



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD Inland Wetlands Board

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES

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

July 27, 2023

Members present: Susan Baker, chair; Alan Pilch, secretary; Carson Fincham, Tim Bishop, vice chair; Tracey Miller, Chris Phelps

Members absent: David Smith

Also present: Caleb Johnson, IW Agent; Aarti Paranjape, Recording Secretary; Dianus Virbickas, Jason Williams, Ed Pawlak, Tom Daly, Dr. Lipton, Robert Jewell, Jason Klein, Antia Jewelz Santiago, Kate Throckmorton, Robert Vuotto.

I. Call to order:

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

II. Public Hearing(s)

- 1. (Contd.)IW-23-18; 27 Abbott Avenue.** Plenary ruling application for construction of apartment complex, associated parking and drainage infrastructure within the upland review area of the wetlands. *Owner: Alimi Veton. Applicant: Brian Carey.* <https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91085>

Mr. Johnson read the new documents submitted since the last Public Hearing.

Ms. Baker said that the applicant has asked to continue the Public hearing to the next scheduled meeting. She added that the office received a petition to intervene pursuant of CGS 22-19 From Mr. Sachs on behalf of 27 Abbott Ave Neighborhood Action Committee. Ms. Baker said that town counsel had sent a note explaining the process Board is to follow. She read the note where the Board has to determine if the intervenor's petition is satisfied and must vote to acknowledge and then grant intervention status to the intervenor.

Mr. Fincham motioned to acknowledge to grant the intervention status. Mr. Bishop seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klein stated that the applicant will like to continue the public hearing to next regularly scheduled meeting as they need time to review the intervention and the peer review comments which were submitted couple of days before today's meeting. They will address the comments of peer review and intervention at the next meeting.

Public Hearing continued to August 24, 2023.

2. **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. *35 days to close the public is June 01, 2023. Extension was granted until July 13, 2023.*
Owner/Applicant: Ridgefield Professional Office Complex LLC.
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/90987>

Mr. Johnson read the new documents submitted on record.

Ms. Baker stated that Public hearing has to be closed statutorily at today's meeting so applicant and peer review must submit any new information and comments today.

Mr. Pawlak peer review for Biological evaluation read his comments and his concerns were not limited to these comments- the sediment erosions on the steep slopes, water basins installation and its functionality in the compacted filling, removal of trees in the existing buffer versus the proposed restored buffer, clearing limits being close proximity to wetlands.

Mr. McManus confirmed that the redox is not due to the wetlands but due to the high-water table which changed the geology and the mottling features of the soil.

Mr. Williams addressed Mr. Pawlak's comments stating that in order to encompass this project as a whole, involving roadways, buildings, underground utilities, the modifications were made to existing landscapes. Impacts associated with the stormwater management at this site follows the guidelines. The plan includes protections and continuous monitoring during the construction to prevent harming the wetlands. The commitment includes Soil Scientist Jim McManus to monthly report the status of these protections to the wetlands staff during construction. to ensure that during construction the erosion and sediment controls will be functioning as designed. The plan also proposed a robust planting and restoration of understory forest canopy which doesn't exist currently. The proposed planting of almost three hundred new trees will provide new food sources to the native fauna. The onsite stormwater management system serves as necessary filtering as required by law.

Mr. Virbickas, peer review for engineering presented his comments. He said that the applicant has made the revision exactly as suggested. The water quality basins designed will work as dual purpose as opposed to the rip rapp designed earlier. He opined that the stormwater system designed is much improved.

Ms. Baker inquired if there will be a similar supervision plan as biological monitoring.

Mr. Daly, PE stated that in his professional work these requirements can be made as condition of approval.

Mr. Jewell made the closing remarks by giving a brief history of the property. He stated that the proposed activity is the feasible and prudent alternative where applicant's environmental and engineering consultants have made significant improvements based on the peer review comments since the original application was submitted. He stated that the long-term impacts on the wetlands and watercourses will be minimized over time.

Hearing no further comments from public, the hearing was closed at 8:25 PM.

