

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION &
INLAND WETLAND AGENCY MINUTES
April 30, 2020**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Destefanis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She noted this was the Commission's first virtual meeting and following the consensus of members present, it was decided she would be acting Chair for this meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Cherichetti took the roll call.

PRESENT: Karen Destefanis; Ed Holowinko, Vice Chair; John Moeling; Steven Klocke; and Cheryl Brown.
Alexis Cherichetti, staff.

Ms. Destefanis noted this was the first meeting after the unfortunate passing of Chairman John Verel due to complications from the Covid-19 virus. She recalled his intelligence and leadership while on the Commission. Mr. Moeling recalled his exceptionally well-honed dry humor. Ms. Cherichetti noted members of the public had expressed interest in a remembrance of John at a Conservation Commission meeting and perhaps they could get the word out regarding an upcoming opportunity to remember John Verel.

III. RECEIPT & DISCUSSION

- a) **#S20-549 – 310 Wilson Avenue – WEB Construction LLC** – Establishment of a contractor's yard for storage of processed materials adjacent to a wetland

Ms. Cherichetti gave brief introductory remarks and provided background regarding the definition of tidal wetlands versus inland wetlands in the CT State Statutes.

Attorney Elizabeth Suchy, representing the applicant, introduced the applicant's team including site engineer Dean Martin and landscape architect Kate Throckmorton. She provided locational information regarding the site and the existing location of a rock-crushing facility at 34 Meadow Street. She referred to multiple aerial photographs of the vicinity.

Ms. Throckmorton reviewed her environmental report and described the inland wetlands as a one to eight foot wide strip immediately uphill of the tidal wetlands. She noted the narrowness of the wetlands reduced function, though the wetlands still provided some functions including groundwater discharge, sediment retention and nutrient removal. She described the vegetation she observed at the site. She discussed the proposed planting plan for the southern portion of the site.

Mr. Martin described the site's proposed contractor's yard in the NW portion of the property. He noted the establishment of the yard would include construction of a twenty (20) foot high concrete block wall. He described the proposed sedimentation & erosion controls and the stormwater management system.

Ms. Destefanis asked about flooding and runoff. Mr. Martin explained portions of the proposed yard would be below the eleven (11) foot base flood elevation, but there would be filter fabric wrapped around the lowest two rows of concrete block to trap sediment.

Ms. Cherichetti asked for specifications of the filter fabric proposed.

Mr. Klocke asked for more information regarding the current conditions of the site. There was discussion regarding the road-like feature that cuts across the tidal marsh.

Ms. Brown inquired about the type of material that would be stored at the site. Ms. Suchy described the current rock-crushing operation next door at 34 Meadow Street.

Mr. Holowinko asked if the applicant considered removing the fill berm at the southern end of the property to allow a better reconnection of the salt marsh. He noted the restoration of the marsh would be far better than the proposed planting. Attorney Suchy indicated they had not.

Ms. Destefanis asked for confirmation the operation would not include crushing building debris material.

Mr. Klocke had questions regarding the various regulatory schemes and noted the tidal wetland regulators should have more say on the matter, including any removal of the berm.

Ms. Destefanis asked if the application warranted a Significant Regulated Activity Permit. It was determined the application should stay an Intermediate Permit application. It was noted the amount of public interest, if any, in the application was currently unknown. The item would return to the next meeting's agenda for further discussion.

Ms. Suchy indicated there was also a Zoning and CAM application pending and these would have a public hearing by the Zoning Commission.

Ms. Suchy recapped they would provide the additional information requested including the material to be stored, the sedimentation and erosion control details and information regarding controls during flood events.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a) **#S19-548 – 35 Huckleberry Drive South – Rich** – Corrective Action removal of fill, restoration of wetlands, and construction of a two-story addition in and adjacent to a wetland and watercourse

Ms. Destefanis noted it was 7:00PM. She opened the public hearing and had Ms. Cherichetti call the roll. It was noted the public hearing had been previously noticed in the paper and by mailings for the March 10, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Destefanis observed there were four attendees in the virtual meeting and described the process for taking public comments. She reviewed the process for public hearings in general and then requested the applicant to begin their presentation.

Doreen Rich, applicant and property owner, noted she had purchased the property in September 2019 with the violation on the property. She described all of the work she had completed to get her Wetland Permit application in order, including retaining wetland scientist Otto Theall to delineate the wetlands and the very deep pits dug to allow Mr. Theall and soil scientist Ms. Mary Jaehnig to approximately delineate the extent of wetland under the fill. She noted she has also retained a land surveyor and the services of Barbara Wilson, Landscape Architect, to design a restoration plan.

Ms. Wilson began her presentation with a review of the property and wetland area. She showed a proposed cross-section of the slope and discussed the proposed planting activities on each portion of the slope. She described the proposed cut and fill areas and the purpose of each area.

Ms. Brown noted the filled wetland area had previously been wooded and was concerned about the lack of proposed trees and the proposed sunny wetland meadow. There was some discussion regarding the species and number of trees within the wetland area.

Ms. Destefanis inquired about the proposed timeframe for completing work. Mr. David Rich indicated it would all take about a few months. He noted 3-6 weeks would be needed for grading, and planting would occur after grading.

There was more discussion regarding the proposed plants, which would be container or bare root stock. Ms. Rich brought up the likely condition of a bond if approved and encouraged the Agency to accept a surety bond.

There was additional discussion regarding the addition of more trees to the wetland. The five additional trees initially offered by Ms. Wilson were considered insufficient. Ten to 15 additional trees within the proposed wetland meadow area would be better. There was discussion regarding keeping the public hearing open to receive an updated planting plan, but it was determined the plan could be modified and the hearing closed.

***** MS. BROWN MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION #S19-548.**

***** MR. HOLOWINKO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. MINUTES

a) March 10, 2020 meeting minutes

There were no changes to the minutes.

***** MR. HOLOWINKO MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MEETING MINUTES.**

***** MS. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** THE MOTION PASSED 4-0 WITH ONE ABSTAINING (DESTEFANIS).**

VII. COMMENTS OF STAFF

Ms. Cherichetti indicated the Conservation Office had been moved, as of earlier today, to their new space on the first floor. She reviewed staffing during the Covid-19 closure of City Hall.

VIII. COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

V. ADJOURNMENT

***** MR. MOELING MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN.**

***** MR. KLOCKE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

***** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:44PM.