

MINUTES
INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
FEBRUARY 11, 2015 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Agency: Block, Sutphen, Ashworth, Furlong
Staff: Jones, Galetta

Vice Chairperson Sutphen called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and sat Furlong for Scott.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF January 28, 2015 and February 3, 2015

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 28, 2015 and February 3, 2015, as written.

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

IV. NEW APPLICATIONS – None

V. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. Fields of Fire, 715 Noank Ledyard Road, Expansion

Tom Vignato, owner of Fields of Fire, presented the expansion plans for his business, located at 715 Noank Ledyard Road, to the Agency. He is expanding his operation to include activities other than paintball. The plan is for an aerial adventure park, which in addition to paintball will include a ropes course, mountain bike trail, and remote control car course. His hope is to take advantage of his proximity to the highway for marketing purposes.

Vignato explained that he will relocate the mesh netting from the highway and move the paintball area south. The existing parking area will be relocated further into the property. In order to get supplies, employees and emergency vehicles back and forth to the recreational areas an access drive must be widened to allow for two-way traffic. This will involve extending an existing culvert by 10' and using fieldstone and gravel fill in the wetlands in order to have a 24' wide, two-lane driveway. He additionally noted that the ropes course will be built by hand, a walking trail will remain as approved previously, and the radio control car track is outside of review area. The driveway crossing is the biggest impact to the wetlands. The mountain bike track is pushed back 50' from the nearest wetland, as the Agency requested, and will entail only limited brush removal. At the suggestion of the fire marshal, a 250-gallon water tank will be located in the woods for brush fire emergencies.

Staff noted that the plans have been revised per staff review comments. The storm water and erosion control plans have been revised. The Agency expressed concern about the size of the access drive, but staff noted that 24' driveways are standard for commercial locations. Additionally, the widening is to the north of the existing driveway rather than south where the wetlands are of higher quality.

MOTION: To approve the Fields of Fire Expansion application for the following reasons:

1. The wetland area to be filled by the driveway expansion has been heavily impacted by the runoff from I-95 and is not as valuable as the area south of the driveway.
2. All activates, other than the driveway expansion are temporary in nature and will have little impact on the wetlands.

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

1. The wetland application notes, dated February 2015, shall be placed on the plan.

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

2. Groton Utilities Water Filtration Plant Improvements, 1268 Poquonnock Road

Staff noted that the applicant has just had a staff review meeting. The plan will be revised to add a sidewalk along the Route 1 frontage, adjacent to a channelized watercourse. The application was tabled to the next meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

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

Staff briefly discussed the Agency's By Laws which were written in 1974. As part of a departmental initiative, the by laws from all the land use commissions are being reviewed and at some point staff will come to the Agency with recommendations.

Staff also distributed The Habitat newsletter.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Barbara Block, Secretary
Inland Wetland Agency

Prepared by Lynda Galetta
Office Assistant II