

MINUTES
INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
APRIL 8, 2015 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

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

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

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF March 25, 2015

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

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

IV. NEW APPLICATIONS

1. Crystal Lake Road Reconstruction, Crystal Lake Road & Military Highway

Engineer Greg Hanover, of the Town of Groton, and Engineer Phil Katz, of Stantec Consulting Services, presented the project to the Agency. Hanover began with an overview of the project noting that Crystal Lake Road serves as a main driveway to the Nautilus Museum and the United States Submarine Base. The road services approximately 12,000 vehicles a day. The 44' wide road is too narrow for the type of traffic it's seeing and this project will rebuild and widen it to 52'. As part of this project, Military Highway will be realigned with the Sub Base entrance. Off-street parking will be provided for an apartment complex to eliminate an unsafe parking arrangement where the tenants back out onto Crystal Lake Road. The final piece to this design is a 10' wide bituminous bike path trail, along the east side of Route 12, that will serve as the connector to an existing bike path at Pleasant Valley Road South.

Hanover stated that the project is in the final design stage and the plans are 70% complete. This is a federally funded project so the Town and its consultants are working with the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CONNDOT) and this may lengthen the process. The goal is to get bids next fall for a construction start date in spring 2016.

Phil Katz, of Stantec Consulting Services, reviewed the five areas with wetlands impacts which comprise both regulated areas and wetlands.

Area #1 – There are wetlands to the west of Military Highway and the 100' buffer area extends east beyond the ROW. The proposed work is within the regulated area but should actually reduce the impact to the wetlands by shifting the road away from the cove. Pavement and some rock will be removed but there are no new drainage outfalls to the river. Five hydrodynamic separators will be installed along the entire project area to take out solids. Water quality swales will allow the water to percolate. There are not many opportunities for rain gardens but the project will allow for landscaping wherever possible. There is no direct impact to the wetlands.

Area #2 – Off-street parking must be provided for the apartment complex. Tenants currently park near a retaining wall and have to back out onto Crystal Lake Road. Wetlands located on the south side of Crystal Lake Road, behind the apartments, drain into an intermittent watercourse that discharges to the Crystal Lake Road drainage system. 19 spaces will be created and a portion of the intermittent watercourse will be piped. The road will be moved 6' – 8' closer to the complex. Landscaping with trees and shrubs will hide the parking area. The Agency discussed other options for relocating the parking area on the property.

Area #3 – There is a watercourse and associated wetlands west of the U-Haul business on the corner of Route 12 and Crystal Lake Road. The stream goes under Crystal Lake Road via an existing culvert. The culvert will be pushed out to align with the widened road and new bike trail. The plan is to dam the stream to keep it out of the construction zone and pump the water around it. While the structure is being built the stream will continue to flow. Presently the stream is not heavy flow but staff noted it is a perennial watercourse. Construction is planned for July or August when there is a low flow.

Area #4 – The proposed work in this area is the widening of an existing trail from 5' to 10' on the west side of Route 12. The original design was for a paved trail with a 2:1 slope which creates wetlands impacts. The slope will be increased to 1 ½:1 to eliminate the need to fill the wetlands. Rip rap stone will be put on the slope to stabilize it and a fence will be installed where the slope steepens. There is no direct impact to wetlands.

Area #5 – The widening of the trail will require the reconstruction of the headwall and result in a minor impact of 80 sq. ft. to the wetlands. Fill material will consist of a concrete headwall, pipe and earth material. 2 CY of fill will be added.

The Agency was concerned about the loss of trees. Staff noted that it is presently cleared to the wetlands. A guardrail in the back and telephone poles also impede the location. The bike trail is as narrow as CONNDOT will allow due to public safety concerns.

The Agency questioned whether there is a demonstrated need for the bike trail. Hanover affirmed that there is and that it is also identified as part of the State of Connecticut bike trails. The Agency requested documentation for the file regarding CONNDOT trail width requirements.

Staff noted that not all the property owners have signed the application and a site walk should be scheduled at the next IWA meeting.

Hanover noted that approximately seven properties will be affected by this project. Discussions and informational meetings have been held with all parties; however, CONNDOT wants all the approvals from the Town before starting negotiations with property owners. Primarily all the property owners are on board but the apartment complex owner has some design issues that need to be resolved.

The Agency noted that a vast majority of the area is already paved or lawned and they would be more concerned if large numbers of trees were planned for destruction.

Staff noted that after the site walk, when the Agency has seen the resources, would be the best time to classify the application.

V. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. Stambaugh Property, 9 Ashby Street

MOTION: To approve the Stambaugh Property application for the following reasons:

1. There is no loss of wetland or watercourse associated with this application.
2. The shed will be built on piers in a disturbed area and will not result in significant impact to the wetland.

This permit is subject to the four standard conditions.

Motion made by Sutphen, seconded by Block, 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (Ashworth).

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Chair

Chairman Scott noted that now that the snow is gone it would be a good time to get out and walk around to see what is happening with the snow melt.

2. Report of Staff

Staff noted a request from Steadfast Baptist Church which is located at the former Bishop Seabury Church on North Road. They are interested in clearing an area that falls within the 100' regulated area, but is further than 50' from the wetlands. At the time of the original approval, the regulated area was 50' and most of the property is lawn up to that boundary. They want to know if a permit is required for this work. Vines and broken trees on the north side will be removed. They will also clear near the utility pole but no major trees will be touched. The project will all be done by hand.

The Agency had no issues with the request and determined by consensus that no permit is required.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Barbara Block, Secretary
Inland Wetland Agency

Prepared by Lynda Galetta
Office Assistant II