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TOWN CLERK

Town of Stafford  
Inland Wetlands Commission  
Regular Meeting  
May 15, 2024  
Veterans Meeting Room

Members Present: John Wilson, Chair  
Dave Smith, Vice Chair  
Kurt Mordasky  
Janet Bareiss  
Ricky Dorman, alternate

Also Present: Andy Marchese, ZEO  
Heidi Morey, applicant, 105 Diamond Ledge  
Jon Martorelli, 188 Crow Hill Road  
Rob Bahler, CHA Consulting; Re: Hydeville Road Bridge  
Claire Christiana, CHA Consulting; Re: Hydeville Road Bridge

**Agenda:**

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Establish a quorum
4. Review and approve minutes of 3/20/2024
5. Application:
  - Applicant:** Heidi Morey, 105 Diamond Ledge, Stafford, CT
  - Owner:** Heidi Morey, 105 Diamond Ledge, Stafford, CT
  - Property:** 105 Diamond Ledge, Map 24, Lot 4, Zone AAA  
*Portion of newly constructed pool into the 100' upland review area*
6. Application:
  - Applicant:** Devin Cowperthwaite, 1 Main Street, Stafford, CT
  - Owner:** Town of Stafford, 1 Main Street, Stafford, CT
  - Property:** Hydeville Rd Bridge  
*Replacement for Hydeville Rd Bridge over Furnace Brook*
7. Adjournment

**1. Call to Order**

John Wilson, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Establish a quorum**

A quorum was established with John Wilson, Chair; Dave Smith, Vice Chair; Kurt Mordasky, Janet Bareiss, and seating Ricky Dorman for Dr. David Mordasky.

**4. Review and approve minutes of 3/20/2024**

Dave Smith made a motion to approve the 3/20/2024 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Kurt Mordasky. Dave Smith, Kurt Mordasky, Janet Bareiss and Ricky Dorman voted to approve. John Wilson abstained. Motion carried.

**5. Application:**

**Applicant:** Heidi Morey, 105 Diamond ledge, Stafford, CT

**Owner:** Heidi Morey, 105 Diamond Ledge, Stafford, CT

**Property:** 105 Diamond Ledge, **Map 24, Lot 4, Zone AAA**

*Portion of newly constructed pool into the 100' upland review area*

John Wilson said a portion of the pool at 105 Diamond Ledge is in the upland review area. The plan that was approved did not show the pool in the upland review area. Andy Marchese explained that the house is only about two years old and the permits were issued before he started with the Town. The approval was based off of a survey for the septic system, and when he went out to the property he ascertained that a portion of the pool could be in the upland review area.

Andy Marchese said he called Mark Peterson, P.E., of Gardner & Peterson who told him the final as-built had not been completed on the house. Neither Heidi Morey nor the contractor were aware of this. Andy Marchese said he issued a cease and desist order, and Gardner & Peterson went to the property and did the as-built on it. They found the pool does encroach a small amount.

Andy Marchese said Mark Peterson was unable to attend the meeting this evening because he was double-booked with another meeting, but he sent an email.

Dave Smith asked what the stage of construction was on the pool. Andy Marchese said the pool is in the ground, but there is no water in it. There is some hardscape work that is being done and the pool house is up, which was permitted properly. He said there is a waterfall that goes into a splash pool as well as some retaining walls, and these are in the upland review area.

John Wilson said it appears some wires got a little crossed and there were other things going on at the time. This has happened with other applicants in the past, too. However, it is required that when any work is being done in the upland review area or in the wetlands, it must be approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission. He suggested they could vote on it this evening and approve it.

Andy Marchese said Mark Peterson sent an email with suggestions for erosion control, should the Commission vote to approve the application. He had suggested getting some seed or straw down on the area beyond the splash pool.

