

MINUTES
MAY 25, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Scott, Sutphen, Block, Keeler, Ashworth

Staff: Jones, Cedio

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. The Ledges East, 375 Drozdyk Drive

Chairman Scott opened the public hearing at 7:32 p.m. He appointed Ashworth to sit for Williams. Keeler read the legal ad.

The Chairman asked whether the certificates of mailing were in order and staff confirmed that they are in order.

Gary Craig, member of Groton Community, LLC and Groton MultiFamily, LLC, distributed an outline of the presentation. He reviewed the proposed regulated activities and compared them to the activities allowed by permit #97-1. He noted that the proposed work result in less wetland impact than the work approved in 1997.

The proposed regulated activities include construction of a boardwalk walking path, filling of wetlands near the Groton Utilities tower, piping 25 linear feet of a watercourse and removal fill from wetlands. The work is associated with the construction of a 213 unit, 3 building multifamily development. All parking will be in a garage under the buildings. Required recreation facilities are proposed on both sides of the wetlands.

Craig reviewed the work near the Groton Utilities tower. The streambed south of I-95 is poorly defined, and the wetland has been negatively impacted by the construction of the highway. Three culverts will be installed in order to construct the maintenance road. This will include clearing, grubbing and excavating in the wetland. A spoils pile, which resulted from the construction of the Groton Utilities tower, will be removed from the wetlands. A mat type boardwalk that sits on the ground will be constructed parallel to I-95.

A raised boardwalk will be built across the wetlands in an area that was previously disturbed by an old cart path. The boardwalk will be 6 feet wide with two bumpout areas. It will be built by hand, with minimal clearing, and will connect the residential buildings to the recreational facilities on the east side of the wetlands. Water, sewer and electrical utilities will be hung under the boardwalk.

Craig introduced Dr. E.A. Welles, a consultant from Sanford Ecological Services Inc., who reviewed the site and prepared a report titled "Supplemental Evaluation of a Potential Wetlands Crossing".

Dr. Welles reviewed the raised boardwalk crossing. He noted that it would not compact the soils and would limit the vegetation to be removed. He suggested removing the phragmites colony as part of the work. The wetlands in this area provides flood storage and cleaning of the storm water. The potential adverse impact would be some shading, although the boards are designed to be set in such a way that the light goes through.

Dr. Welles reviewed the work near the Groton Utilities tower. The maintenance road crossing is fairly compromised by the easement itself. The soils are compact and there is an old spoils pile in the area. I-95 has allowed invasive species to become established, and trash has blown into the wetland. He felt that this is not a high quality wetland. As part of the project, the spoils pile will be removed. There is no plan to remove invasive species.

A mat-type boardwalk will be installed across the wetlands to connect the trail on the east and west sides of the wetland. The new maintenance road, north of the tower, will be a compacted gravel road. It will be contained in a filter fabric envelope so that the fill does not spread out into the wetland.

Dr. Welles felt that the mitigation exceeds the adverse impact. There is significantly less disturbance proposed than was allowed in 1997. The habitat will be recovered by the removal of the spoils pile from and the restoration of the wetland. A long term monitoring plan will be developed if the Agency allows the removal of the spoils pile. A more productive wetlands will result.

Scott questioned the type of soil to be used as part of the restoration. Welles stated that the spoils pile will be replaced with wetlands soil.

Scott asked Welles if the mat boardwalk will have a negative impact on the wetland and whether a raised boardwalk was considered. Dr. Welles replied that he could not make a statement regarding the impact.

Debbie Marshall Baker, civil engineer, summarized the drainage report. Baker stated that the property is located in the Long Hill Watershed and that they tried to comply with the Long Hill Watershed study recommendations. Most stormwater will be discharged to underground infiltration structures. A small amount of water will be discharged to a wet basin.

Baker submitted an amended plan incorporating concerns of staff. The revisions include routing stormwater through a Vortecnic-type structure and into the wet pond. The wet pond design incorporates plantings and shrubs to establish roots in gabion boxes. The water will infiltrate a little during high water periods.

Baker reviewed a discharge that outlets close to wetlands. The stormwater is collected from the plaza and roof, and is clean.

Baker reviewed the raised boardwalk. It will carry people and has utilities installed underneath it for a seasonal use. The applicant is trying to limit the compaction of the wetland soils.

Gary Craig reported that he received comments from Groton Utilities yesterday. The comments are mainly about work in the easement area. Groton Utilities asked that the fencing be shifted 8 feet away from the tower and that a gate on all four sides be shown. They also want the maintenance road to be built to support a 150-ton crane. The width of the road and the radii should also be increased.

