

TOWN OF SOMERS
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 308

SOMERS, CT 06071

CONSERVATION MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

TOWN HALL – 7:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Joan Formeister called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Members Candace Aleks, Henry Broer, Joan Formeister, Dan Fraro, and Alternate Lise Wood (seated for Karl Walton) were present and constituted a quorum. Also present was Erosion Control/Wetland Enforcement Officer, David Askew.

II. OLD BUSINESS

- a. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE DECISION: WETLANDS APPLICATION #585, CONSTRUCTION OF WALKING BRIDGE OVER INTERMITTENT STREAM, SCHOOL STREET, TOWN OF SOMERS

Tom Cowles is a senior at Somers High School and is attempting to gain Eagle Scout status. As he explained last month, when presenting his application, his community service is to place a walking bridge over a stream from the Mill parking lot to a picnic area near The Grammar School in Somersville. The bridge would be located on town property and would be considered a town project. Pictures were distributed which highlighted the area in question and Mr. Askew noted that the flow of the stream is controlled by a culvert. The Commission proposed the question of liability since the walking bridge was on town property; but after some discussion came to a consensus that the liability question was outside the scope of the Commission's jurisdiction.

A motion was made by Mr. Fraro; seconded by Ms. Wood and unanimously voted to approve the Town of Somers Wetland's Application #585 for construction of a walking bridge over an intermittent stream on School Street.

- b. OTHER – There was none.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- a. DISCUSSION: ACTIVITY WITHIN WETLAND, 20 PINNEY ROAD, LINDY FARMS

David Palmberg, from William R. Palmberg & Son L.L.C. and Mr. John Belski, manager of Lindy Farms, were present. An application has not been submitted for consideration, but Mr. Palmberg, and Mr. Belski wished to come before the Conservation Commission to discuss the project informally.

Mr. Palmberg noted that the 58-acre parcel was formally owned by Maturo Farm which grew shade tobacco. The land slopes to a wetland system across the street. There is an existing ditch that drains the center of the parcel, a portion of which has been flagged as wetland. The owner's intent is to replace the now open ditch with either a 12' or 15' concrete pipe. The piping on the west side would be connected to the existing pipe across Pinney Road. The north side of the wetland will be delineated for the future application.

The proposal includes construction of worker housing and horse sheds (some of the current barns are being used for tobacco storage, while another would be altered to serve as a horse shed), some of which is proposed within the upland review area. Due to the need for access to the property, Mr. Palmberg noted that an access road would be placed over the filled ditch, within the area flagged as wetland. Stormwater basins will also be constructed to collect and passively treat runoff from the pastures.

Mr. Palmberg distributed a report from Michael F. Gragnolati, a Registered Professional Soil Scientist. The report was a Wetland Delineation & Functional Assessment of the wetlands on Lindy Farms, Pinney Road. It included wetland classification based on vegetative cover and also analysis of the overall functions of the wetland.

The assessment was based on a methodology developed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Since this pasture has been used in agriculture for many years the report concludes that the wetland boundary is historic and that the wetland has been essentially drained by the ditch.

In addition, Mr. Gragnolati's summary, notes that, "the wetlands on site do provide a few wetland functions. The area has been cleared and is presently maintained as pasture. Based on my observations and experience it is my opinion the proposed piping would not have a negative impact on any wetland that may be off site."

Mr. Askew suggested that it would be beneficial for Mr. Palmberg to outline in writing why there was a need to cross the wetland. Is there no other way to gain access to the property? If it is for functional reasons, and other options have been reviewed and dismissed, those reasons should be specifically addressed. A written assessment of alternatives that may reduce the amount of wetland altered is a standard part of the application process.

Mr. Palmberg stated that there would be further discussion and he would readdress the Commission in the near future.

b. OTHER – There was none.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – There was none.

V. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPEMENT

a. REVIEW ACTION STEPS IN POCD

Mr. Askew presented the Commission with a copy of the Implementation Schedule. Ms. Formeister stated that the Commission would review it and be ready to discuss it at the next Commission Meeting.

VI. STAFF/COMMISSION REPORT

Both the January and February Staff Commission Reports were distributed to the Commission. Over the last week, both Gillette's Crossing and Mink Farm had issues with erosion control due to heavy rains on frozen ground. Additional measures have been installed.

Mr. Askew also mentioned that he received a letter from the D.E.P. in regards to Grower Direct a few weeks back. Mr. Askew reviewed the file for many days, separating plans, applications, maps and various other information. At the end of his information gathering, he comprised a summary in written form and sent it to the D.E.P. per their request.

A motion was made by Mr. Fraro; seconded by Ms. Aleks and unanimously voted to accept the Staff Commission report for both January and February 2008 with the omission of the last sentence, "Two minimum impact permits were issues..."

VII. CORRESEPDENT AND BILLS

A motion was made by Mr. Fraro; seconded by Ms. Wood and unanimously voted to approve the bill for the "North Central Conservation District" in the amount of \$5,650.00.

Mr. Askew also distributed the issue of *The Habitat*, and stated that he would be attending the *Connecticut Associations for Wetland Scientists Annual Meeting* on February 26, 2008.

VIII. MINUTES APPROVAL: January 9, 2008

A motion was made by Mr. Fraro; seconded by Ms. Wood and unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of January 9, 2008 as presented.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made Ms. Wood; seconded by Mr. Fraro and unanimously voted to adjourn the February 6, 2008 Conservation Commission meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer D. Boudreau

Candace Aleks

Recording Secretary
Secretary

Commission

***MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT
MEETING***