



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Inland Wetlands Board
REVISED MEETING AGENDA
Web Based Meeting Hosted on ZOOM

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES

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

March 14, 2024

Members present: Susan Baker, chair; Carson Fincham, Alan Pilch, secretary; Chris Phelps

Members absent: Tim Bishop, vice chair; Ben Nissim, David Smith

Also present: Caleb Johnson, IW Agent; Robert Jewell, Chris Sullivan, Kate Throckmorton, Tom Montanari; Anthony Mungoli; Salvatore Casabianca & Mitzi Hayes; Abigail & Glenn Boyar

I. Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

II: Discussion:

- 1. IW-24-7; 58 Prospect Ridge Rd.:** Summary Ruling application for partial abandonment of accessway and remove the drainage pipe to allow free flow of intermittent watercourse on 58 Prospect Ridge and 62 Prospect Ridge properties within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Thomas M. Montanari. Applicant: Robert Jewell*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95573>

Mr. Jewell gave an overview of the project, that in addition to the abandonment of part of the accessway and removal of the drainage pipe, contains a development that retains the legal 3-family dwelling at 62 East Ridge Road, an existing one-family dwelling behind this building on the 1.61 acre 58 Prospect Ridge property, and the addition of 4 additional one-family dwellings on that property. This density would be permitted by the application of the Main Street Design District floating zone to this property via the Zoning Commission. Only one of these dwellings (Unit 4) is within the 100' upland review area. The abandonment of the accessway (approx. 9400 square feet) will allow for restoration of the wetland in that area and involves work to remove a culvert and partially encapsulate the sewer line that currently runs under the accessway.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the plans for developing the property, including that all access will be from East Ridge Rd. and that the development adds 0.24 acres of impervious surface not including pervious pavers to be used in some areas. Existing trees to be removed are all on the map. All dwellings including existing units on both properties will now be hooked up to the sewer line that exists below the accessway to Prospect Ridge Rd. All new dwelling runoff (including new garage at 62 East Ridge) will be connected to a cultic system within the upland review area, including a hydrodynamic separator, to meet current stormwater specifications. Construction disturbance will be .62 acre on 62 East Ridge and 1.3 acres on 58 Prospect.

Ms. Throckmorton described the plantings to restore the accessway area and some of the lawn area as a meadow of approximately 1 acre, regaining approximately 500 sf of wetland. The

plan includes a 3-year maintenance plan to control invasives including a mowing plan. A maintenance schedule will be included in the final plan.

Mr. Jewell requested that the bond for the planting plan be divided between the plantings on the restored accessway area and the ones related to the development of the homes.

Mr. Pilch commented that Unit 4 would be 56 feet from the wetlands, and asked if it could be moved further to the west about 20 feet to increase the separation or remove it entirely from the upland review area. Mr. Sullivan commented that there is a building separation of 35 feet and other zoning issues. Mr. Pilch further commented that removal of Unit 4 would also solve the problem of disturbance.

Mr. Fincham agreed that in areas where large wetland systems are present near development that the board has been very careful with disturbance in the upland review area. He also mentioned that the use of LID solutions rather than total reliance on Cultecs would be his preference. He suggested that if the applicant does not reposition the building that the board would need to require peer reviewers to be hired.

Mr. Sullivan agreed to review the plans to determine if Unit 4 can be moved further from the wetlands.

The application will be continued at the March 28 meeting.

III: Applications for Receipt(s):

IW-24-9; 653 Branchville Road: Summary Ruling Application for Candees pond dredging within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Candees Branch LLC*
Applicant: Robert Jewell. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.

Mr. Pilch motioned to accept the application and schedule the sitewalk on March 24 and discussion on March 28. Mr. Phelps seconded. Motion carried unanimously

IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

1. 51 Blackman Road

Mr. Johnson described a deposition of wood chips within a wetland area. The homeowner, Mr. Mungoli, confirmed that the previous owner had placed the wood chips. He agreed to remove the chips to 100 feet outside of the wetland within 30 days.

2. 120 Old West Mountain Road

Mr. Johnson described work to remove debris from a potential wetland area that resulted in the uncovering of a stone-lined water-filled low area and removal of all vegetation surrounding it. The homeowners, Salvatore Casabianca and Mitzi Hayes indicated that they had removed the considerable debris in the area and that the tree that was cut down was a threat to fall on their house. The woodchip "path" had been installed by the previous homeowners. Before deciding on planting to restore the area where vegetation was removed, the board requested that the homeowner have a soil scientist delineate the wetlands on the property to clarify what kind of planting should be done. Mr. Johnson will follow up with a list of soil scientists.

3. 124 Spectacle Lane

Mr. Johnson described a violation within the town's right of way, which he reviewed with Dave Buchetti of the Highway Department. Mr. Buchetti requested that the pipe placed by the homeowners in an attempt to redirect water that pools in the area be removed and the area be re-seeded and hayed. The homeowners (Boyers) commented that their original intent was to be able to maintain the grass along the road. They are willing to correct the problem. This will require a permit from the Highway Department. The board asked for the work to be done in 45 days.

Mr. Johnson also updated the board on work performed to correct a violation at 45 St. John's Road and stated that he felt that all corrective work was performed to our expectations. This violation will be closed.

He also reviewed a potential violation at 151 North St. The homeowners removed a group of trees within the 100' upland review area, leaving an area that is now in need of stabilization. The homeowners agreed to immediately install silt fencing and to restore the previous lawn area. Mr. Johnson will not issue a violation but will monitor progress and report back.

V: Other Business:

Mr. Johnson attended the CAWS (Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists) meeting and described a presentation by Mr. Bishop of our board regarding mapping the location of vernal pools as they are critical habitat for protection. The board noted that the current edition of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission's Natural Resource Inventory has a map that locates the known vernal pool areas in town, and Mr. Johnson will keep a lookout for any others as he conducts his normal field work.

Ms. Baker reminded members that they should be reviewing our fee structure, including against fees in nearby towns for possible updates, especially regarding fees for permits to correct wetland violations. This should go on the agenda soon for a general discussion.

Mr. Fincham reminded members also that we should be doing some outreach to try to head off wetlands violations before they are committed. Some ideas were discussed, and this also should be put on a future agenda for specific plans to be moved forward.

VI: Approval of Minutes:

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** February 22, 2024

Mr. Fincham motioned to approve the above meeting minutes. Mr. Phelps seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Sitewalk Minutes:** March 10, 2024
- **Mr. Pilch motioned to approve the above meeting minutes, with the correction that the spelling of Mr. Handshy's be corrected. Mr. Phelps seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

VII: Adjourn

Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.