



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY REGULAR MEETING MINUTES JUNE 8, 2020 7:00 PM VIA ZOOM MEETING

PRESENT: Chairman Ken Braga, Vice Chairman Ron Brown, Art Aube, Steve Hoffman and Hocine Baouche

ABSENT: Jean Burns and Katherine Heminway

STAFF

PRESENT: John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner/Wetlands Enforcement Officer and Barbra Galovich, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Ken Braga called the Ellington Inland Wetlands Agency meeting to order at 7:25 pm.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (ON NON AGENDA ITEMS): None

III. PUBLIC HEARING(S):

1. IW202004 – MJS Leasing LLC & Chilson Realty Co. owners/ Town of Vernon & Town of Ellington applicants request for a map amendment and permit to conduct regulated activity for the construction of four full-size soccer fields, parking and access roads, concession and restroom buildings, and associated site improvements on properties along the east side of Windermere Ave near the Vernon town line, at APNs 011-033-0000, 019-005-0004 and 019-005-0005.

Time: 7:28 pm

Seated: Braga, Brown, Aube, Hoffman and Baouche

David Smith, Town of Vernon Professional Engineer, 55 West Main Street, Vernon, and Richard Zulick, Datum Engineering & Surveying, LLC, 400 Nott Highway, Ashford, were present to represent the application.

Mr. Smith explained the proposed project is located on two separate parcels, which will be merged. The Town of Vernon is proposing to construct four full-size soccer fields, associated parking and access roads with bituminous millings, a concessions building with restrooms and storage on the upper level and a second building with restrooms between proposed fields 2 and 3. The land is presently used agriculturally for growing

corn. He reviewed the requested map amendment shown on sheet 1 of 1 of the plans, revised through June 3, 2020. Mr. Smith stated a portion of the property has alluvial soils, which Mr. Zulick would explain.

Mr. Zulick said years ago the Hockanum River was relocated. The river, at some point, flowed through the wooded area. He explained that alluvial soils are made up of sand, silt and gravel, which do not look or act like other wetland soils. Mr. Zulick reviewed his report dated March 10, 2020 (copy enclosed), discussed the existing conditions, the wetland soils, and the function and values of the land. He explained in his opinion that the hydric wetland area and the palustrine scrub-shrub/forested wetlands are a functioning wetland ecosystem, which exhibits eight wetland functions and three wetland values. He also noted the upper alluvial soils exhibit one wetland function and this function will remain post development. Mr. Zulick stated there will be less impact on the soils using the parcel for the proposed project, compared to the current disturbance from agricultural practices.

During the presentation, Mr. Smith explained each phase of the project as follows:

Initial Step – the site has been in corn production for a number of years and may or may not be clear of vegetation depending on when or if a cover crop has been planted. The first activity would be to protect the native topsoil from wind and water erosion with a vigorous cover crop. Presently, the fields are in what appears to be annual ryegrass. If this area is disturbed or dies off over the winter, the area should be reseeded.

Phase 1 – includes the construction of the access road to future concession stand and northerly most parking area; the actual parking area, and Field# 1 and the extension of the utilities to the central terminus. Landscaping, water management elements and stabilization of the surrounding non-play grass areas.

Phase 2 – includes the construction of Field# 2, the second parking area, the concession stand, landscaping, water management elements, septic system and leaching field, and stabilization of the surrounding non-play grass areas.

Phase 3 – includes the extension of the access drive and the remaining parking area, Field# 3, landscaping, water management elements, second restroom building, required utilities connections and stabilization of the surrounding non-play grass areas.

Phase 4 – includes the construction of the service road, constriction of Field# 4, and stabilization of the surrounding non-play grass areas. Field# 4 is located within the 100-year flood area and the final grades are developed to balance the volumes of cuts and fills such that no loss of flood storage will occur. The access path will mimic the existing grades and is only for emergency or maintenance use. No parking areas or structures are proposed in this vicinity.

Commissioner Hoffman asked how the fields will be maintained. Mr. Smith stated the Town of Vernon will treat only the areas that need attention with regard to herbicides and pesticides however they are open to recommendations on how the Town of Ellington conducts its management practices.

