



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.

September 26, 2024

Members present: Susan Baker, chair; Tim Bishop, Carson Fincham, Isaac Flattau (left at 8:15PM), Alan Pilch, Secretary; David Smith

Members Absent: Chris Phelps

Also present: Caleb Johnson; Inland Wetlands Agent, Aarti Paranjape, Recording Secretary, Brian Carey, Jason Klein, Andy Soumeledis, Dianius Virbickus, Steven Trinkaus, Kathryn Braun, Robert Jewell, Pete Romano, Jeff Hansen, Gene Nazzaro, Tracy Chalifoux

I: Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II: Public Hearing(s):

1. (Contd.) IW-24-19; 27 Abbott Avenue; Plenary Ruling application for the construction of 10 residential town houses with associated drainage and landscaping within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses.

Owner: Veton Alimi. Applicant: Brian Carey.

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97127>

Mr. Johnson read the new documents submitted since the last meeting into the record.

Mr. Soumeledis addressed the concerns raised by peer review engineer since last meeting. As per the suggestions, drainage behind the wall is removed, the level spreader now is directed into a rain garden. The typo regarding the trench drain has been removed, which was earlier showing in the cross section.

Mr. Carey agreed with the suggestions of Biological peer review and updated the plans. He added a rain garden on the planting plan, which will improve water quality and hence be beneficial to the ecosystem. Revised planting is not linear but more naturalized. The species of hay scented fern is swapped with a more diverse one. The rain garden includes natural plugs of grasses and native plants. The same planting buffer is maintained. The debris in the back near the wetlands shall be removed. As suggested the random soil sampling throughout the planting buffer shall be done by contractor. The contractor will monitor the details during the project. The maintenance includes permanent protection of the rain garden. A conservation easement shall be recorded on town records. The wetlands flagging has been reestablished. Silt fence demarcation is marked on the plans. He added as per the revised plans no negative impacts to wetlands.

Mr. Virbickus, Peer review engineer acknowledged the improvements by the applicant and stated that the addition of rain garden is beneficial. Efforts made for the drainage to address one-inch rainstorm is great, overall the changes will not have negative impact on wetlands.

Mr. Pilch expressed concerns with the ground water table under the rain garden, which can impact ability of soil to infiltrate effectively. He reiterated that compacted soils will have issues with infiltration. He added that stormwater infiltration works best in a natural area. The underdrain specification doesn't meet Connecticut Stormwater Manual requirements.

Mr. Fincham also expressed concerns with the compaction of the soils. He suggested inspection of the rain garden and the stormwater system to determine if it's functioning well and that compaction has not occurred.

Ms. Baker inquired about the snow removal area as shown now in the front and would the existing maple tree be removed to stage the snow removal area.

Intervenor's engineer and Attorney spoke and Mr. Trinkaus expressed concerns with the stormwater system and water quality impact on the wetlands. Ms. Braun added that neighbors have expressed concerns with flooding.

Discussion ensued, applicant will address the concerns at next meeting. Public hearing continued to October 10, 2024. Applicant shall grant extension until October 11, 2024.

2. (Contd.)IW-24-21; 599 Branchville Road; Plenary 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>

Staff read the new documents submitted since the last meeting into the record.

Mr. Romano gave an overview of the concerns raised at the prior meeting. He added that as per the request by Board members and the public the applicant's soil scientist Mr. Zemba visited the neighboring property to determine if a vernal pool is present. He said per indicators, the soil scientist confirmed there is no vernal pool located there. He said the proposed septic system is almost a hundred to a hundred fifty feet away from the property lines. He confirmed that the original crossing (which is not to be removed) had wetlands approval. The landscaping will be robust along the property boundary and drainage will not be an issue. Runoff onto Branchville road was discussed and noted that property is down grade; hence no water from site will drain on to the road.

He presented the revisions where the parking pavers shall be pervious, and the applicant proposes operation and maintenance of the pervious pavers. He explained the revised level spreader functioning. He said the stormwater is designed for one, ten or fifty year storms only and not for the hundred year storm.

Mr. Carey also confirmed the results of soil scientist that there is no vernal pool. A revised planting plan includes robust plants. He stated the revisions will have no impact to the wetlands.

