

**TOWN OF SOMERS
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
600 MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 308**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2012
Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room 7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Todd Whitford at 7:00 p.m. Commissioners in attendance were, Joan Formeister, Vice-Chair, Candace Aleks, Secretary, Henry Broer, W. Karl Walton, Dan Fraro and Lise Wood. Also present: Wetlands Agent, David Askew.

Absent: Greg Genlot

II. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Decision Application #650: 2-lot subdivision, septic and single family residence within upland review area. Kumiega

Mike Mocko reported that he is representing the applicant. Rachel Dearborn, Landmark Survey, LLC and the surveyor for the project, was also present. Mike Mocko took recommendations of the last meeting under advisement and made some minor revisions to the plan. Revision include showing a limit of disturbance line which parallels the silt fence line and extends to the property line. There were some other notes added for the benefit of the Town Sanitarian, Steve Jacobs.

Joan Formeister noticed there was a lot of recent activity done on the property near the barn. Mr. Mocko said the septic system for the existing residence had been replaced.

Mr. Askew asked if there will be any secondary impact to the wetland due to construction. Mike Mocko replied that it is a relatively gentle sloping site, and there should be no erosion control or water quality issues.

Mr. Askew asked if he feels the house is realistically sized for 4 bedrooms. Mike Mocko answered the house footprint will not be taken any closer to the wetland.

Chairman Todd Whitford asked what the size of the footprints is. Rachel Dearborn replied 30 deep and 50 long. Joan Formeister asked if the house could be closer to the well than where the house is built. Mike Mocko said yes but they generally maintain 20 feet.

Joan Formeister made motion to approve Application #650 with the condition that the wetland boundary be permanently delineated with markers provided by the town. Candace Aleks seconded it. All were in favor and motion approved.

**1. Discussion/Decision Application #651: Parking lot expansion within wetland.
349 Main Street, LLC.**

Mr. Askew distributed to Commission Members the Project Narrative/Alternatives Analysis for Somers Golf Center and Parking Lot Expansion for Arcade.

Tim Coons, J.R. Russo & Associates, LLC along with Jonathan Murray, 349 Main Street, LLC and Jerry Antonacci were also present. The plan includes expansion for an arcade, an addition to the snack bar, an additional tent and an increase to the parking in order to accommodate the uses. The parking lot is being proposed in the wetland area. The area is currently maintained as lawn. Approximately 38,000 square feet of wetland is to be filled. To offset the filling they propose a mitigation/replication area adjacent to the previously created wetland and flood storage area. The drainage from the parking area will be collected and will be treated with catch basins inserts prior to discharge to the drainage ditch at the north end of the parking lot. Tim Coons submitted the drainage report today which meets all requirements. Mr. Askew asked if they are discharging it directly into the ditch. Tim Coons replied yes directly into the ditch.

Tim Coons also submitted the Alternative Analysis. The only unused area is the wetland area. Somers Golf Center owns land to the east. Currently it is being maintained as residential and agricultural use. J.R. Russo & Associates, LLC is trying to maintain the current residential and agricultural use. There are no current plans on expanding in that area. They want to see how well the Somers Golf Center does. The distance from the building to the existing parking lot is 470 feet. Tim Coons said to get the spaces they need, they would have to expand to the east and then "L" shape to the north. It would add another 340 feet of distance. If you add that to the current amount it is about 750 feet that someone would have to walk. Tim Coons said there have already been complaints about the distance. Tim Coons further explains that there is a residential home on the property to the east and putting a commercial parking lot adjacent to it is what they are trying to avoid. They feel that replication would be the most prudent and feasible alternative.

Mr. Askew answered Chairman Todd Whitford's question about the relative value wetlands. Mr. Askew concurs that there are low value and high value wetlands and this one is definitely on the lower end. In making a decision on any wetland application it is important to parse-out the different wetland functions and try to insure they are either preserved on site or replicated. The wetland to be altered does not have any native wetland vegetation (it is all cultivated lawn) and has no biological functions.

Karl Walton asked if that was a function of the wetland or a function that was done to the wetlands. Mr. Askew said it is a function of the existing use. It has been an agricultural wetland as far back as the 1930's. There is ground water recharge and infiltration. It is hard to replicate those functions in another place onsite. That basic wetland is lost when you pave over an area of wetland.

Mr. Askew suggested that parking lot drainage could surface-flow to the east into the remaining lawn/wetland area off the parking lot. There is an area of grassed wetland over 100' wide before it drains into the intermittent stream. Mr. Coons stated that draining impervious areas into wetlands is not an acceptable practice under State of CT DEEP stormwater guidelines

In response to Joan Formeister Mr. Coons showed the mitigation area on the site plan and explained how it would function. Mr. Askew concurred with professional opinion discussed by Mr. Coons and summarized in the project soil scientists letter that the primary function of the wetland is related to flood control and the mitigation area will replicate that function and provide some secondary benefits by supporting hydrophytic vegetation.

Karl Walton made a motion to approve the Application #651: Parking lot expansion within wetland. 349 Main Street, LLC. Candace Aleks seconded it. All were in favor and motion approved.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Karl Walton made a motion to add to the agenda the scheduling of a public hearing on the Hickley case, as recommended by the Town Attorney and the Election of Officers to the agenda. Joan Formeister seconded it. All were in favor and motion approved.

Karl Walton made a motion to hold a public hearing on the first Wednesday in February 2012 to discuss the settlement with Hinckley. Joan Formeister seconded it. All were in favor and motion approved.

Discussion ensued regarding the general goals and procedures for the public hearing.

Karl Walton nominated the existing slate of officers that are presently on the Conservation Commission: Todd Whitford, Chairman; Joan Formeister, Vice-chair; Candace Aleks, Secretary.

Karl Walton made motion to accept the Election of Officers. Henry Broer seconded it. All were in favor, motion approved.

Joan Formeister made a comment and asked the Commission if everyone has attended the Wetland Workshops. It is very important to have someone on the Commission who has attended all three workshops. The workshops are held in different locations and even on Saturdays. Mr. Askew said the workshops cover all the basics of reviewing wetland applications and recommended the second segment that covers law and recent cases.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

V. STAFF/COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Askew distributed the Wetland Agent's Report.

Lise Wood made a motion to approve the Wetland Agent's report, Joan Formeister seconded. Approved unanimously.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS

Mr. Askew distributed mail to Chairman Todd Whitford from Connecticut Land Conservation Counsel and for Donna Smith. Mr. Askew also distributed the North Central Conservation District Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010-2011 for the Conservation Commission to let everyone knows what he does when he is not here.

Mr. Askew presented a bill to be paid from the Journal Inquirer in the amount of \$62.96

Karl made motion to pay the bill from the Journal Inquirer in the amount of \$62.96. Lise Wood seconded it. All were in favor, motion approved.

VII. MINUTES APPROVAL: DECEMBER 5, 2011

Karl Walton made motion to approve the December 5, 2011 minutes with corrections as stated. Change Lisa to Lise, Mike Mokko to Mike Mocko and Tim Koons to Tim Coons. Candace Aleks seconded it. All were in favor, motion approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Lise Wood made motion to adjourn the Conservation Commission Regular Meeting at 8:00 p.m. Daniel Fraro seconded it. All were in favor, motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Regina C. Robinson, Recording Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING