



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.

March 28, 2024

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

Also present: Caleb Johnson, IW Agent; Aarti Paranjape, Recording Secretary; Jefferey Fontaine, Greg Garrish; Jacob Muller, Steve Sullivan; Robert Jewell, Kate Throckmorton, Bill Kenny.

I: Call to order:

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

II: Public Hearing(s)

1. **IW-24-5; 0 West Branchville Road and Route 7:** Plenary Ruling application for Town Bridge Replacement # 07031 at Depot Road over Norwalk River at the intersection of Route 7 within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Town of Ridgefield-Bridge 07031. Applicant: Greg Gerrish.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/85616>

Mr. Johnson read the documents submitted for this plenary ruling application.

Mr. Fontaine gave an overview of the project involving replacement of the Bridge #07031 which passes over the Norwalk River, south of the bridge is Branchville Station. The current bridge is made of concrete slab with a masonry arch and has a clear span of twenty feet; it used to service almost 600 vehicles per day but is now closed due to partial collapse. The bridge is located in the FEMA flood zone.

The proposal is to replace the existing bridge with wider span from twenty to twenty four feet. The bridge will be elevated and the arch will be removed. In order to handle the water during construction, cofferdams are proposed. Majority of work will be within the cofferdams. Best Management Practices (BMP) will involve proper erosion measures to avoid debris flowing into the stream. Temporary impact to watercourse will be approximately 120 sq ft, with permanent impact to the watercourse of 272 sq ft. Approximately 540 cu yards of cut will be involved and 530 cu yards of fill, bringing the net of -10 cu yards. All the disturbed areas will be stabilized. A few trees in the construction zones will be removed to allow for the wider bridge. The CT Fisheries department was contacted and the construction of the bridge has taken into consideration the natural passage of the fish. To maintain the upstream passage the work will be performed within the cofferdams and the work will be conducted during the June to September months. The NDBB confirmed no impact to the listed species. The project will meet the necessary approvals from State DEEP and Army Corps engineers.

Members acknowledged the detailed presentation of the scope of the work.

Mr. Pilch expressed concern as no plans showed treatment of the sediment removal before entering the catch basins. He added that the headwall should have some kind of riprap or splash pad for erosion control. He inquired if any demolition plan is submitted especially the concrete removal caused during the disturbance at the shoreline of Norwalk River.

Mr. Garrish confirmed they would look into installing sumps to collect any sediments. He said the erosion measures will meet State DOT standards. He added that the project has no intent of removing the existing retaining wall on the east side of the river to the north of the bridge, a full construction plan will be submitted.

Questions were raised on the high water mark and stabilization of the banks, monitoring during the construction of the project, a typo in the Appendix B where it noted the New Milford town numbers, instead of the Ridgefield, and whether animals would be able to pass under the bridge.

Public Hearing closed at 7:36 PM.

III: Application for Discussion:

- 1. IW-24-5; 0 West Branchville Road and Route 7:** Plenary Ruling application for Town Bridge Replacement # 07031 at Depot Road over Norwalk River at the intersection of Route 7 within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Town of Ridgefield-Bridge 07031. Applicant: Greg Gerrish.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/85616>

The following special conditions were discussed:

1. Sump installed at the catch basins.
2. Construction plan to be submitted to office prior to any work.
3. Stabilization of the banks.
4. Illustration to show the riprap at the discharge of the headwall from the 2 catch basins.
5. Typo on the Appendix B will be corrected to show Town of Ridgefield.

Mr. Bishop motioned to approve the Plenary Ruling application with above special conditions and normal conditions. Mr. Phelps seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- 2. 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. Sullivan gave an overview of the revised plans based upon the discussion held at last meeting. Accordingly, Unit 5 was moved away from the wetland boundary to approximately seventy feet. The underground detention system was also moved, saving two maple trees. The access way to serve Unit 4 was reduced to 12 ft., hence reducing the impervious surface. The construction will be reduced, and changing the current culvert to an open system will have a positive impact on the area.

Ms. Throckmorton presented the revised plantings and meadows. She said 16 more evergreens are added. Approximately 43700 sq. ft. almost an acre of the meadows and plantings are added. She added that there will be no impact to the wetlands, in fact it will enhance the function of the wetlands. Impervious surfaces are compensated with stormwater galleries.

Members inquired about the disturbance around the existing pipe, if machinery will be involved, maintenance of the meadows and invasive species.

Discussion ensued and applicant confirmed that no machines will be used when working near the pipes. The stream will not be impacted during the sewer work. The meadows will be maintained under the homeowner's association agreement. The maintenance agreement will also include the invasive species plan.

Mr. Pilch suggested to move the trees away from the sewer easement. He added to swap the *Cornus florida* as they are disease prone with more resistant variety and to mark the meadows with more boulders.

Following special conditions were stated:

1. An ongoing Maintenance Plan for mowing the meadows.
2. A three-year plan for controlling invasive species.
3. Boulder line will have an additional boulder added to clearly demarcate the meadows.
4. Trees to be planted outside of the sewer easement.
5. Swap the *Cornus florida* with more resistant variety.

Mr. Phelps motioned to approve the Summary Ruling with special and standard conditions. Mr. Bishop seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- 3. 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. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95634>

Mr. Jewell gave a brief history of the pond.

