

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

I. ROLL CALL

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

Vice Chairperson Sutphen called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and sat Furlong for Block.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF February 25, 2015 and March 4, 2015

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 25, 2015 and March 4, 2015, as written.

Motion made by Williams, seconded by Ashworth, so voted unanimously

IV. NEW APPLICATIONS – None

V. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. McCracken Residence, 119 Fishtown Road

Architects Christopher Vernott and Bill Bertsche presented to the Agency and introduced the McCracken's who are buying property located at 119 Fishtown Road. Their clients plan to build a net zero energy house. To achieve this goal, solar collector cells will be placed on the house to absorb the sun's energy. Bertsche reviewed a plot plan showing the position of the house and discussed the location of trees that will inhibit solar absorption. There are 24 existing trees that will negatively impact the solar access to the proposed house site. In the wetland area and in the upland review area the plan is to remove trees but leave the stumps. There will be no disturbance of soil or vegetation. Trees in the upland review area, adjacent to the garage, will be taken down and the stumps removed. Outside of the regulated area trees will be cut and removed.

The applicants submitted a letter from Bonner Electric, Inc., dated March 11, 2015, stating that removing the 24 trees will increase solar access from 69% to 98% thus allowing the property to qualify for CEFIA (CT Green Bank) incentive programs. Additionally, the letter notes that data collected using a Solmetric Solar Shading device indicates that removing less trees would not achieve the CEFIA levels, a minimum of 80%, required for funding.

Nick Vallas, of Bartlett Tree Experts, discussed how the trees will be removed inside the wetlands. He explained there is a mowed area that extends to the wetlands where a crane can be set. The crane will gently lift the trees out with no impact to the wetlands. He noted that the trees flagged for removal are a fraction of 1% of the overall trees on the property and they are primarily swamp maple.

The Agency noted its concern about the loss of trees, any negative impact to the wetlands, and future issues with the remainder trees which will continue to grow. The Agency also noted that tree removal must take place during the Fall season after the birds and small animals have left the habitat.

Vallas discussed the difference between canopy trees and small caliper trees which are slower growing. The remaining trees will be red maple and swamp maple. He noted the property will not be clear cut.

Staff noted there is no watercourse and no open water on the subject property. After the flagged trees are removed approximately 60% of the canopy will remain. Additionally, the proposal is for maximum removal needs which may be reduced after the house is built. Staff also noted that the Agency may add conditions to the motion to address the concerns it expressed.

MOTION: To approve the McCracken Residence application for the following reasons:

1. There is no loss of wetland or watercourse as a result of this project.
2. There will be limited impact to the wetland due to the remaining tree cover.
3. Heavy equipment will not enter the wetlands in order to remove the trees.

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

1. The wetland boundary shall be marked with boulders.
2. Tree removal will take place from September 1 through March 31.
3. Any further tree removal will require Agency review.

Motion made by Ashworth, seconded by Sutphen, 3 in favor, 1 opposed (Furlong). Motion passed.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

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

Staff distributed the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District newsletter and a letter and CD from Aquarion Water Company honoring volunteers.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Eunice Sutphen, Vice Chairperson
Inland Wetland Agency

Prepared by Lynda Galetta
Office Assistant II