

APPROVED / REVISED
MINUTES
INLAND WETLANDS BOARD MEETING

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

June 27, 2017
Special Meeting

Present: Robert Cascella
Stephen Cole
Tim Dunphy
George Hanlon
John Katz
Charles Robbins
Mark Zeck
Rebecca Mucchetti, Chairman
Joseph Fossi, Vice Chairman

Also Present: Beth Peyser, Inland Wetlands Agent
Richard Baldelli, Director of Planning and Zoning
Adam Schnell, Assistant Planner

At 7:30 PM Chairman Mucchetti called the meeting to order.

PENDING ITEMS

1. **#2017-016-SP-PR:** Plenary Ruling application under Sec.7.6 of the Town of Ridgefield Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations for the filling of 225± square feet of existing wetlands, the creation of 645± square feet of new wetlands, and site disturbance within a regulated upland review area associated with the construction of a new baseball field and associated site improvements on 2.52 ± acres of land located at **2 Sanford Station Road (Intersection of CT Route 7 and Simpaug Turnpike) (Assessors ID: H13-0059)** in the RAA Zone. *Statutorily received April 04, 2017. Site walked May 07, 2017. Public Hearing held on May 16 and June 06, 2017. Public Hearing continued to June 20, 2017. 35 days to render a decision is July 25, 2017. Owner: State of Connecticut, DEEP and Town of Ridgefield. Applicant: Ridgefield Little League. Authorized Agent: Phil Doyle. For discussion and action.*

Also Present: Attorney Thomas Beecher

Agent Peyser began the discussion by reviewing Section 10.2 and Section 10.3 of the Regulations and how the applicant came to choose #3 of 4 prudent and feasible alternatives submitted. She showed how the applicant became ADA compliant with this choice, how a current low functioning wetland will be improved by removing invasive species and removing garage littered throughout the wetlands and even though the applicant will be filling in approximately 225 sf of wetlands, approximately 625 sf will be mitigated. After some discussion, Agent Peyser suggested that if the Board wanted, a longer monitoring period of the mitigated wetlands and a performance bond could be implemented.

The Board then deliberated and of note were the following comments:

- The other alternatives either did not acknowledge the wetlands, was not ADA compliant or the disturbance to the wetlands was greater.
- The alternative the applicant picked will create high functioning wetlands that will be healthy and balanced and will ultimately help in improving the wetlands downstream.
- The opposition's Environmentalist did not address the filling of the wetlands.
- The applicant requested from the State of CT DEEP a Natural Diversity Database Analysis (NDDDB) of the site. The response based on the information contained in the NDDDB, was there are no anticipated negative impacts to the State listed species in this area and there are no known species to be threatened or endangered in this area.
- The lease on this property is a lease between the State DEEP and the Town of the Ridgefield who in turned leased to the Ridgefield's Little League. The lease states in Section 2, Paragraph 8 that only athletic fields and related uses are permitted on this site. No other uses are allowed.

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Cascella seconded to approve drafting a Resolution of Approval as presented with standard conditions. Motion carried 8-1. Mr. Robbins opposed.

Hearing no further discussion, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lise B. Read
Recording Secretary
(Per Audio Tapes)

APPROVED / REVISED
MINUTES
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

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June 27, 2017
Special Meeting

Present: Robert Cascella
Stephen Cole
Tim Dunphy
George Hanlon
John Katz
Charles Robbins
Mark Zeck
Rebecca Mucchetti, Chairman
Joseph Fossi, Vice Chairman

Also Present: Richard Baldelli, Director of Planning and Zoning
Adam Schnell, Assistant Planner

At 8:03 PM Chairman Mucchetti called the meeting to order.

PENDING ITEMS

1. **#2017-016-SP-PR:** Special Permit application under Section 9.2.A of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations per Section 3.2.C.3 for the construction of a new baseball field, storage building with bathrooms and snack area, and associated site improvements; Section 3.4.D.1 for the illumination of an outdoor recreational use; Section 7.8 for lighting; and Section 7.5.D (Table 4&5) for the use of a screener, and for the excavation, filling, and/or grading of earth material on 2.52 ± acres of land located at **2 Sanford Station Road (Intersection of CT Route 7 and Simpaug Turnpike) (Assessors ID: H13-0059)** in the RAA Zone. *Statutorily received April 04, 2017. Site walked May 07, 2017. Public Hearing held on May 16 and June 06, 2017. Public Hearing continued to June 20, 2017. 65 days to render decision is August 24, 2017. Owner: State of Connecticut, DEEP and Town of Ridgefield. Applicant: Ridgefield Little League. Authorized Agent: Phil Doyle. For discussion and action.*

