



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Inland Wetlands Board
WEB BASED MEETING VIA ZOOM

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES

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

January 11, 2024

Members present: Susan Baker, chair; Carson Fincham, Tim Bishop, vice chair; Ben Nissim, Alan Pilch, secretary; David Smith

Members absent: Chris Phelps

Also present: Caleb Johnson, IW Agent; Aarti Paranjape, Recording Secretary; Walter Suin Chin, Robert Jewell, George Logan, Brett Harrison; Alan Welby, Conservation Commission.

I. Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. Discussion

1. **(Contd.) IW-23-44: 25 Seymour Lane.** Summary Ruling application to correct a violation for a clear cutting and grubbing within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner/Applicant: Jason Ferrandino.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/94573>

Mr. Jewell gave an overview of the revised planting plan. He said that the planting includes a significant amount of native larger trees along with understory trees which will provide shading and thermal mitigation to the wetlands. Plantings also include shrubs and conservation seed mixes.

He added that due to the requirements of the Health Department, the location of septic has to be revised, which is also affecting the location of the dwelling. He said that the applicant will be back in front of the Board with a summary ruling application for the new location of the dwelling, which will partially be in the upland review area.

Mr. Pilch questioned whether the proposed planting of 50-60 feet is sufficient for the corrective action. He added that *Cornus Florida*- flowering dogwood is not suitable for the wet environment. He said that although the planting list includes conservation new England seed mixes, its location is not shown on the planting plan.

Members agreed that the revised planting is a significant improvement with the suggestion of replacing the dogwood with appropriate wetland native trees.

The following special conditions were stated:

- Replace *Cornus florida* with appropriate native trees.

- Planting plan shall show the new England seed mixes.
- Planting bond shall be posted at the date stated by the office along with revised planting plan.
- The plantings will be completed by June 15, 2024.

Mr. Bishop motioned to approve the corrective action Summary ruling with special and standard conditions. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **WV-23-2: 150 Barrack Hill Rd;** Wetlands violation for excavating, grading, clear cutting, and depositing materials within the upland review area. *Owner: Walter Suin Chin.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/94967>

Mr. Fincham and Mr. Pilch gave an overview of what they observed at the site walk.

Mr. Fincham said that they noticed that the area is all leveled with no stabilization in areas which are prone for erosion.

Mr. Pilch noticed a berm at the stream side which will prevent the erosion directed towards it. However he said earth disturbance involves 300-350 feet along the length of the property. He said however there was no evidence of erosion.

Mr. Fincham said that a large clearing of vegetation which includes trees of almost twenty inch diameter and brush clippings were deposited on the lower level near the banks. The grading was more on the upper level than on the lower level.

Removal of the debris will have to be performed very carefully without causing further disturbance.

Mr. Bishop commented that what he is hearing, the removal will require machinery for removal of the deposition of tree logs and brush clippings.

Members discussed the stabilization that can be done by chipping the tree stumps and logs into wood chips which could be used to spread on the upper level. Jute matting and replanting will help along the banks.

Mr. Chin stated that since the leaching fields are in the area where the removal will be involved, using of heavy machinery would not be possible as it will damage the septic fields.

Discussion ensued and members agreed that all the deposited material shall be removed from the property manually. The Board will assess the area once cleared of debris to propose planting a riparian buffer for stabilization of the embankment and upland review areas.

Applicant will remove the deposited materials of all tree logs and brush clippings by May 17, 2024. The applicant will be then back in front of the Board where they will access where and how much planting will be required for mitigation.

Applicant will update Mr. Johnson of the progress of removal of the deposited material in the upland review area before the deadline of May 17, 2024. If work of removal of debris is not completed by then, the Board will issue violation fees.

III. Application(s) for receipt:
None

IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

1. WV-24-1: 45 St. Johns Rd.

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the violation sharing the pictures of the site. He said that the tree logs were deposited in the Open space area and he also noticed that wood chips were deposited in the wetlands near the stream on the property.

Homeowner Mr. Harrison updated the Board that three large trees were cut down as they were hazardous. One of the trees had fallen on the property during the last storm in December.

Mr. Bishop said that bulk of chips deposited shall be removed from the wetlands area. The tree logs deposited in the open space shall be removed.

Discussion ensued and members stated by May 01, 2024 the bulk of wood chips along with the tree logs shall be removed. The office will issue the order of remediation for violation with the date of completion.

V: Other Business:

1. 257 Peaceable Street – Planting Plan

Mr. Jewell presented the revised planting plan.

Mr. Logan explained the proposed riparian buffer. The buffer includes 15-20 feet of no mow zone as per condition number 4 as stated on adopted resolution. He added that in order to access the dock and for maintenance of the pond, the plan include two 12 foot strips of area to be mowed. He said to promote the health of the meadow, he proposes mowing once during June and once at the end of October to control invasives. Mowing is not to be shorter than 4 inches.

Discussion ensued and members were satisfied with the revised plan.

2. McKeon Farm Project – Conservation Commission

Mr. Welby gave a brief overview of proposal by Conservation Commission at the McKeon farm. He said Commission wants to removed the invasive species which are choking a stream. Area of work involves two hundred feet along the stream. The Commission has applied for a grant which will cover the cost. The work proposed will involve mechanical removal of the invasive and no chemicals will be used.

Members agreed that since it's a regulated activity, the Conservation Commission shall submit a Summary Ruling application to wetlands Board. The application will include a planting plan and stabilization of the embankment.

VI: Approval of Minute(s)

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting: December 28, 2023**

Mr. Bishop motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Nissim seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Special Meeting: January 04, 2024**

Mr. Bishop motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Fincham seconded. Mr. Nissim abstained. Motion carried 5-0-1.

- **Sitewalk Minutes: January 06, 2024**

Mr. Pilch motioned to approve the sitewalk minutes and Mr. Fincham seconded. Ms. Baker, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Nissim and Mr. Smith abstained. Motion carried 2-0-4.

VII: Adjourn

Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape
Recording Secretary