

MINUTES
INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
JANUARY 11, 2017 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – 134 GROTON LONG POINT ROAD
COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Agency: Scott, Sutphen, Block, Ashworth
Staff: Jones, Allen, Galetta

Chairperson Scott called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

1. December 14, 2016

MOTION: To approve the minutes of December 14, 2016, as written

Motion made by Block, seconded by Ashworth, so voted unanimously.

IV. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. IWA 16-08 Groton Shopping Center Building Addition, 688 Long Hill Road

Todd Shively, Director of Construction for Cedar Realty Trust, presented the application to the Agency. He explained that Cedar Realty Trust is the owner of Groton Shopping Center and discussed the number of upgrades the ownership has undertaken over previous year. They have a new tenant that will require additional space for their business so Cedar Realty Trust is proposing a 7,500 SF addition to the back of the existing western retail building. He noted that there are wetlands on the northern end of the property.

Rachel Highland, a soil scientist with BL Companies, described the wetlands that are located along the side and the back of the property. There will be no direct impact to the wetlands. The work will be done in the 100' regulated area. The parking area already exists in the wetland buffer. The plan is to remove some impervious surface for islands which will result in less impervious surface when finished. Highland noted that only native species will be used for plantings around the edges of the parking lot and explained that hardier species will be required for the islands.

Shively also explained that a former Groton Utilities (GU) Transformer Substation is located in the parking area. Cedar Realty Trust recently purchased the property from GU and they are now in the process of combining the lots. They are also working with the Planning Commission and staff on a Site Plan application.

The Agency asked for details regarding the resurfacing. Staff noted that the grades will remain the same to keep water flowing in the same manner. There is an existing catchbasin where the lots will continue to drain. Another catchbasin will be added to the stormwater system. There will be no drainage discharge into the wetlands. Drainage will go into the existing system. There is no plan to curb the parking area.

Staff also noted that erosion and sediment (E&S) controls for the project need some revision. Conditions have been added to the motion to address E&S controls outside the parking lot while the work is being done. Staff discussed the additional conditions with the Agency.

MOTION: To approve the Groton Shopping Center Addition application for the following reasons:

1. There is no loss or wetland or watercourse as a result of this project.
2. The work will take place on a previously disturbed, impervious surface.

This permit is subject to the four standard conditions and the following modifications:

1. The wetland boundary shall be shown on all plan sheets.
2. The Limits of Disturbance line shall coincide with the sediment fence line.
3. The Sediment and Erosion Control narrative shall be revised to remove reference to all measures that will not be employed on this site.

Motion made by Sutphen, second by Block, so voted unanimously.

2. IWA 16-09 Chesler Lot Division, 605 Fishtown Road

Staff noted the application had a previous approval and a copy of the permit was included in the packet. At that time, there was some discussion about making the buffer 50'.

Land Surveyor Mike Scanlon, of Loureiro (formerly DiCesare-Bentley Engineers) presented the application to the Agency. The primary reason for the current application is because the previous permit is expired. He explained that much of the work has already been done such as extending utilities to the site and construction of a shared driveway. The remaining work is related primarily to the construction of a house. The original plan has not changed with the exception of things such as reducing the sediment fence where it is no longer needed. The property owner wishes to market the lot as a buildable piece and having a Wetland approval is desirable in so doing.

Staff reviewed additional conditions on the motion relative to the location of construction activity and the erosion and sediment controls.

MOTION: To approve the Chesler Lot Division application for the following reasons:

1. All work will take place further than 50 feet from the wetlands
2. There is no loss of wetland or watercourse associated with this project.

This permit is subject to the five standard conditions and the following additional conditions:

1. There shall be no activity within 50 feet of the wetlands without further review by the Inland Wetland Agency.
2. A grading and erosion control plan shall be submitted to the Office of Planning and Development Services prior to the issuance of the building permit to confirm compliance with this permit.

Motion made by Sutphen, second by Ashworth, so voted unanimously.

3. IWA 16-10 Grasso Technical High School Drive Improvements, 189 Fort Hill Road

Staff noted this application just had staff review and will not present at this meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Election of Officers

MOTION: Motion to approve the slate of current officers.

Motion made by Block, seconded by Sutphen, so voted unanimously

2. Report of Chair – None
3. Report of Staff

Staff and the Agency discussed the many projects currently going on in the Town. Ashworth noted that more unregistered vehicles are located on Cold Spring Road in the same locations that he previously reported about. Staff will make the Zoning Official aware of this.

Staff reported that a new Code Enforcement Officer, Tom Zanarini, will start on January 24, 2017. His duties were discussed and staff noted that the plan is to assign him to staff the Zoning Board of Appeals. Matt Allen will then be assigned to staff the Wetlands Agency where his education and background are well suited.

Another project underway is a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) with the US Naval Base. This is a federally funded, 12-month project that towns along the Thames River are doing jointly. The idea is to look at compatible uses around the Base that will not pose a threat to the base. One such study was just completed in the Town of East Lyme.

Staff noted that the Zoning Commission is updating and revising the Zoning Regulations. Its first task is to update the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD).

This has been a year-long project that has involved review of scientific data and public input along with consultant and staff recommendations.

One often repeated comment from the public is to make the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD) non-disturbance area the same distance from a wetland or watercourse as the Inland Wetland Regulation's regulated area. The Agency noted that activity can take place in the regulated area with a permit, which is very different from a zoning regulation that would prohibit any work. They also noted that a Wetland Permit is required before Site Plan or Special Permit approval.

After this update they will continue with review of the entire Zoning Regulations then move on to the Subdivision Regulations update.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Barbara Block, Secretary
Inland Wetland Agency

Prepared by Lynda Galetta
Office Assistant II