



APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Flood and Erosion Control Board
Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 431-2713 • conservation@ridgefieldct.org

January 23, 2017

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877 on Monday, January 23, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Eric Beckenstein
Carroll Brewster
Jack Kace
Dan Levine, Alternate

Tim Bishop
Jim Coyle
Alan Pilch
Ben Oko, Alternate

The following members were absent:

Susan Baker Dave Cronin Kitsey Snow

Police Chief Roche, Stef Zandri, and Paul Payne from the Deer Committee, wildlife consultant Laura Simon, Howard Kilpatrick from DEEP, and Bill Rexford from Wooster School were also in attendance.

Mr. Coyle chaired the meeting. Colleen Lake was present to take minutes.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 9, 2017 meeting were reviewed.

UPON motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of January 9, 2017 are approved and ordered filed in the minute books of the Commission and the Town Hall.

2. OPEN SPACE

a) Deer Hunt Fact Finding – Howard Kilpatrick from DEEP presented facts supporting the positive impact deer hunting on open space has had over a 27-year period. The information focused on how the hunt has reduced roadkill numbers, browsing in forests, and Lyme's disease. Mr. Kilpatrick agreed to provide the RCC with additional information specific to the Ridgefield deer hunt. Wildlife consultant Laura Simon presented the position that the hunt is statistically insignificant and that there is no ecological benefit to forest, disease reduction, or roadkill from sponsored deer hunts. The RCC will continue to review information on the subject.

b) Lakeside Road Donation – The Board of Selectmen approved moving ahead with the donation at their January 18, 2017 meeting. A Public Hearing will be held on February 8, 2017 and a Town Meeting on February 22, 2017.

3. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

a) **Wooster School Partnership** – Bill Rexford, a teacher from Wooster School, discussed areas that the RCC could partner with Wooster students. Some ideas include: an invasive removal project, senior independent study, school work days, expanding the Freshman walk, and developing a “Pine Tree Award” given to students by the RCC. Mr. Levine, Ms. Snow, and Mr. Cronin will continue to work with the school over the next few months.

4. **ANNUAL MEETING** – The commission will have its annual meeting on April 27, 2017, with John Whalen as guest speaker. A nominee for the Meffley Award was discussed and approved by the commission. Mr. Brewster will contact the individual to share the RCC’s decision and invite him to attend the April meeting.

5. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION, INLAND WETLANDS BOARD

a) **Meetings for Attendance**

Jan. 24 – Mr. Brewster

Feb. 7 – Mr. Pilch

Feb. 14 – Mr. Cronin

Feb. 21 – Mr. Kace

b) **New & Continued Business**

824 Ethan Allen Highway – Mr. Pilch described the remodeling project at the Golf Performance Center. Areas of concern in the plan provided include the potential for inorganic fertilizers to run directly into the Norwalk River, improved buffers to separate turf grass from the wetland and river, and the need for additional measures to protect the water quality of the river during the remodel.

UPON motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was RESOLVED, to submit Mr. Pilch’s comments, with minor revisions (and attached to these minutes as Addendum A), to Planning & Zoning/IWB.

6. CONTINUING TOPICS BEFORE THE COMMISSION

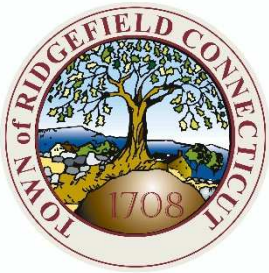
a) **Whitbeck Estate** – Messrs. Coyle, Kace, and Brewster will be meeting with Mr. Marconi and the attorney to discuss the issue January 30, 2017. The next Probate Court meeting is February 7.

b) Ms. Snow and Mr. Pilch will meet with Mr. Marconi Friday, January 27, 2017 to discuss a potential DEEP grant program.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Lake

ADDENDUM A



**Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall Annex
66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 431-2713**

January 24, 2017

Ms. Rebecca Mucchetti, Chairman
Planning & Zoning/IWB
Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877

RE: Comments on Golf Performance Center application
824 Ethan Allen Highway

Dear Ms. Mucchetti:

The project is to remodel the golf facility to regrade the property for greens and sand traps. The Norwalk River traverses the central portion of the property flowing from west to east.

The project site is presently a golf driving range in which golf players can practice into an existing lawn area which extends over much of the property.

It would appear that the driving range function of the property would be downgraded with the introduction of various (it appears to be six in all) greens and sand traps on the property. It is not clear if the driving range function will continue since play on greens and an active driving range are not compatible sports activities.

According to the applicant's engineer calculations, the grading of the property will increase the flood storage capacity of the Norwalk River, which will be a benefit to downstream properties.

Summary of Comments:

A principal concern of the Commission is significant potential for nutrient, pesticide and herbicide transport directly into the Norwalk River which bisects the property. We recommend that the owner, if this is not already done, implement an integrated pest management (IPM) program to limit the use and impact of fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides which are commonly used in lawn areas on golf courses to promote healthy grasses. As noted below, we also recommend that buffers be established to include the regulated wetland areas to separate the turf grasses of the course from the wetland and River. The purpose of the buffer is to limit the potential for the transport of lawn amendments from directly impacting the Norwalk River, which does eventually discharge to Long Island Sound.

To protect the water quality of the Norwalk River, we recommend the following modifications to the site plans for the project:

1. During construction, at the limit of disturbance nearest to the Norwalk River and the on-site pond, the applicant install a line of silt fence backed up with the line of hay bales. This will provide a much higher level of protection than just a line of hay bales. Inlet protection should also be provided around the perimeter of catch basins to remain during the construction period.
2. The construction access route (which we understand will be from Route 7), including the location of the temporary construction road, should be depicted on the sediment and erosion control plan. A construction entrance of 50-feet in length should also be installed to prevent and limit tracking of soil and sediment onto the public road.
3. The plans appear to indicate a 5-foot wide wetland enhancement strip (the width of the strip is not dimensioned on the plans) on the north side of the Norwalk River and a portion of the south side of the Norwalk River. We recommend that the width of the wetland buffer enhancement be at least 15-feet in width. The area of wetland mitigation/enhancement should also include the area on the northwest side of the existing Pond. The wetland mitigation area is to consist of only native shrubs and herbaceous plants.
4. On the north side of the Norwalk River as well as adjacent to the Pond, the area flagged as wetland we recommend remain as "rough" to the maximum extent. We recommend the plans be amended to depict the extent of this rough. By incorporating an area of rough into the design, the risk of lawn amendments and fertilizer from being washed into the Norwalk River will be reduced.
5. According to the golf course designer, an organic fertilizer (6-2-2 N-P-K) will be applied during construction for the establishment of the lawns (probably for the greens). The application of fertilizer in such close proximity to the Norwalk River does have a real potential to impact negatively the water quality of the river. We recommend that: (i) only organic fertilizer be applied to the golf course; (ii) following the initial application of fertilizer to establish the lawn areas that future fertilizer applications not contain phosphorus, and (iii) the on-site drainage system which discharges presently and will in the future discharge to the on-site Pond, include some type of treatment (such as a rain garden) prior to its conveyance of runoff to the pond.

Organic fertilizer is much better than non-organic fertilizer in maintaining soil bacteria and biota essential for nutrient transport reduction. Since phosphorus is the limiting nutrient in freshwater ecosystems, any future applications of fertilizer should not include phosphorus. Finally, we are concerned with the potential impacts on the Norwalk River from any applications of herbicides and pesticides, and as noted above, recommend the implementation of an integrated pest management program.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan L. Pilch, PE, RLA on behalf of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission