

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2010 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL - MEETING ROOM "A"

PRESENT: Commissioners: Kristen Begor, Dave Hapke, Nicholas Lee, Chris Coyle, Jeff Coppelman

NOT PRESENT: Patrice Gillespie and Kim Young (noticed of intended absence)

ALSO PRESENT: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs

I. CALL TO ORDER

a. Chairman Begor called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Chairman Begor noted that the Board of Selectmen are discussing the Environmental Affairs Department budget and motioned to recess this meeting to attend that presentation in the Town Hall, seconded by Dave Hapke, and carried 4-0-0.

Mr. Lee joined the commission at the Board of Selectmen's meeting.

II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS –

Mr. Lee recused himself.

- i. WET#1940(S) – EVANSON** – demolish existing structures and construct tennis court, putting green, and related structures at 22 Branch Brook Road.

Ms. Sesto explained the application as proposed. She mentioned her concerns about moving the driveway, and why the second curb-cut would be maintained. Ms. Sesto also expressed concern over the proposal to move the stone wall away from the scenic road, where it is currently partially owned by the Town – moving it further away would deny the Town ownership, and therefore any influence on the condition of the new wall. Additionally, while the applicant proposes work to reclaim and restore the existing pond onsite, Ms. Sesto noted that particular care and management should be taken to protect the vegetation at the edge of the pond and the trees with roots below the water line.

Mr. Hapke asked for clarification of whether the property would now be considered one plot. Ms. Sesto responded that the applicant intends to maintain it as 3 plots. If the plots were combined they would be subject to the zoning laws at the time re-subdivision was sought, which could potentially prevent them from re-development in the future.

Ms. Begor and Ms. Sesto discussed the existing slope toward the wetland, and whether any re-grading would be done.

Mr. Hapke summarized that the Commission's concerns are the moving of the stone wall, the management of the wetland, and the driveway.

Ms. Sesto also pointed out that the issue of the curb cut would also have to be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen, as it is on a scenic road, and the Commission will have an opportunity to provide input regarding the stonewall at that time as well.

Mr. Hapke also noted that a road is mislabeled on the plans—Tito Lane should be labeled Millstone.

- ii. **WET1941(S) – EVANSON** – demolish existing structures, regrade, and restore existing pond at 320 & 322 Nod Hill Road.

Ms. Sesto explained the application as proposed. She pointed out that the lower lawn is in fact a wetland, although it is not very wet, and has been maintained as full lawn. She noted that the current application proposes to increase the wetland value with plantings. Selective removal of trees is proposed on the western slope above the wetland.

Ms. Sesto noted that since the tennis court is an accessory use, a primary residence must be maintained on the property. Ms. Begor asked about permeability of the tennis court, and possible impact on the wetland.

There was brief discussion of the septic system and the need to pipe the septic line through the wetland if the reserve system is ever built. The Commissioners and staff agreed that placing a septic line through the wetland must be avoided and the best way to do this is to protect the existing system.

- iii. **WET#1944(S) – PETTIT** – demolish existing structures, construction of proposed new dwelling with associated grading, proposed septic system and bid-retention system at 27 Wolfpit Lane.

Ms. Sesto explained the application as proposed. She pointed out that there is a wooded wetland present on the west side of Wolfpit Lane, which actually separates Wolfpit Lane from Greenbriar Lane. She explained that the proposal would not affect the wetland directly.

There was discussion of the roof and footing drains releasing onto the southern slope, possibly directing more water onto the neighboring property. Ms. Sesto noted that the regrading would result in a change in flow direction. In order to protect the abutting property owner perhaps a swale or infiltration system could be used to divert the flows.

There was also brief discussion of whether the house plan would include a walkout basement, which would lessen the incline of the slope.

Mr. Coyle left the meeting.

III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS –

- i. None

IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

1. Parks - All

Commissioners received Mike Conklin's staff report by email. Ms. Sesto noted that this will be how he will convey his report going forward. The Commissioners asked that it be sent at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

2. Open Space Preservation – Sesto

Ms. Sesto reported that there is no news, although there continues to be progress.

3. Plan of Conservation and Development –

No report.

4. Center Tree Plan – Sesto, Lee

Ms. Sesto repeated that they are awaiting approval of Tree City USA designation any day.

She also mentioned that they are looking at an emergency preparedness plan for trees in response to storm damage or blight.

There was also discussion of the upcoming Tree Festival and the tree art exhibition in November.

5. Recycling – Begor, Hapke

Mr. Hapke and Ms. Begor reported that they met with Jennifer at Department of Public Works to get statistics on the new transfer station. They mentioned that the issue of income from waste collection directly ties into increased recycling, and Department of Public Works may be unable to balance their budget without decreasing overhead.

They will be discussing with the First Selectman the third phase of the plan, which would include requiring homeowners to purchase bags as part of a "pay as you throw" program.

6. Norwalk River Valley Trail – Hapke, Coyle

Ms. Sesto reported that subcommittees have been established, consisting of Administrative, Recreation Trail Grant, Other Funding, 501(c)3, and Public Outreach.

Ms. Begor mentioned that she heard about REI (the sporting goods store) possibly funding and cooperating with the Norwalk River Watershed Alliance for work on the Norwalk River. She will research further details which may be helpful to the Norwalk River Valley Trail initiative.

7. Work with other Commissions/Committees

a. Parks and Rec./Allen's Meadows – Young

No report.

b. Energy Commission

Ms. Begor noted that the Committee has begun flyer distribution for the Go Green Festival set for May 2. They are still seeking exhibitors. They are also discussing with Planning and Zoning the ability to close roads around the site on that day.

8. Regional Projects

a. Deer Management – Sesto

Ms. Sesto repeated that the Deer Committee is continuing to look more toward working with private property owners for a more successful program.

The final tally for this year's deer harvest was 42.

Ms. Sesto mentioned that the member from Redding is poised to become the new chair of the Fairfield County Municipal Deer Management Alliance.

9. Other

- a. Ms. Sesto reported on the Pharmaceuticals Collection event. She has met with the schools on the question of internet access for the event. The school is better suited to provide a feed because their network has firewall protection to accommodate outside access to internal systems.

The event has been set for May 1, 2010 at Comstock Community Center. Aquarion has committed to contribute \$1,500. They are still looking for volunteers for the Planning Committee as well as the day of, and donations to provide meals for the volunteers and pharmacists. Ms. Sesto has the support of the Youth Services Commission, the Police Department, the High School Resource Officer.

- b. Mr. Hapke mentioned the upcoming Townwide Clean-Up event, taking place in April, which is coordinated by Mike Conklin. He suggested that it would be a good way for Mr. Coppelman to become involved and get a better understanding of the work the Commission does. Mr. Coppelman agreed to work with Mike Conklin on this.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Ms. Begor showed the Commission photos of signs taken by a member of the Go Green committee while in Martha's Vineyard. Stores there have posted signs in the sections of various environmentally-friendly products, such as cleaners, which state that they are "endorsed" by the Vineyard Conservation Society. There was discussion of whether this would be feasible for Wilton. Ms. Sesto noted that it would be a good idea to discuss it with Town Counsel, so as to avoid conflict regarding endorsing a particular type of product, versus endorsing alternative components and the rationale for sustainability.
- b. Spring Newsletter – Commissioners are continuing to work on various articles as noted at the last meeting.

VI. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Sesto noted that the Keene subdivision discussions are ongoing—while the commission's request for the excess acreage of lot 4 be dedicated as open space was not granted, the proposal

still includes 24% open space; the perimeter of lawn is proposed to be marked; protecting the tree roots of town trees along Sturges Ridge Road is still a concern; and the trees to be protected on Lot 1 in the event of redevelopment needs to be dealt with under the subdivision review.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Sesto reported on the meeting of the Board of Selectman on February 1, in particular the initiative to implement a plastic bag ban, modeled after Westport's program. The Energy Committee and the Board of Selectmen are considering the idea. She cautioned that simply following in the footsteps of Westport, without building consensus in Wilton over a reasonable period of time, would compromise the success of the ban.

Ms. Sesto also mentioned the Green Village Initiatives in Westport and Ridgefield, which is a community-based sustainability initiative. They work on projects such as urban gardens, school composting, a film series, and small-scale fundraising. She mentioned that it could be beneficial in Wilton to have a non-municipal group dedicated to these issues.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 01/06/2010

Mr. Hapke MOTIONED to approve the minutes of 01/06/2010, seconded by Jeff Coppelman and carried 3-0-1.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison McConnell
Acting Recording Secretary