



**TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD  
INLAND WETLANDS BOARD  
Web Based Meeting Hosted on Zoom**

**APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES**

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

March 13, 2025

Members present: Susan Baker, Chair; Alan Pilch, Secretary; Keith Carlson, David Smith

Members Absent: Tim Bishop, Vice Chair; Carson Fincham

Also present, Caleb Johnson, Inland Wetlands Agent; Aarti Paranjape, Recording Secretary; Michael Mazzucco, Ryan Bossis, Tree Committee and Norwalk River Watershed Association; Kitsey Snow, Tree Committee

**I. Call to order:**

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

**II: Discussion:**

1. **IW-25-4; 15 Bear Mountain Road;** Subdivision application for resub division of one lot into two lots within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Giovanni Capocci. Applicant: Michael Mazzucco. *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/100238>

Mr. Mazzucco gave the overview of the subdivision application for creating a new lot of an existing lot of approximately 6 acres which was part of larger parcel of which thirteen acres were deeded to Town. There are no flood zone issues. The natural Diversity database shows nothing on the property. He showed the lot lines with the existing dwelling and septic location on the existing lot and the newly created lot with existing barn and accessory apartment, proposed dwelling and new septic. The property has steep slopes. The wetlands flagging was done by Mary Jaehnig, and a small portion is on the new lot and some across Bear Mountain Road. A water main runs on the road which was recently installed. The new dwelling shall be hooked to that water main. There is an existing six-inch pipe to convey water under the road. A new curb cut is proposed for this dwelling. There is an existing driveway leading to the existing barn but given the steep slopes a new curb cut is proposed. The length of the driveway shall be increased because of the shift, however this allows lessening the grade. A stormwater management system is proposed closer to the driveway. B100 shows the location of new septic location and leaching fields. Due to the steep slopes on the property a retaining wall of six feet high is proposed at the rear of new dwelling with catch basins proposed to pick up the water from behind the house and will just run over in the swale area. Roof drains are connected to footing drains which are connected to stormwater system at the bottom of driveway. Catch basins on the driveway are also connected to system. The stormwater system will have gravel trench level spreader, an infiltration trench with a heavy riprap on top and smaller riprap with a filter fabric.

Mr. Pilch commented that the existing driveway is about eighteen percent grade and per zoning regulations allows max of twelve percent. He said, as a professional engineer he sees the challenge applicant has, however is not comfortable with the proposed disturbance within the upland review area. He added its not just the driveway but the level spreader is also in the upland review area. He suggested a prudent alternative to reduce the amount of disturbance in the URA. Mr. Pilch also suggested some kind of permanent check dams near the swale to reduce the velocity of water discharging from catch basins on the rear of the dwelling. He suggested sediment traps at the catch basins on the driveway. He added that applicant should look into a pretreatment before the water enters the galleries. An access for cleaning these galleries should be proposed since there is a single catch basin on the driveway

Mr. Mazzucco agreed to look into the regulations for maximum allowed grading of 12 percent and will shorten the galleries to reduce earth disturbances. Mr. Mazzucco mentioned that the proposed inlet has a two-foot sump so the sediment will collect directly below the inlet. He will add a manhole for maintenance access.

Discussion continued to next meeting where applicant will address the suggestions of the Board.

**III: Applications for Receipt(s):**

None.

**IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:**

**96 Danbury Road**

Mr. Johnson updated the board on property at 96 Danbury Road where some removal of invasive species and four trees were cut, along with depositing wood chips within wetlands. There was no grubbing or earth disturbance.

Mr. Johnson informed the property owner to remove all the wood chips manually and to submit an administrative permit for tree stump removal closer to the parking lot.

Board appreciated the quick response by Mr. Johnson.

