

MINUTES
INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
MARCH 9, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

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

Vice Chairman Sutphen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and sat Furlong for Scott.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

1. February 10, 2016

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 10, 2016, as written

Motion made by Ashworth, seconded by Furlong. Motion passed 4, 0, 1 (Block).

2. February 17, 2016

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 17, 2016, as written

Motion made by Sutphen, seconded by Ashworth. Motion passed 4, 0, 1 (Block).

IV. NEW APPLICATIONS

1. High Rock Inn Sidewalk, 0 High Rock Road

Clint Brown, P.E., of DiCesare-Bentley introduced the application to the Agency. The applicant is Stonington Behavioral Health and the subject property is open space owned by the Town of Groton. A previous sidewalk agreement has expired and the Planning Commission is requiring the sidewalk to be constructed now. The plan is to construct an 8-foot wide bituminous sidewalk from the intersection of High Rock Road and Poquonnock Road, to Johl Drive. Grading and selective removal of trees, brush, and rocks will occur during the project. Staff and the Planning Commission have requested a wider sidewalk to serve as a multi-use trail that will eventually connect to the proposed walk on Thomas Road.

Clearing and grading will occur in the upland review area; however, it will be minimal with little activity to impact the wetlands. Erosion controls are delineated on the plan.

Staff noted the sidewalk is intended as a multi-use path rather than just for sidewalk usage. The 8' width is intended to allow it to blend in with the Thomas Road Bike Path.

The applicant called out a small isolated wetland area that Soil Scientist Jim Cowen noted in his report is not a potential vernal pool. It is quite shallow but may get runoff from High Rock Road.

MOTION: To classify the application as minor.

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

2. U-Haul Self Storage, 187 Gold Star Highway

Clint Brown, of DiCesare-Bentley, introduced David Pollack from AMERCO Real Estate, and presented the application to the Agency. He explained the site location is on Route 184 across from Wal-Mart and the Hilton Garden Hotel. The proposed project is the construction of a combination commercial storage building and retail store for a U-Haul location. It would be built on approximately 5 acres which is mostly zoned commercial. Public utilities for water and sewer are available and will be used. The applicant has worked with staff planners and determined that 31 parking spaces are required.

The subject location is in the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD). The predominant area of the site drains to the rear. Dealing with grades and staying out of the upland review area will be large components of the project. A new storm water drainage system will be designed so as not to impact the reservoir with runoff. Water also comes onto the site from the hotel next door. This will be dealt with by reconstructing the hotel paving and by means of the underground detention storage and above ground bio retention basin which pretreats the parking lot water. The plan is to be proactive with storm water runoff.

Brown noted that significant trees in area will not be affected by the construction project. Jim Cowen, a soil scientist, has provided a wetland inventory and impact assessment. He has designed a wetlands mitigation plan with a variety of treatments. The idea is to be proactive by planting plants that go along with the native plant habitat.

David Pollock will coordinate the parking reconstruction with the neighboring hotel on behalf of U-Haul. Pollock noted that there will be no vehicle maintenance happening at this location. U-Haul has a vehicle maintenance facility at an off -site location.

The Agency scheduled a site walk for Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. Agency members will meet with staff at the subject location.

V. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. IWA 16-02, Watrous Subdivision, 0 Grove Avenue

Staff noted that the application is not ready to present to the Agency at this time.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Regulation Text Amendments

Staff noted that this is a courtesy referral from the Zoning Commission. Staff explained the history and court case behind the amendments. This is an attempt to eliminate the discretion that Planning Commissions have used when weighing the merits of site plans. The change is not pertinent to the Wetlands regulations.

Staff also noted that other text amendment applications will be forwarded in the coming months. The Agency will be given referrals for any and all applications the Zoning Commission hears.

2. Report of Chair – None

3. Report of Staff

Staff noted that there have been anonymous complaints received about property near 757 River Road. The letters were read for the Agency. Staff explained that this is a tidal wetland area and the Town has no jurisdiction. This would be a matter for the DEEP to investigate. As the letters were anonymous Staff is sending a copy of the correspondence to homeowners as well as DEEP.

The Parks and Recreation Department is seeking guidance regarding improvements at the Judson Avenue Subdivision tot lot. There are new standards for playground equipment and an existing fence needs to be moved out 3' in order to provide the proper fall zone for the slide. The work will all be done by hand. The Agency determined that an application is not required.

Staff noted that Paul Dickson will be staffing the next meeting due to vacation schedule.

Staff distributed Habitat Magazine to the Agency.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Barbara Block, Secretary
Inland Wetland Agency

Prepared by Lynda Galetta
Office Assistant II