Commissioner Brown inquired about the existing and future walking trails. Mr. Smith stated he is aware of the current trail and this proposal does not impact that trail. He also noted there are no additional walking trails proposed, but they would not be opposed to accommodating a trail on the property if requested.

Commissioner Hoffman asked about the amount of disturbance of the wetlands and for the calculations for detaining the stormwater runoff from parking and impervious areas. Mr. Smith said there are approximately two acres of hard surface; the parking and access roads, concessions and restroom buildings. He stated he has calculated a zero increase in runoff by intercepting stormwater with grass filter strips, grass basins, and leaching catch basins.

Mr. Colonese noted the Town Engineer's comments dated June 3, 2020 and the North Central Conservation District's comments dated June 4, 2020.

Janice Messino, 48 Windermere Avenue, said she has lived there for over 22 years and would like the Agency to consider the wild animals, protect the wetlands and consider the installation of a buffer zone for the immediate abutters to the project.

Gerry Kerachsky, 2 Christopher Court, inquired why the project will have a septic system installed and not utilize the sewer system. Mr. Smith addressed Mr. Kerachsky question and stated Tim Webb, Administrator of Ellington's Water Pollution Control Authority, said the sewer system may not be able to handle the amount of flow and it would be best to install a septic system. He also noted the project will be supported by public water.

Keith Hodson, 200 Lake Street, Vernon, President of the Vernon Youth Soccer Club, explained the project is needed in Vernon and Ellington, and they intend to be respectful neighbors and good stewards of the land.

Dave Spielman, 50 Windermere Avenue, asked about lights, buffer areas, and security of the property. Mr. Colonese, explained that the questions pertaining to the lights and buffer areas can be addressed by the Planning & Zoning Commission at their meeting later in June, which Mr. Spielman will receive notice of as an abutter. Mr. Spielman is also concerned about the traffic and stated it is a peaceful place to live.

Commissioner Hoffman asked if lights will be installed lights. Mr. Smith said they are not proposing lights for the any of the fields.

Jeff Kristoff, 95 Trout Stream, Vernon, Vice-President of the Youth Soccer Club, noted the soccer players are done with games and practices by dark. The age range for the club is 3 to 15 years of age and they are looking to partner with Ellington's youth club.

Chairman Braga suggested the application be continued to allow the applicant time to address the Town Engineer's comments and allow the Agency time to further review the application.

MOVED (AUBE) SECONDED (BROWN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO CONTINUE TO THE JULY 13, 2020 INLAND WETLANDS MEETING, 7:00 PM FOR IW202004 – MJS Leasing LLC & Chilson Realty Co. owners/ Town of Vernon & Town of Ellington applicants request for a map amendment and permit to conduct regulated activity for the construction of four full-size soccer fields, parking and access roads, concession and restroom buildings, and associated site improvements on properties along the east side of Windermere Ave near the Vernon town line, at APNs 011-033-0000, 019-005-0004 and 019-005-0005.

IV. OLD BUSINESS: None

V. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Gotta Go, LLC, owner/applicant, request for a permit to conduct regulated activity for the construction of two single-family homes, detention basin, and associated improvements for a previously approved 2-lot subdivision at 33 South Road, APN 112-036-0001 and 35 South Road, APN 112-036-0000.

Mr. Colonese explained to the agency that the original wetlands permit for the 2-lot subdivision was approved on September 19, 2005 and no more permit extensions are available. Therefore, a new permit must be issued by the Agency or its agent. The development plan is the same as was approved in 2005.

MOVED (HOFFMAN) SECONDED (AUBE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE WETLANDS AGENT – Gotta Go, LLC, owner/applicant, request for a permit to conduct regulated activity for the construction of two single-family homes, detention basin, and associated improvements for a previously approved 2-lot subdivision at 33 South Road, APN 112-036-0001 and 35 South Road, APN 112-036-0000.

2. IW202005 – Daniel Houlihan, owner/ applicant request for a map amendment at 42 Crane Road, APN 068-002-0000.

Chairman Braga asked for a motion to add to next month's agenda and suggested to staff send the application to the North Central Conservation District for review of Wetland Delineation Report by REMA Ecological Services, LLC.

