



## TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD Inland Wetlands Board

### APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES

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

July 13, 2023

Members present: Susan Baker, chair; Alan Pilch, secretary; Carson Fincham, Tim Bishop, vice chair; Tracey Miller, Chris Phelps, David Smith

Members absent:

Also present: Caleb Johnson, IW Agent; Dianus Virbickas, Chris Sullivan, Southwest Conservation District; Brian Carey, Andy Soumeliedis, P.E., Jason Klein, Jason Williams, Dr. Lipton, Todd Ritchie, Robert Jewell, Doug Macmillan, Robert Vuotto.

#### **I. Call to order:**

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

#### **II. Public Hearing(s)**

- 1. (Contd.)IW-23-18; 27 Abbott Avenue.** Plenary ruling application for construction of apartment complex, associated parking and drainage infrastructure within the upland review area of the wetlands. *Owner: Alimi Veton. Applicant: Brian Carey.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91085>

Ms. Baker reviewed the regulations regarding upland review areas that were in effect when the previous application for the property was approved.

Mr. Johnson read the new documents submitted since the last meeting.

Mr. Sullivan presented his peer review report including a biological report, wetlands vegetation, infiltration, and suggested remedies for environmentally concerned citizens, plus concluding comments. Members had questions regarding the recommended size of the wetland buffer and more detail on test methods for infiltration.

Mr. Virbikas from Artel Engineering presented an engineering peer report. He had a list of comments to be considered by the applicant's engineering team. Members asked about the addition of weepholes to the retaining wall for the infiltration system, whether chambers are sized properly for the project, proximity of the water retention system to the buildings, filtering of fine sediment. Mr. Virbikas will continue to review the revised plans submitted by the applicant on July 10.

The applicant had already submitted written responses to the peer review comments and Mr. Carey reviewed the changes to the plan made as a result of the biological review, including a planting maintenance plan, and said that their proposed buffer is adequate for the project given the current conditions. Members questioned the adequacy of the buffer and asked about snow removal.

Mr. Soumelidis from LandTech responded to the engineering peer report. Members had a number of technical questions and the discussion will continue at the next meeting with further comments from Mr. Virbikas and the applicant.

Mr. Phelps asked how the applicant had arrived at the current plan for 14 units. The response was that it used an earlier project that had received wetlands approval in 2018 as a starting point.

Mr. Trinkaus, P.E., on behalf of the local residents, provided additional comments based on both the updated plan and some of the peer review reports.

Members of the public spoke against the application regarding possible flooding downstream and ecological concerns.

Mr. Klein raised a point about consideration of expert testimony from an engineer hired by the neighbors and asked the board to bring up any issues that would be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Carson responded that all expert testimony, including from qualified board members, would be considered. Members expressed concerns such as the size of the wetlands buffer, adequacy of the stormwater system, drawdown analysis.

Public Hearing continued to July 27.

2. **(Contd.) IW-23-6, 0 Ethan Allen Highway, G10-0057**, Plenary Ruling Application for construction of thirteen multi-family residential buildings, one community meeting house, outdoor pool amenity space, stormwater management system, vehicular access using existing entrance which crosses onto this site via newly constructed stream channel crossing, associated site work within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *35 days to close the public is June 01, 2023. Extension was granted until July 13, 2023.*  
Owner/Applicant: Ridgefield Professional Office Complex LLC.  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/90987>

Ms. Baker noted that only one more extension was allowable before closing the public hearing. She also asked the board members and applicants to let Mr. Johnson know if they would be available on either August 10 or 17 if a special meeting were to be necessary to discuss the application once the public hearing closed.

Mr. Johnson read a list of documents that had been entered into the record since the last meeting.

Mr. Virbikas commented that he was still reviewing the most recent plans that were submitted on July 7. These will be provided by July 21.

Mr. Williams confirmed that the current plan is the feasible and prudent alternative to the plans for the site that had been created by other firms. He also reviewed changes to the plans including removal of one of the units, moving the wall in that area further from the wetlands, and changes to basin construction. Discussion of the water retention basins will be a focus of the next meeting.

Other questions from board including not cutting trees beyond those needed for construction, how water coming down steepest part of the roadway will be managed (Mr. Richie responded on this), maintenance plan for plantings as needed,

Dr. Lipton provided a concluding review of the project, including sustainability goals for the project and plans that might be considered if this application is not approved. It was noted that Attorney Jewell would speak at the next meeting.

Public hearing continued to July 27.

### **III. Discussion:**

- 1. IW-23-22; 5 Palmer Court.** Summary Ruling application for additions in the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Steven Bronfield. Applicant: Doug Macmillan. For receipt and scheduling a discussion and sitewalk.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/92143>

Mr. Macmillan reviewed the project, which occurs entirely in the upland review area (from the Norwalk River) but does not add much to the current footprint of the house. The excavation material will be removed from the site rather than stockpiled and some work was going to be done to clean out debris that had been deposited in the wetland. Members requested the following special conditions of approval:

- **A buffer planting 20 feet deep will be established which will reduce the width of the current lawn path to the side of the pond. A planting plan for this item and the next item will be provided to the wetlands agent for approval.**
- **A gap in the stone wall will have a 5 foot buffer planting to either side of the opening, resulting in a 15 foot by 5 foot buffer in that area.**
- **A pipe that contains roof or footing drain water will be redirected to a mitigation area such as a rain garden; design for this to be presented to the wetlands agent for approval.**
- **The tree near the house will be trimmed back, not removed.**
- **No soil stockpile (except during the days when excavation is occurring) will be kept on site.**
- **The stone wall will remain, but the split rail fence will be removed, and any debris that was deposited in the wetland will be removed.**

**Mr. Pilch motioned to approve the Summary Ruling application with the listed special conditions and Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

- 2. (Contd.) IW-23-21, 40 Limestone Terrace;** Summary Ruling Application addition to the house within the upland review area of the wetlands. *Owner/Applicant: Robert Vuotto.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91736>

Mr. Vuotto presented a mitigation planting plan which includes removal of part of the gravel driveway. He indicated that he is working with the health department for approval of a new

septic system. The board requested an updated planting plan that includes a list of the species and sizes of the plants, a revised site map including the new septic system and silt fencing.

Discussion continued to July 27.

**IV. Application(s) for receipt:**

- I. IW-23-25, 20 Spring Valley Road;** Summary Ruling Application for repair extend a stone wall and associated drainage between watercourse and deck within the upland and watercourse area of the wetlands. *Owner: Tomas & Megan Bohm. Applicant: Andre Teixeira de Carvalho. For receipt and scheduling a site walk and discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91013>
- 2. IW-23-27, 41 Mulberry St;** Summary Ruling Application to remediate the violation of removal of trees by regrading and planting wetlands plants within the upland review of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Amy Russo. Applicant: Barbara Wilson. For receipt and scheduling a site walk and discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/92700>

**Mr. Pilch motioned to receive the above applications and Ms. Miller seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Site walks are scheduled for July 23, 2023 and discussion on August 24.**

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

**V: Other Business:**

**VI: Approval of Minutes:**

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** June 08 and June 22, 2023
- **Sitewalk Meeting:** June 18 and July 09, 2023

Members stated approval with the following abstentions: June 18 site walk: Mr. Smith; July 9 site walk: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Carson, and Mr. Phelps.

**Mr. Bishop motioned and Mr. Pilch seconded approval of the meeting and site walk minutes with the listed abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.**

**VII: Adjourn**

Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 11:01 PM

Submitted by Susan Baker, chair, in the absence of the recording secretary.