Mr. Fincham said that he submitted a report on the record about bridge shading of the water.

Mr. Bishop in his professional opinion confirmed and agreed to applicant's determination that there is no vernal pool as stated by neighbors.

Mr. Pilch inquired what type of ground cover is proposed. He also asked to confirm the distance of septic with the stormwater discharge system and if it is fifty or seventy feet.

Mr. Carey confirmed that the ground cover will have new England conservation wild mix. Mr. Romano will confirm the septic distance although he said the distance proposed is per State code, which is fifty feet.

Ms. Baker inquired about the no mow demarcation and how long the invasive species maintenance should be monitored. She added that plans should include the construction monitoring of bridge and other activities in upland review area.

Mr. Carey said that the plan shows monuments for no mow area, but the plans will be revised to clearly show the no mow zone. He added that the invasive species removal monitoring is typically three, five or seven years, but applicant will follow Board's recommendation.

Public expressed concerns that proposed septic will affect the soil hydrology and topography of the area and the applicant's plans showing wrong location of the alleged vernal pool.

Public Hearing continued to October 10, 2024. Applicant shall grant extension until October 11, 2024.

III: Discussion (s)

1. IW-24-25; 84 Old South Salem Road; Summary Ruling application for installation of a 10x16 fiberglass inground swimming pool, and patio within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Jeffrey Hansen. Applicant: Samantha Brant.*

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98006>

Mr. Hansen gave an overview of the project. The fiberglass pool will be embedded in the existing patio. A stormwater system will be installed to address the impervious surface to be added.

Mr. Pilch inquired if the patio will be bluestone, and location of the pool equipment. He added Board typically requires a planted mitigation. He suggested herbaceous species along with shrubs to be planted at the wetlands edge as a buffer.

Mr. Hansen said that the new patio will be an extension of the existing blue stone patio, the equipment shall be on the left of pool close to AC unit. He added there is approximately five to eight feet of existing vegetation around the pond which includes river birches and milkweed.

Mr. Bishop also suggested plantings at the edge of wetlands. The lawn stretches near the wetlands flag 5-6, a vegetative buffer along those flags will be helpful. He appreciated the proactive installation of a stormwater water system for infiltration.

Discussion ensued and Board stated special conditions:

- buffer plantings extending along the edge of pond, up till wetland flags 5-6. Board agreed given a tight spot between the wetlands and existing lawn and patio, staff will review with Mr. Hansen for the at least eight feet width of the proposed buffer and will issue an approval once plans are in place.
- no mow more than once per calendar year of herbaceous plant buffer.

Mr. Bishop motioned and Mr. Fincham seconded to approve the above Summary ruling with standard and special conditions.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. IW-24-26; 845 North Salem Road; Summary Ruling application for existing pond restoration within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses.

Owner: Bruce Michel. Applicant: Ross Nazzaro.

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98011>

Mr. Nazzaro presented the application for pond restoration to its original depth and shape. Wetlands are flagged by Mary Jaehnig. All the excavated material shall remain on site. Sediment traps shall be installed before the water enters the pond. One tree near the dam is causing the leaks, shall be removed and masonry dam shall be repaired. Plans shows restoration and equipment access, spoils area, siltation fence A plunge pool is proposed to trap sediments. Cattails and phragmites will be removed.

Mr. Bishop inquired about restoration planting plan or aquatic or semi aquatic plants will be saved or replanted for wildlife enhancement. He suggested meadow mix with pollinator plants.

Mr. Nazzaro stated that there is no planting plan however around the pond has existing vegetation. Existing footpath and lawn area shall remain and no other activity is proposed, everything will remain in natural state. There is no impact of runoff.

Mr. Fincham agreed that site is heavily vegetated with the natural dense setting.

Mr. Nazzaro added there is an existing meadow which homeowners don't maintain, kind of no mow area.

Mr. Pilch inquired about the dredge material and its thickness where it will be spread. He agreed with Mr. Bishop to using meadow mix and pollinator plants.

Mr. Nazzaro confirmed that the thickness of dredge material shall be two-three feet, the area is relatively flat and it will be restored as meadow with native wetlands mix.

