



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Inland Wetlands Board
WEB BASED MEETING VIA ZOOM

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not a verbatim transcription.

July 11, 2024

Members present: Susan Baker, chair; Ben Nissim (joined at 7:04PM), David Smith, Alan Pilch, Secretary; Chris Phelps

Members absent: Carson Fincham, Tim Bishop

Also present: Caleb Johnson, Wetlands Agent; Robert Jewell, Brian Carey, Pete Romano, Seelan Patel, Walter Chin

I: Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

II: Discussion(s):

- 1. IW-24-21; 599 Branchville Road;** Summary Ruling application for a stream crossing and related site work for an accessway/driveway with some related drainage work within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Moreton Binn. Applicant: Robert Jewell.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97450>

Ms. Baker asked the members if this Summary Ruling Application should be raised to Plenary Ruling. Members opined that at the site walk the proposed work appeared as if it could have a significant impact on the wetlands. Mr. Pilch said that the disturbance in the upland review area is significant, Ms. Baker felt that a public hearing would be in the public interest. Mr. Jewell suggested that they should present the application as his team is ready to do so and after the presentation, if members still feel that the application should be raised to plenary they can vote to do so. Members were okay with having the presentation proceed prior to the vote.

Mr. Jewell gave an overview of the property. The twenty-acre property has single family dwelling with numerous accessory sheds that were built for the animal sanctuary. He said that most of the activity will not be in the upland review area. The activity in the wetlands is limited to the stream crossing work. The development is limited to already disturbed areas of the property. The multifamily dwellings will be constructed in the center of the property far away from wetlands, and not visible from the neighboring single-family homes.

Mr. Romano, PE, gave a brief presentation of the proposal. He said that the total roadway will be over 1800 square feet and the bridge will be 75 sq. ft. The bridge will be structurally strong enough to support the vehicular traffic and emergency vehicles. Around 47 trees will be removed to install onsite septic systems. The plan includes two multifamily buildings with forty units of one- and two-bedroom rentals. There will be nineteen parking spaces outside the building and twenty-one parking spaces will be drive-in under the buildings. Work in the upland review area is limited to 1.6 acres. The direct impact to wetlands is limited to the bridge construction. A robust restoration plan will mitigate the temporary disturbance.

Brian Carey added that the property has unique wetlands features. Mr. Zemba mapped the wetlands. The planting plan includes seed mixes and shrubs. No grading or clearing in the wetland area. The proposed bridge crossing will have coffer dams built for installation of abutments on either side and then a crane will be used to lay the bridge structure on top of abutments. Stormwater system designed will collect runoff into a culvert system.

Mr. Patel gave an overview of the architecture of the proposed buildings. The buildings are nestled into the natural topography of the site. The building is constructed under green concept, which will have green roof, solar arrays and electric charging.

Mr. Pilch raised concerns about the twenty five feet high retaining wall near the eastern property line. He added that it is a substantial wall given that the applicant stated that buildings are nestled into the natural topography.

Mr. Phelps inquired about the mitigation process during the construction of the bridge.

Mr. Romano commented that the construction sequence will show the coffer dams placement and erosion measures. He added the construction will be per DEEP approvals. The work will be performed during low water flow season, when there is less rain. The work will last a few weeks.

Discussion ensued and members voted to raise the Summary ruling to Plenary due to following reasons:

Per Section 9.1 (1) substantive disturbance in upland review area can have potential significant impact on wetlands and watercourses, and Section 9.1 (3) to have a public hearing in the public interest.

Mr. Pilch motioned to raise the Summary ruling to Plenary ruling for the reasons stated above. Mr. Nissim seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Public Hearing is scheduled on August 22, 2024.

III: Applications for Receipt(s):

None

IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

WV-23-2; 150 Barrack Hill Road

Mr. Johnson updated the progress of the remediation for the violation. He said extensive debris has been removed from the stream bed as required by the Board. The homeowner has done substantial removal of the deposited materials from the property.

Discussion ensued and members agreed that homeowner Mr. Chin will work with Mr. Johnson and submit a planting plan within couple weeks which will include native trees to provide shade near the stream, shrubs and bushes. A survey showing the planting plan will be submitted to the office, plantings can be started beginning of September.

Mr. Chin thanked the Board for giving him extra time and agreed to work with Mr. Johnson to submit the planting plan.

V: Other Business:

1. IW-21-62; 799 North Salem Road – Planting bond release

Mr. Johnson clarified that after talking to Mr. Sullivan he confirmed the number of dots shown on the plan doesn't correspond to the quantity of boxwood, in fact he had submitted twelve boxwood in his planting estimate. He added that four boxwoods were missing and since site is lush with greenery, it was hard to notice them.

Members were okay releasing the bond in full.

Mr. Phelps motioned to release the above bond in full. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. 2020-038-SR; 9 Maplewood Rd.- Planting bond

Mr. Johnson shared the pictures of the current site and said that the plantings have survived, one of the Silky dogwoods seems to have fallen due to a storm, but he has informed the homeowner to support it with a stake.

Mr. Phelps motioned to release the above bond in full. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

VI: Approval of Minutes:

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting: June 27, 2024**

The minutes were amended to add the adjourned time.

Mr. Nissim motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Phelps seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Inland Wetlands Sitewalk Minutes: July 7, 2023**

Mr. Smith motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Nissim seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Members discussed to add the discussion on the fee schedule on the next meeting.

VII: Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape
Recording Secretary