Mr. Sullivan presented the pond dredging application which involves approximately 105,000 cu yards of material. There will be four stockpile area of around 50,000 cu yards of removed material. The project will take approximately twelve months and will be completed in 2 phases.

Phase 1 will involve the southerly portion. Dam is located on the south side but no work is proposed at the dam. Under CT DEEP dam standards, all the vegetation within the 25 feet of the dam shall be removed. Approximately 2000 cu yards of muck, organic material, etc a day will be taken off site.

Approvals will be taken from CT DEEP and Army Corps of Engineer.

Construction sequence shows the staging area. An 8-inch gate valve will be used to drain water and regulate the discharge. Phase 1 will involve draining the pond. The invasive vegetation will be removed. Proper erosion measures, silt fence and temporary haul roads will be installed.

Phase 2 will involve a temporary pipe from the berm from phase I to II. Turbidity curtains will be installed near the dam at the southern end. The work will be performed between June – September in 2025.

Mr. Nissim inquired about the dam's structural shape. Mr. Fincham inquired if berms will be removed.

Mr. Sullivan confirmed, dam is in good shape and per DEEP and per the CT DEEP clean water Act 4.4. However the vegetation around 25 ft of the dam will be removed as per DEEP requirements. He added that berm will be removed in the end.

Mr. Kenny gave an overview of the pond and the dredging process. He described the biological habitat in the pond. As per NDBB there are no endangered or threatened species. Species of special concern, such as box turtle and wood turtles may be present and best management practices will be taken during the dredging where silt fence will be installed and

if turtles are encountered they will be carefully moved to a safe area. Buffer planting includes first fifty feet as woodland trees and will include more understory and plant canopy. Fifty to hundred feet buffer will include meadow and few shade trees.

A walkway around the pond will be just a dirt path. The applicant will be back in future to request approvals for the walkway around the dam and for crossings of the two streams that enter the pond, which is not included in this application.

Mr. Phelps inquired if any aeration/ bubbling system is proposed. Applicant said it's a good suggestion to include the aeration for the oxygen improvement in pond.

Ms. Baker inquired about the maintenance of the meadow. Mr. Kenny confirmed that the meadow would be mowed twice a year to control any invasive growth.

Following special conditions were stated:

1. Aeration system to be installed.
2. Multiyear invasive plants control plan to be submitted in detail within 30 days.
3. This approval does not constitute the walkway crossing path at the dam. The walkway crossing will be submitted separately.

Mr. Nissim motioned to approve the Summary ruling application with special and standard conditions. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

IV: Applications for Receipt(s):

1. **IW-24-10; 0 Lauzun Lane:** Summary Ruling Application for the McKeon Farm stream riparian habitat restoration project within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Town of Ridgefield Conservation Commission. Applicant: Allan Welby. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95663>
2. **IW-24-11; 824 Ethan Allen Highway:** Summary Ruling Application for maintenance of existing greens on partial golf course within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: GOLF824 LLC. Applicant: Robert Jewell. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/96001>
3. **IW-24-12; 25 Seymour Lane:** Summary Ruling Application for new home construction of a single-family 2-story colonial style dwelling within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Ferrandino Enterprises LLC. Applicant: Jason Ferrandino. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/96042>
4. **IW-24-13; 7 Casa Torch Lane:** Summary Ruling Application for replacement of failing septic system within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner: Joyce Ligi. Applicant: William Dexter. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95662>
5. **IW-24-14; 49 Nursery Road:** Summary Ruling Application for installation of drainage pipe to extend to current existing catch basin within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. *Owner/Applicant: Daniel Saltus. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/93798>

Mr. Pilch motioned to receive above 5 applications. Mr. Fincham seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Sitewalk scheduled on April 14, 2024 and discussion on Special meeting April 18, 2024.

Due to lack of quorum on regular meeting on April 11, members discussed to hold a Special meeting on April 18 and a sitewalk on April 14, 2024. The meeting on April 11, 2024 will be canceled due to lack of quorum.

V: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

Mr. Johnson gave an update to members regarding the ongoing violations. He said that 51 Blackman informed him that the wood chips have been removed from the property. Mr. Bishop commended Mr. Johnson and confirmed that the wood chips have been removed from the property.

Mr. Johnson added that owner of 120 Old West Mountain has contacted a Soil Scientist for his property to be delineated for wetlands flagging. He will submit the corrective application soon.

VI: Other Business:

Members discussed revising the fee schedule. Mr. Nissim is in the process of collecting data from the Fairfield county towns and creating an excel data. He will share the file with Mr. Johnson who will distribute to the Board members. Board members came to conclusion that they all will research and contribute to the discussion at the upcoming meetings.

Members also discussed adding a recommended native plant list to the IWB website. Mr. Johnson will prepare a list by collating a few current lists, and will bring to the board for approval.

VII: Approval of Minutes:

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** March 14, 2024

Mr. Bishop motioned and Mr. Pilch seconded. Mr. Smith and Mr. Nissim abstained. Motion carried 5-0-2.

- **Inland Wetland Sitewalk Minutes:** March 24, 2024

Mr. Bishop motioned and Mr. Pilch seconded. Mr. Bishop and Mr. Phelps abstained. Motion carried 5-0-2.

VIII: Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 9:27PM.

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape
Recording Secretary