Also Present: Attorney Thomas Beecher

Director Baldelli started the discussion by reviewing the Section 9.2 of the Regulations regarding the Special Permit criteria. He stated that under the Plan of Conservation & Development for the Town of Ridgefield, new athletic fields are needed in Ridgefield, that this proposed use is permitted at this location and how the applicant has agreed with the Norwalk River Trail Highway Representatives to incorporate the trail way through the property.

The Commission then deliberated and of note were the following comments:

Environmental

- Pollution by traffic on Route 7 was an issue for two Commissioners citing the opposition's testimony of the conducted studies by Tufts and others and how it would be detrimental to the children's health. Further, they stated that the Commission is charged under the Regulations to consider the safety, health and welfare of the public when determining the acceptance of an application. Here they stated that the pollution would be harmful to the health of the children.
- Other Commissioners offered the following comments:
 - The children would only be using the ball field for a limited time verses being subjected to the pollution from traffic by sitting in a classroom all day. The children will be on the field seasonally, 2- 3 times per week, for 2 hours on those days and will be in an outdoor environment. Outdoor play has been proven better than indoor sitting with computer games and the risk of obesity.
 - CTDOT stated that there is more traffic on Main St than on Route 7. Further, Route 7 is not a highway.
 - The data supply by the opposition regarding pollution did not pertain to Connecticut, to Ridgefield or to the site.
 - Parents can make their own decisions regarding their children.

Noise and Lighting

- The PA system will follow the Town of Ridgefield Noise Ordinance and will be turned off by 8:59 PM.
- The noise analysis by the Expert testimony stated that it would not be a factor to the neighbors.
- Although the opposition argued that the wildlife moth and butterflies would be affected by the lighting, counter to this was that butterflies do not fly at night and the moths were not on the endangered species list.
- The lights will only be turned on during the actual use of the ball field and will be turned off by 10:00 PM.
- Having the lighting benefits the parent's work schedule and their wanting to be with their children during these activities.

Traffic

- The one truck accident with the hazardous material spilled and a fire ball at high temperatures was a freak accident and not the norm.
- There was expert testimony from the Traffic Engineer that the site lines were ample and the queuing was addressed by right turn only signs being posted.
- The opposition did not have a Traffic Engineer to counter the applicant's Expert testimony.
- With traffic lights on Route 7, there are small intervals with no traffic.
- Little League games do not have as much traffic as High School games and Little League is for children 12 and under only.
- A Commissioner uses Florida Hill Rd frequently, which is ¼ mile down the road and there are no problems getting onto Route 7.

- The Town Traffic Authority, the Police Commission had no comments which means per the Police Commission, when silent, they have no issues with the project.

Other

- One Commissioner felt that the expanded use of existing ball fields was not explored enough.
- The testimony of decrease in the enrollment in the Little League and schools has been proven in the past to be increased when the markets turned.
- Per the POCD, ball fields are considered open space. Further, the POCD states that there is a shortage of ball fields in Ridgefield.
- The applicant has complied with all recommendations from the Conservation Commission, the Town Engineer, the NWRT Representatives, and the ADA. Further, the applicant will be installing a guard rail along Route 7 because the State of CT declined.
- Per Attorney Beecher, ownership of the property and the ability of the applicant to apply for these permits is not an issue.
- All Erosion and Sedimentation Regulations have been met and there will be no impact.
- This use is an appropriate and benign use for this site and the use is seasonal.

Vice Chairman Fossi motioned, Mr. Hanlon seconded to approve the drafting of a Resolution of Approval as presented and amended in the Public Hearing with standard conditions and the following conditions:

- **Lighting will be during the actual use of the field and will be turned off by 10 PM.**
- **The PA system will follow the Town of Ridgefield Noise Ordinance Regulation and will be turned off by 8:59 PM.**

Motion carried 7-2. Mr. Katz and Mr. Robbins opposed.

Hearing no further discussion, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lise B. Read
Recording Secretary
(Per Audio Tapes)