



Town of Hamden
Planning and Zoning
Department

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October 14, 2020

MINUTES: INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting via Zoom teleconferencing technology on Wednesday, October 7, 2020 with the following results:

Commissioners in attendance:

Joan Lakin, Chair
Kirk Shadle
George Schneider
Michael Milazzo
Tim Mack
Lee Campo
Jonathan Clapp

Staff in attendance:

Dan Kops, Town Planner
Thomas Vocelli, IW Enforcement Officer
Tim Lee, Assistant Town Attorney
Natalie Barletta, Clerk

Ms. Lakin opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Shadle took attendance and there was a quorum. Ms. Lakin went over electronic meeting procedures.

I. Applications

- a. 15-1212** Construction of a single-family house – 700 Main Street
Renewal Request for a 5-year extension of the permit
David Thompson – Applicant/Owner

David Thompson, owner and applicant, addressed the Commission. Mr. Thompson said that this is the third time that an application went before the Commission for this address. The first application was in 2005 by the previous owner, Anthony Mello. The second application was approved in 2015, when Mr. Thompson purchased the property and took over the development plan. Mr. Thompson said that application had no changes to the septic features, but had changes in Mr. Mello’s house design.

Mr. Thompson reported that the plan has been modified for the better, and has also been granted a de minimis ruling since the original approval. Mr. Thompson said that he originally purchased the lot on Main Street, and there is about 250 feet of street frontage, and a deep extension of the southern side. Mr. Thompson explained that at the time of the 2015 application, he only owned the first lot. Mr. Thompson added that wetlands are in the southwest corner of the property and proceed north. Mr. Thompson said that the original application had included a significant septic field, and because of less than ideal soil conditions, this was identified as the only septic field candidate. Mr. Thompson added that it involved an encroachment on the Conservation Area, which consisted of tree removal and some significant soil disturbance as well.

Mr. Thompson explained that when he went before the Commission in 2015, he reproduced the same septic design as well, but proposed a different configuration of the house. Mr. Thompson added that while the septic system remained the same, the house design has changed. Mr. Thompson stated that it is a single structure with a detached studio building, and remained a two-bedroom house under 2,000 square feet. Mr. Thompson said there was modifications of what was originally proposed to become a more site-specific driveway.

Mr. Thompson added he then approached the neighbor to the north who owned the adjoining property and he purchased the lot in 2017. Mr. Thompson said that having purchased it, it opened alternative septic field options, which is better because it is not near any wetlands, and is a small configuration with much less fill.

Mr. Thompson said that there were very few changes to the current house design other than the footprint being a little smaller than the original. Mr. Thompson said there was a studio apartment, which also was provided with a full bathroom, and classified it as a three bedroom house. Mr. Thompson said that he worked with QVHD and added that they were satisfied with the provisions of the septic field. Mr. Thompson then explained that after that, he then went to Mr. Vocelli for a de minimis ruling, and it was approved because what they were doing was to the benefit of the wetlands. Mr. Thompson said that he proceeded forward with the design of the house and made some slightly different accommodations, and all of the roof drainage and the foundation drainage is discharged down to an outfall location through a natural crease of the property. Mr. Thompson added that one of the other things he did was have a soil scientist extend the delineation of the wetlands, as well as the 100-foot zone. Mr. Thompson added that one of the requests of the de minimis ruling is to be allowed to remove the trees in part of the conservation area down to grade, inside of the former septic disturbance area. Mr. Thompson said that the reason is so he can install solar panels, which was a part of the original application. Mr. Thompson concluded that apart from that, it is all fairly current.

Mr. Thompson said they were moving forward in November 2019, but due to a wet winter and a dry summer, could not proceed. Mr. Thompson added that the contractor's availability had changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Thompson stated that due to all of these factors, it was clear that they were going to run out of time before the permit expired.

Mr. Thompson then added that the clearing on the lower portion near Main Street had some tree damage from a storm, and he is waiting for the site contractor to take care of that. Mr. Thompson said he added a spread of 200 by 100 feet of polyethylene. Mr. Thompson reported that Japanese Knotweed has been growing abundantly on the site, and he is currently learning what a challenge it is to control it. Mr. Thompson said that he has been weed whacking it weekly so it wouldn't get more than a few inches high. Mr. Thompson added that this is an effective way of killing the root system, and that's a work in progress. Mr. Thompson stated that it has a plastic sheeting and the long term plan is to continue cutting it back so that other species can compete. Mr. Thompson concluded he hopes by targeting the knotweed, he can bring back the natural meadow grass since he doesn't have any interest in a lawn.

Ms. Lakin asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Schneider asked if there was a requirement/provision for an alternative septic field. Mr. Thompson said that it has a secondary system as well as the primary one. Marcus Puttock, Engineer at Godfrey

Hoffman Hodge, said that QVHD requires that a new house have a primary septic system and an area for a reserve should the need arise. Mr. Schneider then asked what erosion controls the applicant is thinking about in terms of tree removal. Mr. Thompson answered that in the short term, erosion fencing has been installed on the property where they currently are working. Mr. Thompson added that the area is fairly level, and unlike other areas, where there is a more significant slope, it's much less so in that area. Mr. Puttock said in terms of the meadow grass, we don't intend to stump that area. Mr. Puttock added that the stumps of the trees that are removed will still remain to hold the soil in and the meadow grass will soon grow. Mr. Schneider said so there will be no long term impact to the wetlands. Mr. Puttock said no. Mr. Schneider then thanked Mr. Thompson for an excellent presentation.

