

Town of Stafford  
Inland Wetlands Commission  
Regular Meeting  
January 16, 2019  
7:00 p.m. – Warren Memorial Town Hall

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TOWN CLERK

Members Present: John D. Wilson, Acting Chair  
Dave Smith  
Dave Belcher  
Kurt Mordasky  
Hickory Lake

Also Present: Dave Perkins, ZEO  
Jim Cassidy, Project Engineer, Hallisey, Pearson & Cassidy  
George Logan, REMA Ecological Services  
Robert Arute, property owner, 262 Hydeville Road  
Public

Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC HEARING:

Application submitted by NERP Holdings and Acquisitions, LLC for filling 4,880 sq. ft. of Wetlands at 54 West Stafford Road (Map 47, Lot 9) for construction of 19,000 sq. ft. Tractor Supply store and filling and grading of 88,400 sq. ft. of Upland Review area.

John Wilson opened the public hearing, establishing a quorum with John Wilson, Acting Chair; Dave Smith, Dave Belcher, Kurt Mordasky, and Hickory Lake. He read the public notice into the record.

Jim Cassidy, Project Engineer with Hallisey, Pearson & Cassidy, gave a presentation. The parcel for development is a 16.32 acre property in the Highway Business Zone with 315 feet of frontage on West Stafford Road. The front part of the property has four acres of disturbed and developed area with two houses, an antique store and a former automotive building. There are presently two curb cuts accessing the site. Jim Cassidy noted that George Logan of REMA Ecological Services delineated the wetlands in the front portion of the property. The majority of the back portion of the property is undisturbed, extensive wetlands.

The applicant is seeking a wetlands permit in the wetlands and upland review area to develop a Tractor Supply store. The proposal is for a prototypical 19,097 square foot, one-story building with a front vestibule. Modifications have been made since the last presentation. He reviewed the building. The rear side of the building will have a fenced in outside display area on a concrete pad. There will be a concrete area on one side of the building for loading and unloading, and there will be an area in the front of the building for displaying seasonal products. The other side of the building will have a permanent trailer display area.

Parking will be in front of the building. The regulations require 77 spaces, and most will be in front, with 16 along the easterly side. Four parking spaces are off to one side. They plan to eliminate the curb cut between the two existing houses. Jim Cassidy reviewed how tractor trailers will enter and exit the property. He said there will be no additional disturbance with this revised plan.

Jim Cassidy reviewed the topography of the lot. The grades slope southeasterly toward the wetlands. There is a culvert under West Stafford Road that discharges to the wetlands. Storm water management will include a good deal of sheet flow to paved leak offs. The only formal drainage will be a series of catch basins installed in the front parking area. Two will collect water and discharge to a third catch basin and then a storm water quality unit. There will be four storm water management basins, which will be shallow and designed to handle the first inch of runoff. These will eventually discharge to the wetlands.

Jim Cassidy said that in their storm water model, pre- and post-conditions, there will be no increased runoff from the development. They will seed the storm water quality basins with vegetation.

Jim Cassidy reviewed the sanitary sewer and domestic water service. The utilities will all go out the front of the building.

There will be two impacts to the wetlands. One will be 4,725 square feet of direct impact. They will need to clear existing vegetation, remove soils, extend storm drainage, install retaining walls and then pave. The second area to be affected is a finger of wetlands—224 square feet. In this area they will remove vegetation and soils, fill and grade.

There will be some activity in 2.29 acres of the upland review area. They plan to install three sections of retaining walls which will eliminate having to do a graded slope. This will reduce activity in the upland review area.

Jim Cassidy said he has read the peer engineering review and has not yet completed their responses, but agrees with most of what was written. He responded to alternative recommendations outlined on the last page of the review:

Comment #1: The applicant proposed planting the wetlands with appropriate materials and has incorporated that into their plan.

Comment #2: The majority of the materials can be removed and disposed of manually. However, they recommend against going onto the back area of the site with equipment, because the disturbance to the wetlands might cause greater damage. The large area referred to in the report is not on the site, but rather 20 feet off the southwest corner on another property.

Comment #3: If they have to come through a portion of the site, it could cause more disturbance than what could be gained. This is why their plan puts storm water basins in the front area of the site.

Comment #4: The applicant is proposing putting in a retaining wall across the wood road.

Comment #5: They proposed a conservation easement, but not on the back of the property.

Comment #6: If they remove the existing culvert near the woods road, it will open the flow between the two culverts. They feel it is better to leave it in place, but are willing to discuss the issue further.

