

NORWALK CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

JANUARY 10, 2006 SPECIAL MEETING

ATTENDANCE: Ann Cagnina, Acting Chair; Marny Smith; Elizabeth Ackerman, Susan Llorca; Matt Caputo.

STAFF: Alexis Cherichetti, Senior Environmental Officer; Sarah Rettger, Conservation Assistant.

OTHERS: Judy Slayback, Environmental Land Solutions of Norwalk; Candace Shaeffer, Spinnaker Real Estate Partners; Kim Morque, Spinnaker Real Estate Partners; Andy Kydes; Laurel Lindstrom; Carolyn Curry.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Cagnina called the meeting to order.

Ms. Cherichetti took the roll call.

DISCUSSION/SITE WALK

#S05-239 – 8 Norden Place - Norden Place, LLC – Construction of a multi-unit (316 unit) residential complex with associated stormwater drainage, grading and landscaping in and adjacent to wetlands and watercourses

Ms. Cherichetti reminded those present that the meeting was not a public hearing, and that the public would have the opportunity to comment in the future.

An additional submission from the applicant was distributed to the commissioners. The submission consisted of site plans including building stake locations.

Mr. Morque gave an overview of the site. The project will take place on the rear portion of the site.

Ms. Slayback explained that the existing road would be used in the development in order to decrease the impact.

It was asked if the same owners owned the two portions of the property. Mr. Morque explained that they were not. The front portion of the property was sold December 8, while the rear portion is owned by Norden Place, a collaboration between Spinnaker and Greenfield, with Spinnaker as the lead partner.

Ms. Cherichetti encouraged the commissioners to proceed along the property, stopping at various points. It was asked if the stopping points could correspond to building stakes marked on the maps, and Ms. Cherichetti said that was possible.

Ms. Ackerman asked for a comparison of the map and the site as it currently appeared. Mr. Morque said it would be easiest to visit some of the major stakes to get an understanding. Ms. Cherichetti suggested the commissioners follow the midline of the road.

Mr. Morque pointed out stake 307, which marked where the road would swing south over the existing track. There was discussion of the locations of the clubhouse and pool areas.

The commissioners stopped at point 311, in the center of the road. Ms. Cherichetti explained that 5 town-over-town buildings would be to the south. There would be additional townhouses and mid-rise buildings to the north, along with a parking area.

There was a question about the nature of mid-rise buildings. Ms. Shaeffer explained that the mid-rise buildings will be four stories of wood construction with parking underneath, similar to existing buildings on Richards Avenue.

Ms. Shaeffer pointed out the locations of additional buildings. Ms. Cherichetti suggested that they look in more detail on the way back.

Ms. Cherichetti pointed out building corner 480. Ms. Shaeffer pointed out that the dotted line on the commissioners' maps represented a buffer zone. Ms. Cherichetti added that it was not the limit of disturbance; it was a 35-foot buffer.

Ms. Shaeffer explained the floor plan of the town-over-town buildings, which are slightly wider than standard townhouses.

Ms. Cherichetti pointed out building corner 478, which is the last corner of the southern row of townhouses. She asked Ms. Slayback about the parking lot on the south side of the buildings, which was close to the wetlands.

Ms. Cherichetti reminded the group that they were trying to get an overview of the property before the commissioners had to leave.

Ms. Cherichetti pointed out the stone wall that is shown on the maps. The center line of the road will be approximately where the wall currently is. She pointed out the wetland crossing at the end of the stone wall, with a large wetland to the north and another to the south. She explained that the monitoring wells on the southern wetland were part of an earlier remediation, and that the commissioners could examine the file if they were interested. There was discussion of whether the monitoring wells were inside or outside the wetlands.

Ms. Cherichetti pointed out the wetland crossing at stake 323. Ms. Shaeffer explained that Village B would consist entirely of townhouses.

Ms. Cherichetti pointed out a visible watercourse. The commissioners noted that there were several bluebirds in the wetland, and Ms. Shaeffer said that bluebird boxes were planned.

Ms. Cherichetti noted that the watercourse was marked by a line of phragmites, and that they were coming up on six townhouses. Ms. Shaeffer explained that they plan to replace the phragmites with trees. There was discussion of the type of tree that might be planted.

Ms. Cherichetti pointed out the corner of a mid-rise and the location of turn-around parking. She pointed out the large wetland to the south, and added that it is a standing water swamp, and is therefore regulated as a watercourse.

Ms. Cherichetti explained that the area had been used for radar testing, and that the radar tower and screens had been recently demolished. The commissioners noted that there was another area of remediation.

The commissioners noted that the area was very wet. Ms. Cherichetti said that it had not been mapped as a wetland soil area, and suggested that the water might not be present often enough to change the soil.

It was pointed out that a path went from the property to Hiawatha. Ms. Cherichetti asked Ms. Slayback about the standing water swamp, and Ms. Slayback agreed that it was both a wetland and a watercourse.

There was discussion of the location of the Westport-Norwalk border. Ms. Shaeffer stood by different stakes to mark the locations of the building and parking lot corners. Ms. Cherichetti noted that the corner was very close to the continuation of the wetland.

Ms. Cherichetti asked the commissioners if they wanted to stop at any particular locations on the way back. It was decided to stop at the second wetland crossing and the proposed remediated wetlands. Ms. Slayback pointed out that the remediation would include the introduction of native species.

There was discussion of the locations of the Vortech units. Ms. Shaeffer pointed out that the engineer would be able to address this at the meeting that evening. There was discussion of the level spreaders and drainage. Ms. Shaeffer and Ms. Slayback pointed out that the head of the Westport Department of Public Works had spoken in support of their Vortech units.

The commissioners visited the second wetlands crossing. They discussed the culverts near the railroad tracks.

The commissioners visited the area of wetlands replacement. They discussed the remediation plans.

ADJOURNMENT

** MS. SMITH MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

** MS. CAGNINA SECONDED.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Rettger
Conservation Assistant

