



## TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD Inland Wetlands Board

### APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES

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

May 11, 2023

Members present: Susan Baker, chair; Tim Bishop, vice chair; David Smith; Alan Pilch, secretary; Tracey Miller (joined at 7:17), Carson Fincham (left at 8:37PM)

Members absent: Chris Phelps

Also present: Caleb Johnson (IW Agent); Aarti Paranjape( Recording Secretary), Juliana Starbuck; Jason Williams; James McManus; Richard Lipton; Todd Ritchie; Shelley Plude

#### I. Call to order:

Ms. Baker called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Ms. Baker announced that the Board will discuss the 23 New Street Summary Application before the presentation of the Public Hearing, as Public Hearing may take couple of hours and the discussion should be relatively short.

#### II. Public Hearing(s)

1. (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. *Owner/Applicant:Ridgefield Professional Office Complex LLC. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and Public Hearing.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/90987>

Mr. Johnson noted three new documents were submitted since the opening of public hearing at the last meeting.

Mr. Williams with SLR Consulting gave an overview of the proposed project at 29.2 acres. The water tower has been decommissioned and the sewer facility is in the process of being decommissioned. The entrance will include the existing entrance at the 901 Ethan Allen Highway and a crossing over the existing stream. The project includes construction of thirteen buildings, which includes apartments and town homes. The planting includes mitigation and restoration plans. The entrance is improved both ecologically and esthetically. The newly planted

buffer will act as a rain garden. The Phragmites and other invasive species on the right side of entrance will be removed and the area will be restored with native plantings and with New England seed mixes. On the eastern side of the stream crossing, the lawn will be removed and planted with native wild flowers. A detailed planting plan is submitted.

Ms. Plude presented the new improved stream crossing. Existing thirty-inch culvert is not functioning hydrologically a new improved crossing is proposed. The crossing is up to the standards of Army Core requirements of 1.2 times the width of the stream. The existing pipe will be replaced by a thirty-foot Bridge. There will be some bank space for the critters and other animals to cross underneath the span. The elevation is set above 100-year water surface and meets the Army core requirements.

Mr. Williams gave overview of the buildings and the associated sitework. Apartment parking spaces will include permeable pavers. Amenities include outdoor pool, and meeting/club house. The planting in the area where buildings are constructed will have plantings all around which will have mix of trees and understory trees and shrubs, conservation and wildlife mixes.

Grading will take into consideration the existing contours with leveled roadways. Plans include the stockpile locations. There are two major stormwater management basins. All drainage is captured into the stormwater system before being discharged, Mr. McManus' report specially takes into consideration sediment and erosion control measures. Sediment traps and erosion control blankets are proposed for any sheet flow. All the catch basins will have inlet protection.

Mr. Ritchie presented the utilities and stormwater management plan. The existing force main location will be followed for the new gravity pipes. The water and electric and gas utilities will be accessed from Route 35 along the emergency driveway.

Mr. Bishop expressed concerns-

1. The American Beech in the planting plan, due to the nematode issues in the north east, are not recommended.
2. The construction phasing. To submit a phasing/ construction plan in the graphic map. This will avoid the clear cutting of 20 acres all at once for construction.

Mr. Pilch as a licensed Civil Engineer and registered Landscape Architect expressed following concerns-

1. Removal of phragmites. Typically it requires a period of time. Extends to a longer duration.
2. More detailed Stormwater presentation with special attention to the systems close to the proximity to the wetlands.
3. The slopes of 2 to 1 at the northeast water quality basin, which is a steep slope. Two fifteen foot walls and the fill almost of 30 feet is concerning and drastic in the wetland area.
4. The model of the Stormwater report should be taking into account the two water quality basins.

5. The stormwater drainage is designed for 10 year and in the event of major storm how will it handle the flow. Especially the detained subsurface chambers. And that during the storm the erosion and sedimentation might affect the Ridgefield brook.

Mr. Williams stated that the phragmites will be removed by the application of the DEEP permitted herbicide spray called “habitat”.

From the ecological perspective the stormwater system is planned to be near water due to the hydrologic system.

Mr. McManus explained the existing conditions. The north western site is forested and slopes down to the wooden swamp. Robust planting is proposed for that basin.

Ms. Miller as a Landscape architect stated following concerns-

1. Although phragmites is invasive, they do help removal of nitrogen and will require a carefully executed removal plan.
2. She also expressed concerns of the close proximity of the retention basins near the hydric soils. The disturbance during the construction of the basins
3. The building six is in the conservation easement and that should be addressed.
4. Survey of the trees being removed in the upland review area will be helpful.
5. The zone change is proposed for multifamily residence. The impact of the stormwater design for multifamily development.