George Logan of REMA Ecological Services mapped the wetlands, noting that Attachment C is a delineation of the wetlands. He indicated where there is shallow fill, but where it still retains a wetlands character. He said from the 1930's to 1960's there were a lot of wetlands filled before regulations went into effect.

George Logan pointed out critical habitat—bog areas—in the rear portion of the property, which must be protected. He said he feared that if they go into the property to remove the crushed pipe mentioned in the peer review report, that it will disturb the hydrology of the area. He said the pipe has been there a long time and the area has adapted to it.

George Logan said that about half the impact area is in fill wetlands. He indicated areas where there is some infestation of invasive plants like Japanese knotweed and said if they do nothing, these infestations will only get worse. There is a large infestation that goes to just a few feet from the wetlands boundary, so excavating it will help mitigate it. The plan would be to remove invasive plants along the entire perimeter of the site. This would be a three-year program done twice a year.

George Logan said they also plan to create wetland habitats in each of the basins. They will create meadow, scrub shrub. They also will be planting the uplands. They will be supplementing and enhancing the wetlands habitats. George Logan said they are still discussing preservation of the habitat. Nothing is being proposed in the back part of the property, and they will see if they can work with neighboring property owners to prevent access to the rear part, particularly vehicular access.

John Wilson agreed that there are some areas where they won't be able to remove unwanted materials, and he feels the plan should mitigate water problems. As to the construction part, he asked if they would be installing the pipe first. Jim Cassidy provided sequencing information. They will first layout the areas of disturbance, then take down trees, install sedimentation control measures, and pump out standing water. They will pull out stumps and topsoil, install riprap outlet, install a 24" temporary bypass for flash rain events, then install a big block retaining wall. They will then construct the piping, backfill and regrade.

John Wilson asked if they had a large enough area for dewatering. Jim Cassidy said they did, and they would add a typical dewatering area to the plan. This will eliminate silt going back into the wetlands. John Wilson asked if they felt the roof runoff to the pond should go through any sort of device. Jim Cassidy said he did not feel this is necessary as it is clean water. It will be running to a bigger basin, and from that they can control and slow down the velocity to avoid scouring. John Wilson asked if a separator should be installed to catch runoff. Jim Cassidy said he felt that by having the appropriate vegetation in the basins, this would handle it.

Hickory Lake asked if there is an area designated for snow stockpiling. Jim Cassidy said this would be provided for along the front of the site and at areas where there are islands. There are also landscaped areas where it can be stockpiled on the west side of the property. They might need to stock pile some snow in some parking areas, but it should not be a problem because they won't need that many spaces.

Dave Smith asked what the reason was for the four parking spaces near the front basin. Jim Cassidy said they are there simply to meet the number of parking spaces required in the zoning regulations. In reality, he said they won't need them as 60 spaces are usually more than sufficient for their stores.

Kurt Mordasky asked if the applicant will need to go to the State Department of Transportation for an encroachment permit. Jim Cassidy said they would. They will only need an encroachment permit because they will be installing their own pipe, thereby creating two separate drainage systems.

Dave Smith asked how the basins will be accessed for maintenance. Jim Cassidy said they will be relatively small basins and there will be a guardrail along the edges. The bottom depth will only be about three feet and can be reached with an excavator. They will mow the basin annually with a push mower or weedwacker.

Dave Perkins asked if there was a concept for four-bays in the plans. Jim Cassidy said the bottom basin could be a four-bay and it would be good to have one there. Jim Cassidy said there is a lot of water that comes in to the site through the state system across the road and is the reason they are keeping their system separate.

Jim Cassidy discussed a temporary sediment trap, noting if they try to break it up into a bunch of small areas, they will have to deal with more staging areas, which would make it harder to keep things in place during construction. He said they can also create temporary diversion berms.

Dave Perkins asked if the storm water management basins will be built early in the project. Jim Cassidy said they would and he reviewed the sequencing for those. They would be put in after establishing the retaining walls. Dave Perkins also asked if they had any test pit data. Jim Cassidy said they are in the process of having geo-tech data done. Dave Perkins said he would want more detail on the construction sequence of the ponds.

John Wilson asked if staked hay bales for erosion control would be enough. He asked this because they had recently dealt with another project when there was erosion caused by excessive rain. Jim Cassidy said they have a contractor that is very reactive to the on-site condition changes, who can be counted on to take appropriate actions quickly. He could put in diversion berms if needed.