The discussion will be continued on a Special meeting to be scheduled either on August 10 or 17 depending upon the availability of members.

III. Discussion:

1. **(Contd.) 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.*
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91736>

Mr. Johnson shared the planting list and plan submitted by homeowner. Members commented that the quantity and size of the plants should be revised. They stated that the trees should be 1 to 3 gallon sizes and flats of ferns and sedges plugs should be added for better cover.

Discussion ensued and following special conditions were stated:

- Plants size should be 1 gallon and 3 gallon sizes
- Total of at least 10 flats of ferns and sedges (5 flat of each) on each side of the driveway.

Ms. Miller motioned to approve the summary ruling with special and standard conditions. Mr. Bishop seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Publication date is August 03 with effective date August 04.

2. **IW-23-23, 37 Walnut Hill Rd;** Summary Ruling Application for the corrective violation for removal of trees and earth disturbance, planting new trees, removing old branches and landscaping within the upland review area. *Owner/Applicant: Antia Santiago.*
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/92309>

Ms. Jewelz presented the planting plan which include understory trees and shrubs along the driveway extending to the back. The plantings include all New England natives.

Mr. Pilch stated to put shredded hardwood bark mulch for stabilization. He also suggested to push the tree away from the right of way.

Board suggested placement of boulders to keep the cars driving over will be helpful.

Board stated that all plantings to be completed before November 15, 2023.

Following special condition was stated:

- Hardwood bark mulch to be put around the plantings for stabilization.

Ms. Miller motioned to approve the summary ruling with above mentioned special condition along with standard conditions. Mr. Pilch seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Publication date is August 03 with effective date August 04.

- 3. IW-23-24, 234 Florida Rd.;** Summary Ruling Application for construction of detached garage with new septic within the upland review area of the wetlands. *Owner: Vincent Reppucci. Applicant: Kate Throckmorton.*
<https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/91883>

Ms. Throckmorton gave an overview of the application for the proposed detached garage. The wetlands were flagged by Mary Jaehnig. Large amount of property has wetlands and a watercourse. The existing septic is located at the proposed garage location. The septic will be relocated. Eleven trees will be removed. The edge of disturbance will be replanted. The septic system installed will have infiltrator which will cover the 1 ½ year storm. Grading is minor and little excavation for the footings and foundation. Minimal filling behind the garage structure for accessibility.

The garage will be primarily used to store hobby cars and minimum driving will be involved. There will be a gravel pad in the front and no driveway construction is required. The septic is pulled away from the garage.

Invasive species will be removed and the disturbed area will be planted with understory trees and spicebush, flowering dogwoods, red bud. Ground cover includes ferns and pachysandra.

Ms. Miller inquired about the load bearing of the new septic tank. Ms. Throckmorton confirmed that the tank will meet the loading requirements.

Mr. Pilch inquired if the septic area will be protected and placing of the stones should be shown on the plans. He stated that grading will be involved near the gravel pad and that should be stated on the plans as well. Extending the herbaceous plants between the spice bush and red bud would be helpful. Ms. Throckmorton agreed to plant ferns as undercover.

Following conditions were stated:

- Add stones around to protect the septic creating a no drive area around the septic.
- Grade change near the gravel pads to be shown on plans.
- Planting to be extended with more herbaceous species between the spice bush and red bud north of gravel pad.

Mr. Pilch motioned to approve the Summary Ruling with above mentioned special conditions along with standard conditions. Mr. Phelps seconded. Motions carried unanimously.

The Publication date is August 03 with effective date August 04.

IV. Application(s) for receipt:

None

IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

None

V: Other Business:

None

VI: Approval of Minutes:

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** July 13, 2023

Mr. Pilch motioned and Mr. Fincham seconded to approve meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Sitewalk Meeting:** July 23, 2023

Mr. Pilch motioned and Mr. Phelps seconded to approve sitewalk minutes. Mr. Bishop, Mr. Fincham and Ms. Miller abstained. Motion carried 3-0-3.

VII: Adjourn

Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 9:38 PM

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape
Recording Secretary