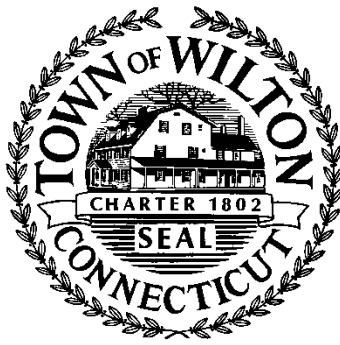


CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Telephone (203) 563-0180

Fax (203) 563-0284



TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

March 2, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Kristen Begor, chairman, Dave Hapke, Patrice Gillespie, Jeff Coppelman, Kim Young

Absent: Nick Lee, Chris Coyle

Also Present: Patricia Sesto, Director Environmental Affairs, Recording Secretary Liz Larkin

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.
- II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS –

A. WET#2008(S) – TIAA CREF – 10 Westport Road – construction of surface parking spaces within a regulated buffer.

Ms. Sesto noted that this is a repeat application as Planning & Zoning approved the previous application, and Inland Wetlands denied the portion considered “phase 1” of the parking plan which is closest to the building.

The revised plan includes infiltrators in lieu of the original plan which proposed level spreaders. According to the applicant, the need for more parking is driven by the “market” and the desire to bring the number of spaces into line with Planning & Zoning’s requirements to have 3 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. of office space. The market force is not something the Inland Wetland Commission has authority to consider.

In reference to understanding the proposed number of spaces needed, a discussion ensued about more employers allowing work from home and the cost of the rent which could be lowered to bring in a lessee. The future use of the Hansen House is not a consideration at this time.

A discussion ensued about the cumulative impacts of the proposal. As a gauge of watershed health, impervious coverage greater than 12% is considered overdeveloped. The infiltrator is being added to solve any thermal pollution issues.

Ms. Young suggested that the Inland Wetlands Commission require a bond to ensure the maintenance of the infiltrator. Ms. Sesto noted that this can be enforced the action based on the permit. The Inland Wetland Commission may not deny any application due to future maintenance concerns.

A discussion ensued relating to putting the parking area under the bridge and in the wooded area opposite Hanson House. The goal is to keep a greater chunk of the wooded hillside above the stream intact.

Mr. Hapke suggested stacked parking. Ms. Sesto confirmed that this idea was considered but not appealing to the owner. Ms. Sesto added that, as stated by the applicant's engineer, the lower level would need a sanitary sewer for the storm water, which was not desirable.

Ms. Sesto will write a letter to IWC noting the concerns of this commission.

B. WET#2009(S) – GUERON/CANNONDALE – 24-30 Cannon Road –
construction of 25 new residential units and other site improvements within a regulated area

Ms. Sesto described the site and the plan of this application. There is a conservation easement on the west side of the site. There are high tension power lines, the Norwalk River, and the railroad tracks, so the property is constrained in terms of development. No new buildings are proposed within the floodplain. There is a concern about the impervious area so close to the river. The proposed zone allows for 7 units per acre, but there is no discounting this density based on other site constraints.

A discussion ensued relating to the water flow, peak volume and quality. Generally speaking, engineering efforts to maintain pre-development peak flows don't necessarily mean the total volume won't be increased. The post-development site may just have a longer peak flow and when the flood levels stay longer, the stress on the watercourse is greater. She then confirmed that the storm water management system will be included in the homeowners association and the bylaws would kick in to handle any repair. The sense of the commission is that the water table is too high to allow the infiltrator to work properly.

In a separate issue, the existing septic appears be failing which is a current public health issue. This will be reported to the Health Department.

The commission discussed the property on the upstream portion of the property as currently being a mature forest. Ms. Begor noted concerns with removing these large trees and the subsequent disturbance and silt which will affect the river. Ms. Sesto confirmed that the Inland Wetland Commission has no jurisdiction for the trees as they are in excess of 100 feet from the wetland.

Ms. Gillespie provided pictures of the site including a stream that is not noted on the plans. She suggested that the applicant do something for the town such as change to a non-profit organization which would provide them with historical regulations. It was agreed that this location, with proximity to the town center, and mass transportation could be a great addition to this area. It is suggested that the applicant leave space for the Norwalk River Valley Trail, use low impact development, and sustainable products.

The commission discussed the requirement for a certain percentage of the units to be affordable per the Zoning Regulations. There are 9 units on the plan that are within the buffer. Ms. Sesto stated her expectation that the IWC will hire a consultant to look at the site. The 100 ft. buffer is important. Activities within 300 ft. of buffer can affect the watercourse, however this is not in the Wilton Regulations.

Ms. Sesto will request a planting plan. The staff will check the value of the buffers next to the river. The commission also asked if there were any provisions for open space; there are none.

Ms. Begor said the commission should look at “developable land” and not just 7 units per acre as some of the acreage is not feasible to build. The commission requests the characteristics of the Planning and Zoning Overlay that is being proposed for this purpose.

Ms. Begor also asked if the sewer can be built under the railroad tracks. Ms. Sesto confirmed that this can be done but that it is very expensive.

III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS

A. CHZ#10329 – GUREON – 24-30 Cannon Road – overlay Cannon Crossing District (CXD) on underlying R-2A Zone

This dialogue took place under the Inland Wetland Referral. Please see above.

