ConserveMin
Cc:

CONSERVATION COMMISSION/INLAND WETLANDS &
WATERCOURSES AGENCY MINUTES
DECEMBER 20, 2011
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Richard Miller, Chairman, called the Regular Meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:38 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Town Offices. Other members and alternates in attendance were Margaret Sexton, Patrick Kottas, Ryan Mihalic, Margery Winters, and Donald Rieger. Also present were Howard Beach, Conservation Officer, Janis Prifti, Commission Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Miller appointed Commissioner Rieger to serve for Commissioner Bucknam and Commissioner Kottas to serve for Commissioner Zackeo.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of November 15, 2011

Commissioner Rieger made a motion to approve the November 15, 2011, minutes. Commissioner Winters seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

IV. RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATION(s)

a. Application of Richard L. Sawitzke, P.E., Town Engineer/Director of Capital Projects, Applicant for an Inland Wetlands Permit to allow for construction of a parking area, and also a walkway, within the 100-foot regulated area to a wetland on property located at the Town of Simsbury's Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street. (Map G-10, Block 203, Lot 049)

Mr. Sawitzke provided a general overview of the area at Scout Hall with 18 existing parking spaces and a proposal for 10 additional spaces with a walkway that would come up into the Library. He said the soils are mostly sand and gravel and the solid blue line delineates the upland review area. He stated the issue has come up over the years with a bridge proposed

originally using the same theme as the southern boundary of the Library property - a precast concrete structure and brick wall theme. He said a bridge is intrusive and expensive and today's proposal is for a simpler pedestrian crossing similar to the approved treatment behind Drake Hill Plaza's section of the same brook. He said the driveway connection was approved by the Library and Congregational Church, but there remain concerns about traffic cutting through Church and Library property and a more invasive impact. He said it is hoped with improved pathways and lighting that people will walk and utilize the area. He stated the main reasons for doing this are the extremely successfully Library programs and community events. Currently, he said there are about 90 spaces onsite and direct access to 28 more is significant. He said impacts include, 10 additional spaces and on the eastern edge a five-foot walk which picks up the existing Belden Forest walkway, across the brook to the Library site.

He said the stream is a well-defined channel and they are crossing at the narrowest area with lighting for security and safety. He said the narrow band of wetlands is about .14 acres along the brook; the wetland is primarily characterized as the stream course itself. Regarding the upland review area corridor, he said they will disturb in the 100-foot wetland buffer area about .13 acres and a 7' wide x 20' long crossing at the brook; they will deposit about 300 cubic yards of clean fill in the parking area to protect the valuable trees. He said it is an open canopy forest area although there are many oak trees down from the storm with severe damage near the dam further northwest on the site. He stated they are also preserving the large pachysandra field onsite and there has been consideration in other Town studies for a pond feature in the area. He said about 3% of the watercourse is affected on Town property and about 5% in the upland review area; the parking lot would be paved with a stone infiltration channel along the edge to prevent direct runoff into the upland review area and a five-foot grass strip and paved walkway.

He said the Zoning Commission liked the walk so people can get out of the parking lot quickly and it would be more attractive, rather than on the edge of the Pine Forest. He said the original culvert proposed was fairly large and after more extensive study of the sandy gravel percentage in this drainage basin, as well as the retention in wetlands further north, it is now proposed to use a four-foot diameter culvert which would take about 4 weeks to complete, excluding planting and paving, at an estimated cost of \$32,000. He said they will landscape with native plants; the bridge with brick-faced wall will be reduced greatly in scope; there will be four-foot culvert with the bottom foot maintained in the flow for fish passage and using versalock type walls the same as at Drake Hill Plaza at a maximum height of five feet, except at the pipe where the depth is nine feet.

He said the original proposed crossing preceded the Library addition and it

would now be very expensive and intrusive to break into the existing stonewall. He said the current proposal completely avoids the Pine Plantation. He stated the need for additional parking at the Library is because of both their special programs and community programs and it is also very busy in the evening. The Commissioners discussed the difficulty of adding another signal to allow usage of Drake Hill Plaza parking. He said the Library driveway would have a textured crossway over to the stairway. He said the culvert only needs a stone foundation underneath and they'll use a versalock interlocking wall with a brownstone look and no footings required.