MOVED (HOFFMAN) SECONDED (BAOUCHE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADD TO THE AGENDA, RECEIVE, AND SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING ON JULY 13, 2020, 7:00 PM FOR IW202005 – Daniel Houlihan, owner/ applicant request for a map amendment at 42 Crane Road, APN 068-002-0000.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the May 11, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (BROWN) SECONDED (BAUCHE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MAY 11, 2020 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

2. Correspondence/Discussion:

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (BROWN) SECONDED (AUBE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE JUNE 8, 2020 REGULAR MEETING OF THE INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY AT 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbra Galovich, Recording Clerk

Datum Engineering & Surveying LLC.
Richard Zulick
Certified Forester / Soil Scientist
400 Nott Highway
Ashford, CT
06278

March 10, 2020

Town of Vernon
Town of Ellington
Inland Wetlands Commissions

Re: Wetland function and value assessment report, Future Athletic Fields - Windmere Ave,
Vernon / Ellington, CT

Dear Commissioners:

I have conducted a delineation to identify Connecticut regulated wetland soils on a 42 acre parcel of farm land adjacent to the Vernon – Ellington town lines located east of Windmere Avenue. This delineation was conducted for the purposes of assessing the wetland functions and values and potential impacts to the wetlands associated with the development of municipal athletic fields.

Existing Conditions

The wetlands on this plan have been field delineated in accordance with the standards of the National Cooperative Soil Survey and the definition of wetlands as found in the Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 440, Section 22A-38.

This delineation is not intended to be used for soil mapping but to identify the wetland soils relative to the development and management of this parcel. The wetlands/ watercourse boundaries have been marked with pink and blue flagging as shown on sketch dated 3/3/20.

This entire property area has been compromised by past major and minor disturbances associated the development of the existing agricultural fields. The most significant disturbance is that it appears that a past relocation of the Hockanum River occurred near wetland flag number WB35. This is important, in that, the prior route of the river produced the alluvium that classifies the upper alluvial area as a regulated wetland today.

The proposed development areas are relatively level throughout while the areas adjacent to the central wooded wetland and the river have steeper slopes which drop in elevation to wetlands and a watercourse beyond the toe of the slopes. This watercourse is the Hockanum River which is a significant watercourse located generally to the east of the proposed development area.

Wetlands

The predominant wetland area flagged delineate well drained alluvial (floodplain) Pootatuck soils. These soils exist east of the WB1 to WB 22 line (see map).

The Pootatuck series consists of very deep, moderately well drained loamy soils formed in alluvial sediments. They are nearly level soils on floodplains subject to frequent to occasional flooding.

TAXONOMIC CLASS: Coarse-loamy, mixed, active, mesic Fluvaquentic Dystrudepts

True hydric soils exist within the alluvial delineation line and are identified by flag numbers WB 23 to WB 80. These hydric soils are soils that are saturated, flooded or ponded enough during a growing season to develop an anaerobic condition that results in soil indicators that classify them as such. These soils are classified as Limerick and Lim series soils. These soils consist of very deep, poorly drained soils on flood plains. They formed in loamy alluvium.

TAXONOMIC CLASS: Coarse-silty, mixed, superactive, nonacid, mesic Fluvaquentic Endoaquepts

Wetland Functions and Values

The hydric wetland complex was inspected to determine wetland functions and values utilizing the Army Corps. of Engineers methodology as outlined in "The Highway Methodology Workbook Supplement". These wetlands and River exhibited the following wetland functions and values with the corresponding rationale:

Ground water recharge and discharge: potential for and public or private wells occur downstream of the wetland, wetland is underlain by stratified drift and gravel or sandy soils present in or adjacent to the wetland, wetland is associated with a perennial watercourse..

Flood flow alteration: the area of this wetland is small relative to its watershed, but, effective flood storage exists adjacent to the wetland. Wetland contains hydric soils which are able to absorb and detain water, wetland exists in a relatively flat area that has flood storage potential, wetland has ponded water, and signs are present of variable water level, wetland receives and retains overland or sheet flow runoff from surrounding uplands. In the event of a large storm, this wetland receives and detains excessive flood water. Properties, structures, or resources are located in or near the floodplain downstream from the wetland, this wetland. watercourse is sinuous and diffuse and channel flow velocity is affected by this wetland.

