

NORWALK CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

MARCH 25, 2003

ATTENDANCE: Matthew Caputo, Vice
Chairman; Ed Holowinko, Marny Smith, Anne
Cagnina, Jane Corcillo, Karen Destefanis

STAFF: Alexis Cherichetti,
Senior Environmental Officer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Caputo called the meeting to order at 6:11
p.m.

RECEIPT AND DISCUSSION

97 Wolfpit Avenue – Reith - #S03-137- Construction of a new single-family residence with associated driveway and landscaping adjacent to a wetland

Ms. Cherichetti indicated on the plan the proposal is for a new single family house; she noted the house that was taken down went in on a free cut and the new house would be on parcel-B where there is wetland on the adjacent property that is 47 feet from the house. They would have to relocate the driveway from the easement that would then be closer to the wetland. She said the question is if the commission wants to require an application concurrently for the Reith's to install the driveway, but if they were interested in mitigation plants then they would talk to the neighbor.

Mr. Reith said he was the co-owner of the lot, he sold the home to the present occupant and the lot has been split. He said he was looking to build a new home and he stated that in establishing the lot, he gave the other owner 5 feet of his land to push the driveway away that resulted in splitting the driveway. He said he didn't feel it would have any affect on the wetland.

Mr. Caputo asked when he sold the house. Mr. Reith replied in November 2001.

Ms. Cherichetti said the concern is it needs to be recognized that it has a different owner now.

Ms. Smith asked if the new house would share a driveway also. Ms. Cherichetti explained they would have the same curb cut and after entering the property there would be the driveway to the east of the proposed house.

Ms. Corcillo questioned if the driveway would be very far away. Mr. Reith explained he is giving the whole accessway on the same curb cut.

Ms. Smith asked about the wetland line and she said when she visited the property, she saw a little string that is the proposed easement driveway. Mr. Reith clarified the string denotes the center of the driveway.

Ms. Smith said that due to the wet winter; the ground is saturated and water bubbles through the grass. Mr. Reith said there is a broken water line present; he talked to someone at the water department and when it was mapped out, they inspected it and found a break in the line that has caused water to percolate for a while.

Ms. Cherichetti said she contacted Otto Theall and was told it's not a wetland soil.

Ms. Smith noted there are several big trees that would have to be taken out for the driveway; if they are taken down, she wondered if doing so would make matters worse. Mr. Reith said the oak trees wouldn't have to be removed and he indicated a Norway spruce that is outside of the line as well as some junipers that won't be affected, he noted the junipers became diseased.

Ms. Smith clarified she was speaking of the deciduous trees located within the 10 ft. wide line that would be the driveway; but again, its all wet and if they were taking out the trees they would have that much more water. Mr. Reith noted it's a recent problem that he hasn't experienced in prior years; and again, the water department flagged the problem to address it.

Ms. Destefanis asked if they need to look at the property to the south and if so, do they need to let the person know his land needs to be looked at. Ms. Cherichetti said she would contact him and advise him to file an application that should run concurrently with the Reith's. Mr. Reith stated there is a mutual agreement with the neighbor (Mr. Michael Macaveni).

Mr. Caputo asked if he was agreeable to a joint venture. Mr. Reith acknowledged he submitted a letter of intent.

Ms. Smith questioned the commission approving the permit before the water line problem was addressed. Mr. Caputo clarified that the commission didn't have jurisdiction over that problem and noted that Mr. Macaveni would be responsible for it.

Mr. Caputo also noted to the applicant that there wouldn't be a decision made tonight, the matter was presented for receipt only.

Mr. Reith referred back to the water main problem and said the water department contact and Mr. Macaveni were discussing the problem and how to best address it; but the issue doesn't really concern him.

Ms. Cherichetti confirmed there is a water main problem to be addressed but beyond this, she questioned if there was anything else that needed to be discussed with Mr. Macaveni in relation to the driveway and noted if not, the matter could move forward through Mr. Reith's application only.

Ms. Cagnina asked about the locations that were flagged on the property. Ms. Cherichetti said the flagged locations were surveyed in relation to the proposed development.

Ms. Corcillo mentioned a shed that appeared to be encroaching on the wetland. Ms. Cherichetti explained that the shed has been there and on the map for years and pre-dates everything.

Ms. Destefanis asked if they knew exactly where the new driveway would be. Ms. Cherichetti said it would be limited to be within the easement she pointed out on the plan.

