

2017 NOV 16 P 5:08

Town of Stafford
Inland Wetlands Commission
Regular Meeting
November 15, 2017
7:00 p.m. – Warren Memorial Town Hall


TOWN CLERK

Members Present: John D. Wilson, Acting Chairman
 Hickory Lake
 Tom Topping
 Rick Hartenstein
 Ronald Laiho, Alternate

Also Present: David Perkins, ZEO
 Joseph Willis, applicant
 Public

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Establish a quorum.
3. Discussion and possible action – Application of Joseph Willis, 688 Crystal Lake Road. Forestry and conversion of raw land to farm land. Land between Handel Road and Old Birch Road, Map 61, Lots 1, 5, 6, Map 44, Lots 9, 1, and 10
4. Other Business
5. Adjournment

1. **Call to order.**
Acting Chair John D. Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Veterans' Meeting Room.
2. **Establish a quorum.**
John Wilson established a quorum with John Wilson, Acting Chair; Hickory Lake, Tom Topping, and Rick Hartenstein, and he seated Alternate member Ron Laiho for Bill Dixon.
3. **Discussion and possible action – Application of Joseph Willis, 688 Crystal Lake Road. Forestry and conversion of raw land to farm land. Land between Handel Road and Old Birch Road, Map 61, Lots 1, 5, 6, Map 44, Lots 9, 1, and 10.**

Joseph Willis attended the meeting. John Wilson said he felt the package sent out to Commission members was incomplete and he was originally not planning on holding a discussion. However, he found more paperwork on the application was available at Town Hall, and while it was too late to send out to Commissioners, Dave Perkins, ZEO, got it in order for them for a discussion this evening. John Wilson said he would only want to act on the permit to do the logging, and not on the farming issue this evening.

John Wilson provided some history. Back on September 26, 2007, the IWWC approved an operation on the property approving roads for a subdivision. That plan never came to fruition, but wetlands crossings and wetlands were marked by soil scientists.

Joe Willis gave an overview of Phase I, which is the forestry piece of the project. He said the overall project entails about 135 acres of land. The plans show a road that was approved in 2007, and using the road system, he said they did a partial clearing. He said he had a lot of discussions with Roland Violette, one of the members of Crystal Wood, LLC, which owns the property. Joe Willis said he wanted to do a forestry and agriculture project and use the approved road for entrance and egress from the property. This runs from Handel Road to Old Birch Road.

Joe Willis said they have gotten a small portion of the forestry project underway, outside of the wetlands area, and he would like to utilize Handel Road for most of the entry and egress from the property. He said their equipment is too big to come in and out of Old Birch Road. He said they are clearing small plots of land to determine where they could put in small fields, using the map and road system as a guideline. He would like to develop a farm road to access fields for growing vegetables, fruit trees, and for accessing greenhouses. Eventually, they may also wish to add other agriculture, such as livestock.

Joe Willis said he met with Director of Public Works Rick Zulik, who gave them a permit to have temporary access from Old Birch Road until they can access the property from Handel Road. He showed the main wetlands crossing on his map and where the road accesses fields G, H, and I, and a harvest site J on another map. Work has already started at site J and the harvest line is flagged every fifty feet. He said he wants to gain access from Handel Road to get to two wetlands crossings. Starting at Handel would have minimum impact on the wetlands at the point of entry.

John Wilson said it is important that no equipment be in the wetlands. Dave Perkins said they are working outside the buffer area.

Hickory Lake asked if there is a plan for preventing runoff to the wetlands. Dave Perkins said he will be reviewing the site to set up erosion control, putting in silt fence where needed. He said they will setup stump locations when it is time. Joe Willis said they would like to start stumping as soon as possible, but they need to cut the trees first, then do an analysis of the site. John Wilson asked if the silt fencing should go in now. Dave Perkins said some silt fencing has been installed. The property is also sloped and there is an anti-tracking pad and some wood chips have been put down.

Joe Willis referred to one of the wetlands crossings, saying he wanted to put in a temporary forest bridge at that location. Dave Perkins said he saw no need to have that crossing for another year. John Wilson asked if crossing the wetlands can be done with a temporary bridge. Dave Perkins said he would have to look into it. It would probably be doable during the dry season, but he was less certain during the wet season.

Hickory Lake said the downstream side needs erosion control to prevent silt from running off into the wetlands. Joe Willis said he could install a corduroy bridge on both sides of any temporary bridge. John Wilson said he felt any approval should show erosion control totally installed around the whole area. Hickory Lake said they need to keep erosion from getting into the pond and they need to stay 100 feet from the wetlands and put silt fence in place.

