

INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
SEPTEMBER 22, 2004 - 7:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Scott, Keeler, Williams, Furlong, Ashworth
Staff: Jones, Vislosky

Ashworth was appointed to sit for Sutphen and Furlong was appointed to sit for Block.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Boulder Heights, Colver Avenue

Chairman Scott opened the public hearing at 7:34 p.m. and Keeler read the legal ad. Staff noted that the certificates of mailing were in order. Steve McDonnell, applicant, distributed site layout plans and clarified that the road shown was approved by the Agency under a separate wetland permit. All of the proposed buildings and a retaining wall are outside the conservation easement and wetland buffer, with the exception of a drainage outfall. They are proposing a zero net increase in runoff via underground detention. Test pits have indicated that the soils are somewhat conducive, but there is the presence of bedrock 7-10 feet below. This is not a concern because they are proposing detention and controlled release and not much infiltration. They do need a small, underground sewage pump station. McDonnell explained that the small, 2000 s.f. wetland proposed for filling was created by excavation associated with a sewer right-of-way and has no wetland functions. All staff comments will be accommodated.

The Agency questioned a zero increase in runoff with all the extra water from new impervious surface. McDonnell clarified that volume will increase over time, but they are proposing to detain and control the release of the flow. Their system is proposed to accommodate current flow through the property and new flow created in a way that will not impact downstream areas. Drainage calculations were based on 2 to 100-year storm events.

McDonnell explained that they are not proposing any direct discharge of stormwater from the roadway to the vernal pool. They have proposed a small culvert to move water from one side of the road to a wetland area. They expect minimal water because it will flow through a grassy area first. Furlong questioned whether a five-minute time of concentration was a logical assumption for impervious surface. Bob Bureschi, representing the applicant, clarified that it meant everything would drain off within five minutes.

The Agency questioned the location of drainage outfalls in areas with considerable slopes and how the slopes would be stabilized. Bureschi noted that mostly 3:1 and some 2:1 slopes are proposed. They are proposing a steep slope treatment consisting of the installation of fabric as soon as the areas are graded, haybales and silt fence. Notes concerning the erosion and sediment control measures are included on the plan.

The Agency was impressed by the 45,000 s.f. underground detention basin, but questioned the perforated pipe and its longevity. McDonnell noted that the pipe would last indefinitely in the ground with no exposure to oxygen so there is no maintenance. They are treating stormwater before draining to the detention structure which would also avoid the need for maintenance; however, it will have access ports if needed. They are willing to propose an inspection schedule if required by the Agency. The Agency questioned oils and other volatile material coming off the bituminous surfaces. Bureschi noted that those areas would be treated in sediment removal structures and those structures would be maintained.

The Agency noticed a lot of parking near a significant and pristine wetland system and expressed concern with a large amount of water from impervious surfaces and the steep slopes harming the wetland system. Discussion continued on the possibility of one to two-story, aboveground parking garages to reduce the amount of impervious surface. Zoning requirements and the slopes make a garage an option. McDonnell noted that they are proposing to control and treat stormwater, but will investigate the garage alternative.

Staff read correspondence from the Conservation and Planning Commissions. She touched on her main concerns and noted she has not received revised plans. She needs to review this plan's compliance with the previously-approved driveway permit and compliance with certain zoning regulations that might possibly impact the design of the complex. She further explained that compliance with certain multi-family regulations might require activity to be pushed closer to wetlands. She needs confirmation on the soil capabilities and a more detailed erosion and sediment control plan that addresses initial blasting, clearing and grading. She also clarified that this permit is to fill a 2000 s.f. wetland pocket and grading. The driveway connection and its associated grading and stormwater discharge were previously approved under a separate permit.

Chairman Scott asked for public comments.

Al Tuchman, 79 Courtland Drive, was not opposed to the project but was concerned with the amount of parking lot coverage and the direction of runoff from the parking lot. Many Tall Woods' residents have basements with sliding doors and he did not want them to get flooded. Staff presented an exhibit showing off-site areas. Tall Woods is upslope from this proposed development and all flow would be to the south, away from Tall Woods.

David Lord, Soil Scientist, described the isolated wetland pocket proposed for filling. It is a depressed area created by excavation. It is a shrub and wooded wetland system with low function because of its size and high groundwater table. It is a wetland by soil type, which is leicester fine sandy loam, but has no organic layer. There are 6-9 inches of topsoil then fine, sandy loam. It has no trapping function, wetland vegetation, wetland wildlife or wildlife food values. Wildlife would not choose this wetland over the higher functioning wetland system that is being protected by the conservation easement.