Ms. Destefanis asked who would build the driveway. Ms. Cherichetti and Mr. Reith responded he would work together with Mr. Macaveni to do it.

Mr. Caputo asked when it was built, how close it would be to the wetland. Ms. Cherichetti said the new driveway would be 25 feet at the closest point to the wetland line, thus no major construction issue.

Ms. Destefanis asked if they would be putting in mitigation landscaping. Ms. Smith suggested if it's a gravel driveway, landscaping might be more of a disturbance than an enhancement.

Mr. Caputo asked what type of landscaping she would suggest. Ms. Cherichetti recalled another property that planted shrubs to act as mitigation but she felt the proposed consisted of such a small impact that she wasn't sure it would be necessary to plant a lot of landscaping. Mr. Reith offered he could put in white pines to enhance the property on either side.

Cagnina commented she saw the property and it appeared to have natural buffer and she didn't feel any extra would enhance it.

** MS. DESTEFANIS MADE A MOTION TO RECEIVE THE APPLICATION

** MS. CORCILLO SECONDED

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE

*It was noted that action would be taken at the next scheduled meeting on April 8, 2003.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 11, 2003

Corrections

Page 8; 4th paragraph, 3rd line down where it reads calculations were similar to what she had intended to see should read calculations were similar to what she had independently determined.

Page 10; under Stephen Coscia, 346 Chestnut Hill Road, where it reads draught throughout the entire paragraph should read drought.

Page 11; last paragraph, 2nd sentence should read, He noted that the problem was the sewer line going through the wetland for the additional house.

** MS. DESTEFANIS MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED

** MS. CAGNINA SECONDED

** MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR VOTES IN FAVOR AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (MS. CAGNINA AND MS. SMITH)

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 18, 2003

Not available.

COMMENTS OF STAFF

Declaratory Permits

Ms. Cherichetti said she didn't have an update but information would be available at the April 18 meeting.

It was noted that the April 8 and April 22 meetings would be split for a discussion of declaratory permits. It was further discussed that the presentation would be held on April 8 followed by a discussion at the April 22 meeting.

COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Ms. Cagnina said she talked to the editor at the Hour and he suggested they write something for the guest opinion column, she noted there is going to be a garden issue in May.

Ms. Smith agreed this would be a good place to put an article on buffers. Ms. Cherichetti said this was discussed at the last meeting and it was determined that anyone who had ideas, should write them up for submitting.

Mr. Caputo urged the commissioners to write something and present it to staff for review for possible write up in the column.

Mr. Caputo asked if Ms. Cagnina could also check with other newspapers to place an article, he felt that they could perhaps place a couple of articles per year.

Mr. Holowinko asked about soil testing for the community garden; he said he checked with someone and asked what needed to be done to get the process started and he was told if the land

was not thought to be contaminated, a soil test should be done but if the soil is thought to be toxic, it was suggested to do more intense testing.

Ms. Smith noted he could possibly do the test himself and send it for results.

Ms. Cherichetti suggested Mr. Holowinko follow up on this and then contact someone with more knowledge of the problem.

Ms. Destefanis also suggested taking a sample for testing just to assure its not contaminated soil.

Mr. Holowinko said a nursery would help as a sponsor for the community garden.

Mr. Caputo stated the community garden was a great idea but he wondered who should be responsible for developing it and he felt it might not be in the Conservation Commission's purview to plan it; it should probably be done outside of the commission's charge; all agreed and Ms. Smith noted that Recreation & Parks might be a better source to head it up.

Mr. Caputo stated some ideas fly through the Conservation Commission while others can't but any idea could be discussed to help it along. Ms. Cherichetti added that a letter from the commission could certainly be helpful to push the project forward. She suggested something concrete be devised by Mr. Holowinko with details but the commission could not per se endorse it but they can show support.

Mr. Caputo further agreed something concrete should be presented on paper and this would elicit support from the parties who are looking to get involved. Ms. Cherichetti agreed.

Mr. Holowinko added the project already had an endorsement from the Norwalk Land Trust.

Ms. Destefanis asked if the plan were approved, would the Common Council call for a public hearing etc. Ms. Cherichetti explained a presentation would probably be made with Mr. Holowinko supplying endorsements received etc.

ADJOURNMENT

** MS. SMITH MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN

** MS. DESTEFANIS SECONDED

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diane Graham

Telesco Secretarial Services