Baker stated the applicants are using the best management practices to deal with stormwater. She noted that one unique feature of this project is that it provides only indoor parking, which limits the washing away of pollutants. The interior drainage of the parking garage uses a canister system, to filter pollutants from snow melt off the cars. The water is then discharged into the sanitary sewer system.

Ashworth asked how stormwater will be kept out of the garage during a heavy storm. The outside pavement will be graded away from the entrance to the underground garage. A trench drain and intercept are the only place where the grade allows drainage into the garage.

The project utilizes a comprehensive phasing plan, so that the project is built north to south, which allows finishing and preparing drainage before it is needed.

Craig summarized by stating that this proposal has less impact on the regulated wetland, and will disturb significantly less wetland than the first phase of the Ledges.

Block questioned the discharge point in the buffer. Baker stated that the piping in the buffer is only 2 feet deep and must be installed using heavy equipment.

Scott asked staff for comments.

Staff read Planning Commission comments.

Staff stated that no comments have been received from the Conservation Commission or the Fire Marshall. She has not yet reviewed the Groton Utility comments in depth and has not reviewed the revised plans submitted tonight.

Staff noted that the stormwater management system originally proposed the use of an oil/water separator. She has recommended the use of a vortech type unit. She expressed concern with the design of the recreation area. It appears that the grading plan was designed to accommodate the disposal of excess fill rather than to merely construct the required recreation. She noted that while the direct wetland impacts of this proposal are less than that of permit #97-1, the indirect impacts are greater. The project to be built under permit #97-1 only showed development in the southwest portion of the property. The remaining land was to be undisturbed, thus limiting the erosion possibilities.

Scott asked for comments from the public.

Edward Martin, Chairman of the Shellfish Commission, asked about the impact of wastewater on the wetland. Baker reviewed the drainage plan.

Ashworth questioned running raw sewage under the boardwalk and above the wetlands. He was concerned about spills. Baker responded that environmental friendly toilets were not considered. The State of Connecticut does not encourage using these in recreational areas because they are not always maintained. The piping for this purpose will be hung out of the sun, and utilize a grinder pump. Marshall stated that there is the possibility of double lining the piping for added protection.

Craig noted that there are animal waste control stations distributed throughout the site.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing on the Ledges East until June 8, 2005.

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

Scott closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF May 11, 2005

The minutes were not distributed for this meeting and will be reviewed at the June 8, 2005 meeting.

V. NEW APPLICATIONS

1. O & C Subdivision, 120 Godfrey Road

Staff reviewed the location of the site. Gary Winalski reviewed the 4 lot subdivision. There is one existing residential lot and 3 additional lots would be created. All development is planned outside the 100 foot buffer area of the wetlands. The wetlands on this property are associated with Haley Brook, and are at the base of a long slope. The lots will be served by on site wells and septic system.

Staff stated that the stone walls shown on the plan delineate the steeper slopes on the site.

MOTION: To classify this application as a minor application.

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

A site walk was tentatively scheduled for Monday, June 20, 2005.

2. Common Ground Subdivision, 236 Pumpkin Hill Road

Staff reviewed the plans for this property, located south of the Ledyard town line across from the Deerfield subdivision open space. This 3 lot subdivision includes a lot with an existing house. There are wetlands and a watercourse located on the east side of the property.

A site walk was tentatively scheduled for Monday, June 20, 2005.

3. Stambaugh Residence, 9 Ashby Street

Peter Springsteel, an architect representing owners Don and Jane Stambaugh, reviewed the plans. The proposal is to take down the existing garage, build a larger carriage house with 3 bays, and an accessory apartment above. A steep bank slopes to an intermittent stream at the rear of the property. The wooden floor of the existing garage may contain some oil, and will be removed.. Springsteel stated that no materials from the removal will stay on site. This project has not received Historic District Commission approval.

MOTION: To classify this application as a minor application.

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

A site walk was tentatively scheduled for Monday, June 20, 2005.

4. Receipt of New Applications - None

VI. PENDING APPLICATIONS

1. The Ledges East, 375 Drozdyk Drive

The hearing for this application is open and not discussion took place.

2. Watrous/Kent Driveway Culver Replacement, 113 and 125 Fishtown Road

Discussion was tabled until the June 8, 2005 meeting.

3. Antonino Property, Gold Star Highway

Discussion was tabled until the June 8, 2005 meeting.

4. Hickey Subdivision, Briar Hill Road

Discussion was tabled until the June 8, 2005 meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. 135 Packer Road – show cause hearing

Scott opened the hearing and noted that the property owners were not in attendance.

MOTION: To continue the hearing until June 8, 2005.

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

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

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:55 p.m. made by Sutphen, seconded by Keeler, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Block