Discussion ensued and members stated the special conditions of plant the spoil area with meadow mixed with pollinator plants along with quantity of plant mixture, to be approved by staff before starting.

Mr. Bishop made the motion to approve the above Summary ruling with special and standard conditions. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. IW-24-28; 9 Kendra Court; Summary Ruling application for construction of a patio, retaining wall, stone steps, shoreline stabilization, trenching of existing utilities, deer fence, and native wetland mitigation plantings within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses.

Owner: Andrew Roman. Applicant: Tracy Chalifoux.

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98030>

Ms. Chalifoux presented the scope of work. She said the wetlands follows along the shoreline of the pond. Trees are existing along the shoreline which will stay. No trees are being removed.

Future changes will involve patio reconfiguration along the existing pool, which include patio, outdoor kitchen, pergola and steps down to the pool. These proposed changes extend slightly into the upland review area.

The proposal includes enhancing the buffer with native plantings and increasing the stability of shoreline. Erosion around the shoreline will be restored with some armoring, using large natural boulders with pockets of planted natives. A natural stone patio and seating is proposed near the pond. Plantings include 13 trees; drainage easement access shall be screened with arborvitae.

Sink holes and erosion occurring above the existing drain pipe which inlets into the pond, would be back filled and stabilized with plantings. Debris clean up around the north will be replanted with native shrubs. Ferns and perennials are proposed to improve the habitat. Access to the canoe launch along with gaps to access the pond shall stay.

Mr. Fincham inquired about the site plan showing incomplete information about the wetlands flagging in the northeasterly portion. He noticed the wetlands flags and pond line disappears, although he said he observed play area and activity in that space. He suggested showing the effect of proposed activity on the existing conditions.

Mr. Bishop expressed concerns over the drainpipe discharge directly into the pond. A rain garden or riprap will be beneficial. He suggested taking the opportunity to install stormwater drainage for the impervious surfaces created.

Mr. Pilch inquired the thickness of planting plan from the pond's edge. He added twelve to fifteen feet of riparian buffer is recommended. He expressed concerns over the manicured lawn at the edge of pond at flags 10-11 and an enhanced buffer will be helpful. His concerns were also similar to Mr. Fincham regarding the drainpipe directly discharging into pond; he suggested plunge pool rather than rip rapp. He suggested that patio be constructed to minimize runoff and promote infiltration.

Ms. Chalifoux agreed and will proposed wider gaps with some kind of plantings. She will submit a revised survey, which has missing parts, at the next meeting.

Discussion continued to October 10, 2024.

IV: Applications for Receipt(s):

1. IW-24-35; 625 Ridgebury Road; Summary Ruling application for proposed pond dredging and stream bank stabilization within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses.

Owner: Lessley Burke. Applicant: Katherine Throckmorton. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98332>

2. **IW-24-36; 43 Danbury Road;** Summary Ruling application to redevelop the property for twenty-unit multifamily apartment building within 100-foot offsite drainage ditch.
Owner: Ljatif Ramadani. Applicant: Peter Olsen. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98580>

Mr. Fincham motioned and Mr. Pilch seconded to receive the two applications.
Motion carried unanimously.

The sitewalk is scheduled for October 20 and discussion on October 24, 2024.

V: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

None

VI: Other Business:

1. **21 Powder Horn Road** - Planting bond release

Mr. Johnson updated the Board that most of the plants survived. Only one plant was missing.

Mr. Bishop motioned and Mr. Pilch seconded to release the bond in full.
Motion carried unanimously

2. **134 Branchville Road** - Planting bond release

Mr. Johnson updated that less than eighty percent of the plants are surviving of the complete list of thirty nine plants. He said that Board can release the bond partially and he will direct the owner to plant the rest of missing plants. Board agreed to release fifty percent of the bond and to hold fifty percent for two years after the new plants are completed.

Mr. Bishop motioned and Mr. Pilch seconded to release the bond only fifty percent and hold fifty percent for two years. Motion carried unanimously

VI: Approval of Minutes:

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** September 12, 2024
- **Inland Wetlands Sitewalk meeting:** September 22, 2024

Approval of minutes tabled to next meeting.

VII: Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 10:27 PM.

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape
Recording Secretary