B. SP#360 – CARALUZZI’S – 920 Danbury Road – expand existing shopping center

Ms. Sesto reviewed the plan with the addition in the back of the building which is already paved, so no disturbance will take place. The applicant has stated that they are increasing their stormwater management by having drainage from the roof which is better than pavement run-off.

The commission was concerned that this additional space would require more parking but the plan includes the tightening of the parking spaces when you pull in from Danbury Road.

The commission reviewed the planting plan and agreed that they should plant more shade trees as the pear trees on the plan are not sturdy.

IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks – Mike Conklin sent a staff report noting no updates due to snow cover. The only activity that was completed was the blazing of a trail by a scout. Ms. Begor suggested that the commissioners start walking the trails in the next month and to report back any downed trees or issue so Mike can make arrangements to remove them.

B. Recycling - Ms. Begor reported that the Wilton Transfer Station is now accepting selected items at no charge for TV's, monitors, computers and printers. She wrote an article for the newsletter which she sent to be uploaded to the internet. A discussion ensued about the timeframe for updating the website.

C. Work with other Commissions/Committees

1. **Tree/Bench Committee** – Ms. Sesto reported that the Tree Festival planning is well underway. There is one tree that is due to be planted. There will be a new campaign for more town benches as more locations have been established. Some of the new benches may have sustained damage due to snow plows. The Arbor Day Celebration, which is a requirement for the Tree City USA Designation, will piggy-back on the Go Green Festival.
2. **Energy Committee** – Ms. Gillespie reported that the Neighbor to Neighbor Challenge is launching at the end of March when the website will be completed. She also noted that that the committee is looking for people to join, preferably with an understanding of energy requirements.
3. **Go Green Committee** – Ms. Gillespie stated that the group meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Mediterranean Grill for “Green Drinks”. She noted that the first meeting was well received and a fun time was had by all.

Ms. Begor noted that the “Bring Your Own Bag” contest is ongoing with many different age groups participating within the school.

E. Regional Projects

1. **FFD Co. Deer Management Alliance** - Ms. Sesto stated that the name has been changed for this group whereas the “Municipal” has been removed. There was also a new logo created.

Ms. Sesto reported that the Alliance is working with the DEP to discuss relaxing the hunting regulations. If the focus is to increase the harvest, the fire arms hunting season should be extended. Recreational hunting is not enough to reduce the population to the desired 10-20 deer per square mile.

Studies showed that the increased snowfall during the hunting season did not affect the population as assumed. The studies also show that the groupings have increased from 3-5 deer to 19-26 in each group.

Ms. Sesto asked if anyone has any time, or knows anyone, that may be interested in joining this committee as they have 3 openings.

The town spends 6 million dollars per year for deer management. This does not include costs for illness associated with tick-borne diseases. Ms. Sesto stated that, if enough people get on board, it may be more prudent and cost effective to have the town fund deer removal rather than having individual properties pay millions to deal with deer overpopulation.

Ms. Begor provided information on the Garden Club Conservation Committee's talk which will be from Howard Kilpatrick on October 3, 2011. The deer committee will cosponsor this event and the Land Trust will also be present.

2. **Norwalk River Valley Trail** – Ms. Sesto reported that the bulk of the work is planning the public workshops as there will be one for each town. The committee is selecting a consultant for the routing study from five finalists. The interviews will take place in April.

The grant has match services of \$45,000 and they have already accumulated time and services valued at \$30,000. The 501(c) paperwork is being filed shortly.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Meds Collection** – Ms. Sesto asked if the committee would like to have a shed your meds event in town. The sense of the commission is that one day a year is not enough. New Canaan is working on having a turn-in box at the police station which anyone can use at any time. A discussion ensued about the dangers of not properly disposing unused medication. Social Services and Wilton Volunteer Ambulance Corps participated last year so Ms. Sesto will contact them for assistance.
- B. **Spring Newsletter** – Ms. Begor wrote an article about the new e-waste program at the Wilton Transfer Station. They now accept, free of charge, recycling for TV's, monitors, computers and printers. She has also agreed to write an article on Go Green.

Mr. Hapke suggested that an article is written on the success of the town clean-up as we will not make it to print prior to the day. There was discussion about the Land Trust getting a "Guest Corner", and boxes for the Norwalk River Valley Trail, Tree Festival and Go Green. Ms. Young mentioned that she would like to do an article on outdoor and feral cats. Mr. Coppelmann noted that he would work with Ms. Gillespie on an article relating to the energy audit and their personal experiences and benefits.

- VI. **Liaison Report** – Ms. Gillespie reported that she attended the Planning & Zoning meeting. She reported that the Halan application for 295 Newtown Turnpike has been withdrawn. She was also able to describe details on the referrals from Planning & Zoning, such as the use of the Caraluzzi's proposed space, and the overlay details for Cannondale.
- VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
- Ms. Sesto stated that she has nothing new to report.
- VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 1/5/11 – Mr. Hapke MOVED to approve the minutes and Ms. Begor SECONDED the motion. The Minutes were APPROVED 4-0-0.
- IX. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Hapke SECONDED the motion. The motion CARRIED 5-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Next meeting will be April 6, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Larkin
Recording Secretary