Mr, Fincham questioned –

1. The design parameters and the hydraulic capacity of the stormwater system and the criteria involved in the designing.
2. Changes to the impervious surface calculations for the existing and proposed area not including the pond. The proposed development area calculations.
3. The existing Town waste water system being decommissioned, the water entering the pond will be drastically changing. Calculations for the current discharge volume and the discharge once the waste water system is decommissioned. Which will affect the drainage discharge into the little pond. The proposed change calculations will be helpful.

Mr. Ritchie stated that the stormwater system is designed for 100 year storm. Stormwater quality system is designed according to the Town’s impervious surface requirements under the stormwater design criteria. The decommissioning of the waste water system facility will reduce the nutrients and eliminate the nutrients flow.

Mr. Lipton commented that that there is no definite plan but the construction would be from bottom starting with bridge crossing building 1 with meeting/ club house. Phase II with construction of building 10, 11, 12 and 13.. Final phase will have building 5 and 6 and up to Buildings 7 and 9 up to the top.

Ms. Baker stated that the peer review will be hired by next meeting and that the review will focus on the Inland wetlands members concerns first as the engineering peer review will be combined for both wetlands and Planning & Zoning.

A biological evaluation review will also be conducted.

Applicant will address the concerns before the next meeting.

No public comments.

The public hearing continued to May 25, 2023.

## **II: Application(s) for Discussion:**

1. **IW-23-17; 23 New Street.** Summary Ruling Application for tree planting in wetlands and rebuild the rubble wall within the upland review area of the wetlands.

*Owner/Applicant: Juliana Starbuck.*

<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91596>

Members discussed the planting plan which include, red maples, dogwoods and redbud and the stonewall being proposed by the homeowner.

Mr. Pilch commented that redbud is not a wetland plant and not appropriate for that area. He spoke as a licensed Landscape Architect, and suggested that other wetland understory plants should be included, shrubs such as elderberry, shadblow.

Discussion ensued, members agreed that the wetlands plants will be installed near the wetlands and the fern, bed will be along the edge.

The Stone rubble will extend to the vertical pole at the property and not extend to the lawn and not to be more than two feet in height. Mr. Johnson will verify the location of the pole with the homeowner.

Mr. Pilch and Ms. Miller will share the planting list with Mr. Johnson who will discuss with the homeowner. The homeowner will choose the wetlands plants from the list provided by Board members.

Following conditions were stated:

1. Five plantings to be chosen along with the quantity and size from the Board members suggested list.
2. Fern bed along the edge.
3. Deer protection for the shrubs and plants.
4. Rubble wall to extend to the existing vertical pole.

**Ms. Miller motioned to approve the correction violation and Summary Ruling. Mr. Pilch seconded with the special and standard conditions. Motion carried unanimously.**

Publication date of May 18, 2023 and effective date of May 19, 2023.

## **III: Application(s) for Receipt:**

1. **IW-23-20, 258 Main Street;** Summary Ruling Application for installation of handicap accessible trail, improvements to sculpture garden, drainage and associated work within the upland review area of the wetlands. *Owner: The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum Inc. Applicant: Robert Jewell, Esq.*

*For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91821>

2. **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.* *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91736>

**Mr. Bishop motioned to receive above two applications. Mr. Pilch seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0.**

Sitewalk scheduled for June 18 and discussion on June 22, 2023.

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

**V: Other Business:**

**1. 66 Manor Road – Bond Release**

Mr. Johnson updated the Board that the area is stabilized. Homeowner was asked to replant one shrub which had exposed root ball due to winter ice. The fern beds were growing well after two growing seasons.

**Mr. Bishop motioned to release the bond in full. Ms. Miller seconded. Motion carried 5-0-0**

2. Ms. Baker informed the Board that Janet Brooks, Attorney for Environmental and Land Use Law can be hired to give a training session to the Board members. Members agreed that it will be beneficial to be updated with the Inland Wetlands regulations. Members will draft questions and concerns to be asked at the meeting. Members aim to host Ms. Brooks sometime in July depending upon her availability.

**VI: Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Baker stated the abstentions for the meetings and sitewalks for the below dates.

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** March 23, 2023; April 13 and 27, 2023  
**Mr. Smith motioned to approve the above meeting minutes. Ms. Miller seconded. Mr. Pilch abstained. Motion carried 4-0-1.**
- **Sitewalk Minutes:** April 11, 2023; April 23, May 7, 2023  
**Ms. Miller motioned to approve the sitewalk minutes. Mr. Smith seconded. Mr. Bishop Abstained. Motion carried 4-0-1.**

**VIII: Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 9:06 P.M.

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape  
Recording Secretary