The public hearing was opened to public comment. Joe Boucher of Towne Engineering, who provided the peer review, said it will be important that the contractor on site stay ahead of erosion problems. He noted that off the corner of the road near the cemetery, it looks like the properties were logged together at one time, and that is the area he referred to about limiting access. He said he recommended removing the 15" crushed pipe only because it is still working and questioned what would happen when that stops. He noted that a long time ago, a man-made ditch was dug that carries water to the railroad tracks. He added that the upgraded plans address many of his concerns.

Donna Wright of the Stafford Garden Club asked that when replanting the wetlands that they make sure to use native wetlands plants. George Logan said they planned to. Donna Wright also asked if a three-year plan for invasive control would be long enough. George Logan said they felt it should be as the plan has been successful at other sites. He reviewed how they handle various invasives.

Dave Smith asked a procedural question---if they have enough information at this time or if they should wait for a final version, and give the town engineer time to look at those plans. He said if they close the public hearing, there is concern they will not have an opportunity to comment on any changes. He noted, however, that they are not far apart.

First Selectman Mary Mitta asked if they are close to agreement, if the public hearing could be closed and the applicant's engineer could just work directly with the ZEO to iron out the final details. Dave

Smith said the concern would be that if any new information is provided after the public hearing closes, the Commission could not use any of that information as part of their decision-making process.

Nancy Ravetto, chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission, noted that the applicant will be coming before their Commission next Tuesday for a preliminary discussion.

After further discussion, there was consensus to schedule a special IWWC meeting in two weeks to go over the final details.

Hickory Lake made a motion, seconded by Dave Belcher to continue the public hearing and to schedule a Special Meeting for the continued public hearing for Wednesday, January 30 at 7:00 p.m. All were in favor.

## REGULAR MEETING:

### **AGENDA**

1. Call to order.
2. Establish a quorum.
3. Review minutes of December 19, 2018 regular meeting.
4. Possible decision – public hearing items
5. 262 Hydeville Road upland review discussion
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

**1. Call to order.**

John Wilson called the meeting to order at 8:44 p.m. in the Veterans' Meeting Room.

**2. Establish a quorum.**

John Wilson established a quorum with John Wilson, Acting Chair; Dave Smith, Dave Belcher, Kurt Mordasky, and Hickory Lake.

**3. Review minutes of December 19, 2018 Regular Meeting.**

John Wilson noted that Dave Smith was listed as an alternate member in the minutes, but he was and is now a regular member of the Commission.

Dave Smith made a motion, seconded by Kurt Mordasky, to accept the December 19, 2018 regular meeting minutes as amended. All were in favor.

**4. Possible decision – public hearing items.**

The public hearing on this application has been continued.

**5. 262 Hydeville Road upland review discussion.**

Dave Perkins said he got a call a couple weeks ago at home that there was some logging or clear-cutting at 262 Hydeville Road. Robert Arute is the property owner, and he was present for the discussion. John Wilson went out to the property and found clear cutting done on the two-acre lot, which has wetlands to the south and north.

John Wilson said no permit had been issued to the property owner, nor the logging company, Rocky Mountain Lumber Company. He said he spoke to both Rob Arute and Rocky Mountain Lumber, explaining that the IWWC is charged with administering the state statutes on logging.

Dave Perkins said clear cutting was done in the 100 foot review area. After being informed, Rob Arute came to the office and pulled a permit.

Rob Arute said he wasn't aware that he needed a permit as he wasn't planning on doing any construction. He apologized and said he rectified the situation as soon as he was informed of his error.

Dave Perkins reviewed the various levels of cutting that can be done on properties. John Wilson said Rocky Mountain does cutting all over New England and the south and should know better. He said they should have asked to see the permit. John Wilson said he informed Rocky Mountain that if they are found doing any cutting in Stafford again, they had better have a permit. He said there is also a brook in the back of the property and the logger cut right up to it. Rob Arute said they only took out dead and dying wood destroyed by gypsy moths. He said they are done with their work for the current weather conditions and will return later to do the appropriate grading. Dave Perkins said Rob Arute should inform him when that is going to be done. He also said he wrote a formal letter to Rocky Mountain Lumber regarding the situation.

Nancy Ravetto noted Rocky Mountain Lumber may have encroached and cut down trees and brush on a neighbor's property, and the neighbors now have to get a survey done. She said she hopes the property will not be left in the condition it is in presently.

**6. Other Business:** None.

**7. Adjournment**

Dave Belcher made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dave Smith. All were in favor. The January 16, 2019 meeting of the Stafford Inland Wetlands Commission was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Annie Gentile  
Recording Secretary