Joe Willis asked Commissioners if they would be averse to using a woodchip berm. Dave Perkins said he would rather see a silt fence installed. Hickory Lake said he would want to see on paper a more detailed crossing, so that in the future they could look back and see what was approved. Joe Willis said he could provide drawings for the two crossings and would be good with having another meeting to go over those drawings. John Wilson and Dave Perkins agreed that this would be the best route.

John Wilson said he is aware that work was started before approvals were granted, and so moving forward he would want to see silt fencing put in where Hickory Lake indicated on the map. Joe Willis said they should be aware that silt fencing might be subject to being smashed when trees come down. He explained that this is very dense forest and this happens when you are clear cutting land. He said he will also need to clear some trees to put in the fence. Joe Willis was advised to put silt fence inside the buffer and that if any trees pull it down, that it be reinstalled.

Dave Perkins indicated areas on the map that need to be staked out.

The discussion moved to the entrance on Handel Road. Dave Perkins said there is a swale taking the water off the road and Rick Zulick directed that a pipe be installed and that the inlet be plastic. He had also instructed how he would want the anti-tracking pad installed.

Joe Willis said the site was harvested back in 1992, also at the Old Birch Road entry and the anti-tracking pad from that operation is still there today. He said there's a minimal wetlands crossing at this location, and that 3" to 4" stone was put in for the crossing, which is still there today. He said Rick Zulick suggested they add stone in this area, and refurbish the anti-tracking pad, so they can continue to use it. The plan is to come in about 700 feet. He said he and Dave Perkins walked the site and the road is there now. They will utilize silt fence on the downslope side of the road. He would like to put in a landing for trucks where the road comes in and flattens out. He said Rick Zulick also authorized the apron to be as wide as it needs to be. Joe Willis said they will also put in a chip berm around the landing.

Joe Willis said the plan is to put down stone and progressively build the road as they go in. No topsoil will leave the site. Saplings will be raked when they stump. The goal is to have some fields ready by spring.

Hickory Lake said he is concerned what might happen with stabilization if the project goes unfinished. He asked what the contingency plan would be. Joe Willis said that if something like that happened, he would stabilize the property properly before leaving.

Dave Perkins said he has been clear with Joe Willis in their discussions that there be no grubbing, that it be done after the trees come down. Joe Willis assured the Commission that when he stumps an acre, he closes it and grades it. John Wilson said he plans to walk the site and encouraged other Commission members to do the same. Joe Willis asked that they inform them when they are coming if workers are in the process of harvesting.

There were no further questions or comments.

Hickory Lake made a motion to grant a permit to do the two crossings on the north side of the property on the Handel Road side, along with installing appropriate silt fencing, and clearing on the Old Birch Road side near the wetlands, adding appropriate silt fencing, with a requirement to return with engineered plans for review for the crossings on the south side of the property. Tom Topping seconded the motion. All were in favor.

4. Other Business.

John Wilson said that Rick Zulick contacted him last month, reporting that there were people working on the dam at Crystal Lake. John Wilson said they went out but found no one there. However, upon returning the next day, he found people working in the water, and he shut them down.

John Wilson said the workers had DEEP approval to fix the dam, but water was coming out and going into the wetlands. He required that they put up silt fencing and Rick Zulick determined where it should be installed. The workers put the fencing up. After discussing it further with Rick Zulick, they decided it would be prudent to let them finish the work. He said the workers poured ten yards under the bridge and made a spillway. The fix appears to be working. Dave Perkins said the lake had also been lowered, so it seemed an opportune time to get this work done.

John Wilson also reported that First Selectman Tony Frassinelli had received a request from Johnson Memorial Hospital Chair/CEO Stu Rosenberg to meet with zoning, wetlands, and their contractors to discuss the installation of a subsurface septic system to be done in two phases. This would serve both Johnson Memorial Hospital and Evergreen. John Wilson provided a broad overview of the plan, which would include bringing in about 52,000 cubic yards of material. It was noted that the work would result in a large change in elevation with a 3 to 1 slope.

Rick Hartenstein said the system is designed to handle 50,000 gallons of effluent per day. John Wilson asked Dave Perkins to make clear that Johnson Memorial needs to come back before them for the second phase, as they said they would.

Dave Perkins suggested they add an approval of the 2018 calendar to the agenda. Meetings will continue to be held as needed on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

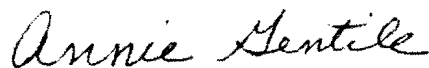
Tom Topping made a motion to accept the 2018 meeting calendar, which was seconded by Hickory Lake. All were in favor. Dave Perkins said he would forward the calendar to the town clerk.

John Wilson said he expects the newly elected First Selectman will be sending out letters soon to all members of the Commission to ask if they plan to continue with the Commission.

5. Adjournment.

Hickory Lake made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tom Topping. All were in favor. The November 15, 2017 Inland Wetlands Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Annie Gentile
Recording Secretary