**V: Other Business:**

**1. Parks & Recreation invasive plant removal and restoration discussion.**

Mr. Bossis, Tree Committee and Norwalk River Watershed Association member along with Ms. Snow from Tree Committee and former Conservation Commission member presented the plan which involves invasive plant removal and restoration at Ridgefield Parks and Recreation facility. This is a multiyear project which will focus on removal of the invasive vegetation like vines, bitter sweet, porcelain berry, and nonnative honey suckle, at the rec center. Removal of the overgrowth of these invasive vines threatening the large trees and along the property and water body will be done manually. The work will focus on restoring riparian buffer areas, including the current lawn area that is actually wetlands. The plantings will include pollinators, wildlife friendly shrubs and all native planting of mixed ground cover, shrubs, understory and canopy trees. He added that a forestry study was performed by the Connwood Forestry. Mr. Bossis shared the area of site where the removal and restoration will happen. The areas include work around river near the Rec center trail, an area near pond and mixed forest. The debris will be removed and parks and rec employees to take to the town brush pile. Invasives with heavy seeds shall be trash bagged and taken to the transfer station. Mr. Bossis added volunteers shall do all work and the only time Parks and Rec employees shall be involved is when they will be taking the truckload of debris to brush pile at town center.

Discussion ensued on the use of chemicals like glyphosates or tricopyr as part of application to stop the growth of invasives. Ms. Snow mentioned that they contacted Ms. Barbieri at State who said they have no problem as long as volunteers do the application. The remediation might include cutting the stem and then painting root with chemicals.

Mr. Bossis presented the remediation-planting plan of native plants which included ground cover, shrubs, understory trees and tall trees provide a multiple canopy which will provide shading and reduce surface temperature of the brook and pond. The ecological planting proposed will consider the site conditions, light, soil moisture etc. The buffer shall be minimum of thirty feet wherever possible. Areas near the trail will have reduced buffer given the distance between the water and existing trail. Restoration will also include bank stabilization.

The proposed planting will enhance and provide over all interesting characteristics throughout the year.

Board also suggested to include buffer around the pond where currently lawn is maintained. Mr. Bossis agreed to include that area into remediation planting.

Mr. Pilch acknowledged the planting list as extensive list. He expressed concern with the deer browse and if any protection is proposed.

Members discussed if this shall be a Board approval or administrative. They agreed the proposed work application could be handled administratively. The applicant will however put details on the application of chemicals as per Ms. Barbieri from State of CT, the Forestry study, planting plan, timeline of the work, work hours during summer and planting time estimate into the record.

Ms. Snow stated it's a multiyear plan.

Board appreciated the work proposed by Norwalk River Water Shed Association along with Tree Committee. They agreed that educating the public would be a good start so more people can volunteer.

## **2. Fee Schedule discussion**

Staff noted a few items from the existing fee schedule were not discussed and added on the revised fee schedule.

Members agreed that the fees should be increased for the inspections and monitoring.

Discussion ensued, members agreed that public should be encouraged to call the office and get informed about the wetlands and its functionality before work starts. Not many residents are aware of the wetlands on the properties and how to protect them. Members said a free consultation by the Wetland Agent would encourage the residents, public to reach out to the office.

Members agreed that consultation inspection by Wetlands Agent, which will be for no fee /cost to interested people, will be added as a category in the fee schedule.

Since IT has to incorporate all these changes into the OpenGov program, members agreed that as stated at last meeting the effective date of March 31 is too early.

Members announced the new effective date for the revised fee schedule is now May 01, 2025.

Press release shall be sent accordingly.

## **3. Preliminary regulation discussion**

Staff informed since IT has to incorporate a new application tab, to create amendment application, the application for the Amendment to regulation has not been created. After IT incorporates the details, the wetlands office will create a proposed a regulations update amendment and place it on the agenda as soon as possible.

## **4. Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists (CAWS) Conference discussion**

Mr. Johnson attended the CAWS conference and gave the overview of different topics discussed.

He said there were presentations regarding Coastal wetlands, emergency authorization to DOT and DEEP for regulated activity, especially the work they had do during the last year's august storms where the bridges were washed out. The presentations included the life cycle of tree frogs during the cold weather and light pollution.

He added that Mr. Bishop presented the idea of a CT license plate for conservation of wetlands. He showed four license plate options where the conference members voted to choose. Members supported the idea of the Conserve Wetlands license plate.

Mr. Johnson said he will share the slides with all the Board members.

## **VI: Approval of Minutes:**

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** February 27, 2025

**Mr. Carlson motioned to approve the above minutes. Mr. Pilch seconded. Mr. Smith abstained abstained. Motion carried 3-0-1.**

- **Sitewalk Minutes:**

**March 02, 2025**

Mr. Smith motioned to approve the above minutes. Ms. Baker seconded. Mr. Carlson abstained. Motion carried 3-0-1.

March 09, 2025

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

**VII: Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape  
Recording Secretary