There was discussion of plantings, including native dogwoods. He said there will be lanterns on the walkway and it will create a nice walking path in the area connecting to Belden Forest's walkway. He said they considered a wood deck bridge, but there is a possibility of a future pond and related issues, so he would like to leave the walkway and crossing fairly simple. He said other than fill to level the parking area, there will be no other significant excavation, cuts or fills; generally a stone trench is two-feet deep and one-foot wide and would use coarser stone underneath with pea stone on top; the grass would be next to the stone trench. He said it is very difficult to get a company to make a small amount of permeable paving; Mr. Beach discussed the technical considerations.

If the weather holds, he proposes completing the crossing and grading as compacted sand and gravel will maintain. He said Scout Hall sits on a small triangular piece of property and this pathway is 20-30 feet with much of the area access already existing. He explained the Library project will soon lose the approved and bonded funding for the walkway and bridge - signage will also be added. Steve Osborn of First Church said for years they have tried to get members to park in the Library parking lot and they nonetheless doublepark in the Church lot and they hope this proposal will result in people taking a direct route from the Library lot. He stated he was representing the President of the Congregation and this proposal is an attractive and hopefully beneficial alternative for them. Commissioner Winters would like the Town plans for the future to consider parking coordination. Chairman Miller said the LID study has some consideration of parking in the future. Mr. Beach discussed DOT's widened parking lanes on Hopmeadow Street which causes people to think it is another lane; Mr. Sawitzke said they have a grant for bumpouts for pedestrian crossings.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion that this is a regulated activity because it involves construction of a bridge and culvert in a watercourse and disturbance of the surrounding area in the upland review area. Commissioner Winters seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion that it is not a significant activity based upon the information provided by the applicant today about how the construction will be performed and construction measures that will be implemented to make sure there is minimal impact to the upland review area and the watercourse. Commissioner Winters seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion to approve the permit subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The non-native species on the planting list are removed, particularly the Japanese and Korean Dogwood trees, and replaced with something more native and Town staff can help;
- 2) The four-foot culvert used is for pedestrian traffic and not to create a passage way or bridge to support a vehicle without requiring further evaluation and permit by this agency; and
- 3) Follow all guidelines set forth by Town staff in the memo to the agency.

Commissioner Kottas seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

VI. RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATION(s)

1) Spillway Cease and Restore

Mr. Beach demonstrated on a map that 2-3 layers of concrete paver blocks (100 lbs. each) have been added to the top of the dam raising the water level 8-10 inches and now, with this year's severe weather, the water is going over the emergency spillway and has destroyed the bank. He said it is likely the Condo Association put the blocks in to raise the water level; they own the pond and the Town owns the dam. He said the path ends at a 6-7 foot deep hole and is a real hazard as the trail is regularly used; once the water gets over the solid clay dam, the rich sandy soil is rapidly eroded. He will recommend the Town do a survey and put pins in place, but the dam will likely require more repair soon. Mr. Sawitzke said they need to remove the blocks from the site immediately. Mr. Beach said they must put in normal fill and restore the bank.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion the Town be directed to restore the condition of the spillway adjacent to the pond and label it as a cease and restore for the Town to make sure that the action that started the damage is immediately removed and the condition is restored to its normal purpose and use. Commissioner Winters seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

2) Lot on Firetown Road for one house with barn in the back and nothing within 65 feet of wetland

Mr. Beach said people working on the lot suggested two lots and the owners then had to negotiate with neighbors on each side; now they are back to proposing one house near Firetown in order to get drainage. He said this Board requested a public hearing and they agreed.

3) Ensign Bickford Application

Mr. Beach said EB has a site cleanup project and their first step is an inland wetlands map amendment for the eight wetlands; once identified they will probably come in the spring for permits to begin remediation; this encompasses both sides of Hopmeadow Street.

V. STAFF REPORTS

None.

VI. DISCUSSION

Chairman Miller discussed last year's two paragraph writeup about the Commission in the Annual Report and suggested for this year they report the LID Study being incorporated into the Design Guidelines; other suggestions were wastewater management, Drake Hill permeable pavement, Landmark Realty's West Street application, Dorset Crossing's sophisticated LID post-development hydrology and water quality improvement with infiltration detention basin, outflow construction, and 2-3 stonecheck dams. He said registrations are due in 3 weeks and only Valero's has come in so far; Wagner has not made a decision. He understood that EB volunteered their site at Town Forest for grinding and chip storage following the recent storm.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Beach requested Commissioner Mihalic's list of environmental regulation changes for consideration in Town regulations, e.g. what can the Commission do procedurally regarding an amended application. Commissioner Kottas recommended having a handout of native plants for applicants; Chairman Miller said that UConn Plant Science has a list that could be accessed of recommended non-native plants.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.
Commissioner Winters seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Ryan Mihalic, Secretary