Edith Fairgrieve, Rowland Street, questioned staff's comment regarding this site's compliance with Zoning Regulations. Staff clarified that she did not mean this use was not allowed on this property. There are zoning regulations for multi-family developments on items such as

retaining wall buffers and building separation distances. Staff needs to review revised plans for compliance with those regulations without increasing proposed wetland activity.

Staff asked for additional information on peak flow from this site and peak flow coming from the upper watershed and timing of release. She does not want the detained water on this site being released at the same time the upper watershed is flowing through the area. She also wants information on whether the applicant looked for groundwater when digging test pits. McDonnell noted that they did not encounter groundwater in the test pits. David Lord noted the high groundwater is close to the wetland pocket because of a dense layer of soil or bedrock; otherwise, it is much deeper.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing to October 13, 2004.

Motion made by Keeler, seconded by Williams, so voted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF September 8, 2004

MOTION: To approve the minutes of September 8, 2004 as written.

Motion made by Williams, seconded by Ashworth. The motion carried with four votes in favor (Williams, Ashworth, Furlong, Scott) and one abstention (Keeler).

V. NEW APPLICATIONS

1. Oat Property, MacDonald Court

Staff reviewed the location of the proposed 25'x50' house. The lot will have access via an existing driveway off Route 215 that serves two additional homes, and not MacDonald Court or Campbell Road, because a wetland cuts through the property. Some grading is required 25 feet from the wetland edge and the house is 35 feet from the wetland edge. The house is proposed right on the setback lines and could not be moved further from the wetland without a variance. This property falls within the Noank zoning jurisdiction. The Agency scheduled a site walk for Monday, September 27, 2004 at 4:00 p.m. They will meet on the Groton Long Point Road driveway.

MOTION: To classify the application as minor.

Motion made by Keeler, seconded by Furlong, so voted unanimously.

2. Hickey Subdivision, 268 Briar Hill Road

Staff reviewed the location of the proposed five-lot subdivision at the end of Briar Hill Road. There is an existing house on one of the lots. There are no wetlands on site and a 50-foot buffer is proposed. There are wetlands just off the property. Stone walls mark the edge of wetlands. The site is a flat, wooded and field area. Municipal water and on-site septic systems are proposed.

MOTION: To classify the application as minor.

Motion made by Keeler, seconded by Williams, so voted unanimously.

3. Porter Subdivision, 1560 North Road

Staff reviewed the location of the proposed five-lot subdivision. There is an existing farmhouse on Lot 4. She reminded the Agency that this property was the subject of a City of Groton Utilities open space referral to purchase the back portion of the property. It was also the subject of a permit application to allow grading to repair the existing road damaged by a logging operation. No wetland fill is proposed. Septic systems are proposed and although there is municipal water available, they may not tie in due to pressure concerns.

MOTION: To classify the application as minor.

Motion made by Keeler, seconded by Williams, so voted unanimously.

4. Receipt of New Applications - None

VI. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. Delaporta Property, Noank-Ledyard Road

Staff reviewed the location of the property noting that a permit was previously approved approximately seven years ago, but had expired. All activity is outside the 50-foot wetland buffer. She has received confirmation from the Ledge Light Health District that the septic system would work as shown. Staff distributed considerations for decision.

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

1. There is no loss of wetlands or watercourses associated with this application.
2. There are no future regulated activities made inevitable by this project.

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

1. There shall be no activity within 50 feet of the wetlands.

Motion made by Ashworth, seconded by Williams. The motion carried with four votes in favor (Ashworth, Williams, Furlong, Scott) and one abstention (Keeler).

2. Emerald Estates, Lambtown Road

Staff noted that the applicant is still addressing staff comments and has requested a 30-day extension. The application was tabled to the next meeting.

3. Boulder Heights, Colver Avenue – public hearing continued to 10/13/04

4. Holdridge Resubdivision, 155 Irving Street

Staff is waiting for revised plans since staff review. The application was tabled to the next meeting.

5. Robe Property, Tollgate Road – public hearing scheduled for 10/27/04

6. Neal Subdivision, 119 New London Road

Staff is waiting for revised plans. The application was tabled to the next meeting.

7. East Farm Subdivision, 500 Noank Road

Ashworth noted for the record that he walked the property. Staff is waiting for revised plans since staff review. The application was tabled to the next meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Chair

Scott asked if the construction entrance for the Fishtown Road new house lot was repaired or paved. Staff was told the work would be done on Tuesday and will inspect the site tomorrow.

2. Report of Staff

Staff distributed The Habitat newsletter.

Staff reported that the Department of Transportation was cleaning leakoffs in the Route 1/Judson Avenue area and left stockpiles of dirt. They will be returning to install erosion and sediment controls and stone to prevent erosion.

Staff reported that Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, has requested that the Town Engineer prepare a wetland permit application to clean out Eccleston Brook.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. made by Ashworth, seconded by Williams, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Girard Keeler