



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Inland Wetlands Board
Special Meeting
Web Based Meeting Hosted on ZOOM

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES

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

Thursday August 10, 2023, 7:00 P.M.

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

Members absent:

Also present: Caleb Johnson, IW Agent; Atty. Tom Beecher

I. Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

II. Discussion:

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.* <https://ridgefieldct.viewpointcloud.com/records/90987>

Ms. Baker opened the discussion by asking for comments from members.

Mr. Bishop said that it was a well-designed project with a number of positive features. Concerns were about the steep slopes, runoff during construction given increased rain events, significant reduction of forest canopy.

Mr. Pilch agreed with Mr. Bishop's outline. Noted that Mr. Pawlak, the biological peer reviewer commented many times on the need in this particular case for a 100-foot buffer between the project and the wetlands/watercourses. Mr. Pilch has been concerned about the water quality retention basins in close proximity to the wetlands and noted that the applicant had not suggested any modification to the location. No issues with the loss of water from the treatment plant or the wetland crossing for access. He believes that there is a feasible alternative that would be more protective. Concerned with the amount of tree removal in the URA and height of retaining walls.

Ms. Miller agreed with comments from Mr. Bishop and Mr. Pilch. Was disappointed that after many requests to see a prudent/feasible alternative to the basins close to the wetland none was provided or why more green alternatives that might have reduced the size of the basins were not examined. Concerned about the lack of replacement trees in the area of the NE basin and the significant loss of tree canopy in the URA. Noted that the effort to remove invasives was positive.

Mr. Fincham gave a brief overview of his CV though he did not earlier have it added to the record. Agreed with previous comments and said that the applicant's team had handled many aspects well and had made some modifications to address some of the Board's concerns as well as the engineering peer reviewer's comments. Noted that the plan has positive aspects but not enough effort was made to pull back from the wetlands and in fact grading is planned within a few feet of the wetlands. Thought that there was too much inflexibility with the plans.

Ms. Baker agreed with previous comments. Noted that the canopy in much of the URA would be lost for upwards of 20 years. Said that she had not seen an alternative to the location of the basins such as treating runoff closer to where it is produced.

Mr. Smith asked what the Board's options would be in terms of approval or denial.

Mr. Beecher provided a brief overview.

Ms. Baker asked if members were more concerned with short-term or long-term impacts. Mr. Bishop responded that both needed to be addressed and was not sure that the applicant had shown that they are controlling both.

Mr. Beecher reminded the board that in terms of feasible and prudent alternatives, there is a balance to made between economic reality and protection.

Ms. Baker, hearing no further comments asked the Board if she was correct in reading that a Draft Resolution of Denial should be prepared to be voted on August 24. A couple of members indicated that this was a correct reading of the comments.

III: Adjourn

Hearing no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54.