John Martorelli of 188 Crow Hill Road of Stafford Springs, who had been working with Heidi Morey on the project, said the pool area was about 70 percent done and the pool house was about 90 percent done. He said they are waiting to finish off the grotto. He said when they are done with that, they want to bring their machine back in and finish digging and then put in the liner. After that they planned to put down grass seed. John Wilson recommended putting in silt fence before taking the machine back in there.

Andy Marchese said they are at most about 30 feet into the upland review area. Heidi Morey said there was grading on the original site plan where the pool was proposed to be, and that is still the same. She said the pool was moved back a little bit.

John Wilson read the emailed notes from Mark Peterson. The proposed pool was proposed to have grading adjacent to it and behind it. The surface water is designed to shed away from the basement at an elevation of 484.5 feet to an existing 482-foot contour. Silt fence was proposed parallel to the 482-foot contour. Mark Peterson wrote that the home was constructed in a nearly identical area as was proposed on the original design plan. He wrote that the partially constructed pool was pushed back from the home and the site grading downgrade of the pool is generally consistent with the design plan. Mark Peterson recommended installing silt fence downgrade of the pool construction and the area be loamed and seeded immediately upon completion of the structure.

Ricky Dorman asked why the pool was moved back from where it was located in the original plan. John Martorelli explained that they ran into elevation issues. He said they thought the initial proposed plans were also set back a little further than they actually were. Ricky Dorman asked if the wetlands were flagged prior to starting work. John Martorelli said they were. Heidi Morey added that the pool was all staked out and that they had numerous inspections done along the way. Ricky Dorman said it appears no one ever caught the 100-foot rule about the upland review area. John Wilson said this wouldn't be the first time that has happened.

Kurt Mordasky made a motion to approve the application for the construction of a pool at 105 Diamond Ledge, Map 24, Lot 4, Zone AAA where it is presently located and to require silt fence be constructed and grading be done, including loam and seed. The motion was seconded by Ricky Dorman.

Discussion: Andy Marchese said if they can get the silt fence in by this coming Monday, he can come out and inspect it the same day. He suggested they put it up about 30 feet beyond the back of the splash pad in a west-east direction. He could then lift the cease and desist order.

A vote was taken on the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

6. Application:

**Applicant:** Devin Cowperthwaite, 1 Main Street, Stafford, CT

**Owner:** Town of Stafford, 1 Main Street, Stafford, CT

**Property:** Hydeville Rd Bridge

***Replacement for Hydeville Rd Bridge over Furnace Brook***

Director of Public Works Devin Cowperthwaite said the Town will be replacing the Hydeville Road bridge over Furnace Brook. This project is part of the federal bridge program and is 100 percent funded – 80 percent by the federal government and 20 percent by the state. In addition, they asked the Connecticut Department of Transportation to do the design for the project under the DMS system so that is also 100 percent state funded. So, there will be no cost to Stafford taxpayers.

Rob Bahler and Claire Christianna of CHA Consulting attended the meeting, and Rob Bahler explained what the project will entail. He said currently, there are wetlands at the northwest corner of the bridge and both sides of the river on the east side. The plan is to reconstruct the roadway on both sides of the bridge leading up to it for about 150 feet on the north and south sides and also a portion of East Street on the southwest side of the bridge.

Rob Bahler said the bridge will be fully reconstructed. The existing two-span concrete bridge will be removed and the proposed replacement is a twin-box culvert. The plan shows the inlet and outlet elevation. The twin box culvert will have a 10-foot high opening and 16-foot span. Rob Bahler reviewed the particulars of the construction, noting the proposed bridge will allow for a 50-year storm to run through without overtopping the roadway. This is a significant improvement to hydraulics over the existing bridge which can only accommodate a 25-year storm.

He reviewed the four-part staging of the project. They plan to use a system of water handling and coffer dams to route the stream through the existing south span. As part of Stage one, they will remove the north abutment. Once that is removed, they will grab the water back to the north side, remove the center pier and the south abutment. That will complete the demolition of the existing bridge.

Stage 3 will consist of a series of coffer dams and water handling. During this stage, water will be on the north side and they will reconstruct the bridge on the south side. During the final stage, water will be flowing through the newly constructed culvert on the south side.