Fish habitat: forest land is dominant in the watershed above and adjacent to this wetland, there are an abundance of cover objects present, the size of the ponded areas and Brook are able to support fish populations The wetland is part of a larger, contiguous downstream watercourse, the quality of the watercourse associated with this wetland is able to support healthy fish/shellfish populations.

Sediment/toxicant retention: potential sources of sediment are in the watershed above the wetland, opportunity for sediment trapping by slow moving water and deep water habitat are present in this wetland, fine grained mineral or organic soils are present, long duration water retention time is present in this wetland, public or private water sources occur downstream, effective floodwater storage in wetland is occurring, areas of impounded open water are present, channelized flows have visible velocity decreases in the wetland, diffuse water flows are present in the wetland, wetland has a high degree of water and vegetation interspersion, and dense vegetation provides opportunity for sediment trapping and/or signs of sediment accumulation by dense vegetation is present.

Nutrient removal: Shallow water and limited open water habitat exists within the complex beyond the watercourse. Overall potential for sediment trapping exists in the same areas. Saturated soils exist for most of the season, ponded water may be present in the wetland, organic/sediment deposits are present, dense vegetation is present with emergent vegetation and/or dense woody stems dominant, water retention/detention time in this wetland is increased by thick vegetation and other dense herbaceous and shrub vegetation in wetlands utilize and immobilize excess nutrients transported/deposited by developed areas upstream.

Production export: Wildlife food sources grow within the wetland beyond the watercourse, evidence of limited wildlife use found within this wetland, higher trophic level consumers may be

utilizing this wetland, a few high vegetation density species are present, wetland exhibits moderate degree of plant community structure/species diversity, wetland contains flowering plants that are used by nectar-gathering insects.

Sediment/shoreline stabilization: indications of limited siltation is present, topographical gradient exist in wetland, potential sediment sources are present upstream, a wide wetland (>10') borders the backside of the River , some moderate to high flow velocities can occur in the River during and after significant storm events , dense vegetation and energy-absorbing emergents and/or shrubs border the Brook to protect water quality.

Wildlife habitat: Wetland is fragmented by significant development both upstream and downstream, however, upland immediately surrounding this wetland is undeveloped and will remain so after completion of this project. Significant animal signs observed (tracks, scats, nesting areas, etc.), wetland contains a population of insects and amphibian populations.

The wetlands were also examined for wetland values (recreational, educational/scientific, visual/aesthetic, or uniqueness/heritage values) and the following values were noted with their rationale:

Recreational value: The wetlands and brook have a limited area accessible for hiking, fishing and photography.

Educational/scientific value: There are a diversity of wetland classes present, any wetland is considered valuable wildlife habitat, there is potential access to a perennial stream, if a trail was utilized, it could serve as an educational site.

Visual/aesthetic value: There are acres of wetlands, a watercourse and a diversity of vegetative species in view from primary viewing locations, wetland is also easily accessed and considered to be valuable wildlife habitat.

Conclusions:

In summary, it is my opinion that the hydric wetland area and the palustrine scrub-shrub/forested wetlands are a functioning wetland ecosystem which exhibit 8 wetland functions and 3 wetland values.

The upper alluvial wetland complexes were also inspected to determine wetland functions and values utilizing the Army Corps. of Engineers methodology as outlined in "The Highway Methodology Workbook Supplement". These soils exhibited the following wetland functions and values with the corresponding rationale:

Ground water recharge and discharge: potential for and public or private wells occur downstream of the wetland, wetland is underlain by stratified drift and gravel or sandy soils present in or adjacent to the wetland, wetland is associated with a perennial watercourse..

The upper alluvial soils were also examined for wetland values (recreational, educational/scientific, visual/aesthetic, or uniqueness/heritage values) and the following values were noted with their rationale:

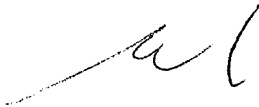
No significant values were identified.

Conclusions:

In summary, it is my opinion that the upper alluvial soils exhibit 1 wetland function. This function will remain post development.

If you have any questions concerning this report, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Richard Zulick
Certified Forester and Soil Scientist
Member SSSSNE