

MINUTES
INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
SEPTEMBER 10, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

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

Chairman Scott called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF May 28, 2014

MOTION: To approve the minutes of May 28, 2014, as written.

Motion made by Block, seconded by Sutphen, 4 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention (Williams)
Motion passed.

IV. NEW APPLICATIONS – None

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Lawton Property, 71 Pequot Avenue, Jurisdictional Ruling

Staff reviewed the request by Natalie Gates Lawton for a determination that the keeping of poultry on her property in an area designated as wetlands and upland review area is permitted as of right. Staff explained that the Zoning Commission recently passed a regulation to allow limited keeping of hens on residential properties. Buck and Nat Lawton were present and addressed the Agency to explain their request. The Lawton's property is a rear lot off Pequot Avenue which abuts Allyn Street. They have been given a coop and a run that is totally enclosed and they would like to keep 6 chickens. The coop is 4' x 4' and the run, which has a wire enclosure on top, bottom and sides, is 4' x 8'. They are located in a regulated area but not in wetlands. The location was chosen to keep the chickens farther away from neighbors and to locate them under deciduous shade trees.

Staff noted that for purposes of Inland Wetland Agency Regulations, if the Agency finds that the activity falls within the definition of farming then it is allowed by right and does not require a Wetlands Permit.

MOTION: To find that the construction of a coop and run for hens at 71 Pequot Avenue as described in the September 3, 2014 letter from Natalie Lawton is an activity permitted as of right in accordance with Section 4.1a of the Inland Wetland and Watercourses Regulations as the activity is associated with farming as defined by the Connecticut General Statutes. The Agency also finds that the coop is a building that is directly related to the farming operation.

Motion made by Sutphen, seconded by Ashworth.

The Agency was concerned with the wording of the motion relative to the use of the term farming.

Staff clarified that the Agency is not declaring it a farm, but rather, they are just determining that it meets the definition of farming and therefore the activity is allowed as of right.

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Avery Farm & Candlewood Ridge Properties, 465 Lambtown Road and 1770 Gold Star Highway, Jurisdictional Ruling

Staff referred the Agency to the letter included in their agenda packet from Joan Smith, President of Groton Open Space Association, Inc. (GOSA). Joan Smith introduced herself for the record and further described the project. They have received two federal grants to expand the habitat of the New England Cottontail. The idea is to create a connection between where the native New England Cottontails are living and the three locations under discussion. GOSA is requesting permission to cut trees on 11 acres on Candlewood Ridge and 26 acres on Avery Farm and to install two temporary stream crossings. A forestry plan has been developed and GOSA is getting volunteers and hiring equipment to remove trees to make a thicket that the New England Cottontails will inhabit. The plan is to leave the white oaks because they have a higher habitat value. Smith noted that two water courses must be crossed to reach the targeted areas. The Association is also seeking permission for temporary stream crossings by means of either a corduroy road or temporary bridge to reach the targeted areas.

The project will start in late 2014 when the birds are not nesting. A CT DEEP recommended contractor will be used to cut the trees.

Chairman Scott noted there will need to be an erosion sedimentation control around the edge of the ramps to ensure that there will be no depositing of material in the watercourses. He also noted that a temporary bridge should be used for the stream crossings as a corduroy road is not a desirable method as it may alter waterflow.

MOTION: To find that the removal of trees down to ground level, or coppicing, of 11 acres of land on the Candlewood Ridge property, 1770 Gold Star Highway and on 26 acres of land on the Avery Farm property, 465 and 466 Lambtown Road as well as the temporary crossing of two watercourses using a temporary bridge with appropriate erosion control to allow passage of logging equipment as described in the September 2, 2014 letter from Joan Smith will not disturb the indigenous character of the wetlands, will not alter water flow, and will not result in the deposition of material in the wetlands. The Agency determines that this activity is permitted as a non-regulated use as defined in section 4.2a of its regulations and does not require a wetland permit.

Motion made by Sutphen, seconded by Ashworth. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Report of Chair – None

4. Report of Staff

Staff stated that there have been no announcements yet relative to a new Director of OPDS; however, Mark Oefinger will probably have something to announce next week. Staff did note that clerical staffing reassignments have been made within the department to allow for better land use commission coverage.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Barbara Block, Secretary
Inland Wetland Agency

Prepared by Lynda Galetta
Office Assistant II