Once construction is completed and the roadway work is done, they will seed the impacted areas on each side of the roadway. They will also be installing some drainage, two sets of catch basins on the north side and two sets on East Street.

Dave Smith asked about the time table for the project. Rob Bahler said it would not start for a couple of years. They need to first go through the permitting process with the Army

Corps of Engineers and DEEP. He said they expect to start in the spring of 2026 and complete it in one season.

Dave Smith asked about the dam on the east side of the bridge. Rob Bahler said they have no plans to touch it but will monitor it throughout the construction process.

Dave Smith asked if they are changing any of the grade as they get up toward Route 19. Rob Bahler said they will maintain approximate profiles, but the road will align about five feet further to the west. He said the reason for this is two-fold. First, it will help straight out the road. Second, the existing bridge is very close to the Right of Way line, so they will be shifting it more toward the center of the Right of Way.

Dave Smith said this could possibly be a nice opportunity to extend the approach a little deeper. He said doing so could improve the sight line as you're coming around the curve. However, that is not a Wetlands issue. Rob Bahler said they could look into it. John Wilson asked if the State, when doing construction like this, looks at sight lines. Rob Bahler said they do. He said the State has been accepting to their requests lately. He said they look at all design requirements and try to do improvements where it makes sense. Rob Bahler added that the project will go out to bid at the end of 2025.

Dave Smith made a motion to approve the replacement for the Hydeville Road Bridge over Furnace Brook as presented. Kurt Mordasky seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

John Wilson asked if there was anything new they needed to discuss.

Andy Marchese provided an update on the property at 16 Reservoir Drive. He said Rachel Dearborn of Landmark Surveys in Ellington surveyed the property and found they built 10 feet over the boundary line into the water on one side and six feet over the boundary line into the water on the other side. Presently, the property owners are arguing that their deed reads differently than what she put down on the survey, so they are hashing that out right now.

Andy Marchese said he told them they have to get a wetlands permit to go back in to remove the wall mount. They're deciding with Matt Basch, the contractor, if the whole wall has to go because of the way it is constructed. Andy said they have been receptive to him with what they need to do. He said he explained that had they come to him first, he would have told them to come before the Commission and get a licensed surveyor to flag the rear of the property. He said they claim there were boundary markers there already.

Andy Marchese said he has spoken to Rachel Dearborn and she told him she didn't mind doing the survey because she's done a lot of surveying up at the lake. He said she has a lot of the history and facts on the area. He said the other issue is the lower wall that's over the line is now under water because the water level is up. They will need to remove it but can't use any equipment. They will need to first come before the Commission.

Ricky Dorman asked what has to be removed right now. Andy Marchese said the three-tiered wall will need to come down, but they will need to follow the process. He said the owner isn't too happy with him, nor is he with the results of the survey. He said he talked to the homeowner—the husband—and he said to talk to his wife. Andy said she is also upset but, as he explained, they should have come talk to him first. He would have told them to get it flagged. He said this is a monetary issue. They poured about \$100,000 into these really nice walls. He said he understands the functionality of the project and their erosion issue, but they drew up a big plan and never talked to the town to get wetlands approval. At the end of the day, they went off their property.

Andy Marchese said they will be coming forward to obtain a wetlands permit. He said he told the wife today to make sure they get their approvals in place. This way, even if they can't start until October or November, the approvals will be in place.

Janet Bareiss asked if all this work was done to mitigate the erosion factor. Andy Marchese said that is what they are saying.

There was a brief discussion about the possibility of the property owners approaching the owners and buying the 15 feet they need, potentially allowing them to save the wall. There was uncertainty, however, if this would be possible.

**7. Adjournment**

Kurt Mordasky made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ricky Dorman. All were in favor. Motion carried. The May 15, 2024 meeting of the Stafford Inland Wetland Commission was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Annie Gentile  
Recording Secretary