Mr. Mack said that he visited the site, and noticed that the knotweed has been spreading, despite all of efforts. Mr. Mack asked how Mr. Thompson is going to stop knotweed. Mr. Mack continued that he noticed when looking at the site, it is near the wetlands and that it is a real problem. Mr. Thompson said that he has consulted with a variety of experts, and reached out to other architects. Mr. Thompson said that they had all kinds of different theories, including plastic sheeting. Mr. Thompson continued that he hopes to continue managing it over a 5 year period by keeping it cut back down and letting other things compete with it. Mr. Thompson acknowledged that it is approaching the wetlands, but is no worse now than it was five years ago. Mr. Thompson said that in a nutshell, he is going to continue to explore what the options are.

Mr. Shadle said he noticed that the drawing displays it as being one complete lot, and asked if it was deeded as one lot with this address. Mr. Thompson said that the property line has been dissolved, but is still two properties on the tax record.

Mr. Shadle asked if the solar array will in any way be associated with transformers, or will be a direct feed to the grid. Mr. Thompson said that it is all a roof top system, and the associated inverters will occur with the house. Mr. Thompson added that they are trimming the trees so there will be less shade. Mr. Shadle asked if there will be any transformers. Mr. Thompson said no. Mr. Shadle then asked if there were any other site alterations to the area.

Mr. Schneider said that he wanted a clarification on who will do the analysis and asked if there was a vendor. Mr. Thompson said that there was no vendor at the moment. Mr. Schneider asked if they will do the analysis. Mr. Thompson said yes and it will be underground power service.

Mr. Shadle said that there was some clearing on the property, and asked if that was done by the previous owner. Mr. Thompson said no, that was done when the de minimis ruling was issued. Mr. Thompson added that there was a house there originally, and it was demolished. Mr. Shadle said that aside from the de minimis activity and the approved activities from the previous owner, if there were any other changes. Mr. Thompson said that he drilled a well in November 2019. Mr. Shadle said that aside from that, were there no other site alterations. Mr. Thompson said that there was tree removal, rough grading, and the well.

Mr. Schneider made a motion to renew IWC Permit # 15-1212 for the construction of a single-family house at 700 Main Street, subject to the following stipulations:

- 1) In accordance with Section 7.9 of our Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations, the Commission hereby waives the 65-day filing requirement for renewal requests;
- 2) The permit shall be renewed for a period of five years, with a final expiration date of October 7, 2025;
- 3) The permit shall be renewed with all conditions, amendments, and administrative rulings previously imposed or approved by this Commission or by the Wetlands Officer.

It was seconded by Mr. Milazzo, and the vote was unanimous in favor. The permit renewal was approved.

II. Other Business:

a. Review Site Inspection Schedule

There were none scheduled at the time of the meeting.

Mr. Vocelli said that Brian Banning is preparing an application for construction of a single family house on Benham Street, and it's possible that he may submit it in time for the November meeting. Mr. Kops added that the City of New Haven is also preparing an application to construct and replace buildings on Park Road. Mr. Vocelli added that it's a case of how quickly they can submit their plans in order to get on the November agenda.

b. Review September 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Lakin said that she noticed a few errors in the minutes. Mr. Pfrommer's name was misspelled a few times, and she pointed out that "gavel" needs to be changed to "gravel" on page four. Mr. Schneider said that Lauren Wholey needed to be noted as present at the meeting, as she was not listed as attending. Mr. Schneider then added that on page 9, "Mr. Schneider asked that as a part of the educational opportunity would be the reporting" versus "Mr. Schneider asked that a part of the educational opportunity would be the reporting." Mr. Schneider then at the end of that paragraph asked to replace "Mr. Schneider said that he liked the idea, because it shows the organization where the money went" with "Mr. Schneider said that he liked the idea, because it shows the organization where the money was spent."

Mr. Schnieder then made a motion to approve the minutes with the changes. Mr. Milazzo seconded. The minutes were approved, with one abstention from Mr. Campo.

c. Storm water catch-basins

Mr. Walters addressed the Commission and said the check was sent out. Mr. Walters added that the check for Garden State was sent out and they are working on the medallion design. Mr. Walters said that once the design is complete, it will be sent to the Commission for approval and then production will begin. Mr. Walters stated that he will also get maps from the Government Center to see which neighborhoods would be the best to start with. Ms. Lakin asked if Mr. Walters can send out a copy. Mr. Walters said yes.

Ms. Lakin asked if Tim Mack and Kirk Shadle had met with any Eagle Scouts. Mr. Mack said that since the last meeting he hadn't met with anyone, and the troop leader has a need for scouts. Mr. Schneider asked which troop this was. Mr. Mack said it was 610. Mr. Schneider said he knows a couple of group leaders in Troop 608.

Mr. Shadle said the scout from 604 said that he contacted Mr. Walters, and he is very excited about the project.

Ms. Lakin thanked Mr. Walters for his efforts on the project.

There was then a brief discussion on knotweed.

d. 360 Gaylord Mt. Road --- solar farm update

Mr. Kops said that there is not too much to report, and added that he knows the RWA submitted a petition requesting intervenor status on the matter. Mr. Kops said he missed the prehearing teleconference, but he and Mr. Vocelli said that the petition to intervene is on the agenda for the biweekly Siting Council meeting on Thursday, October 8, 2020. Mr. Vocelli said that he, and Mr. Mack and Mr. Kops, have been dialing into the meetings. Mr. Vocelli referenced an application for a solar farm in the town of Winchester in the northwest hills that was denied without prejudice because the proposal tried to shoe-horn the solar panels around wetlands. Mr. Kops said that the Siting Council public hearing for 360 Gaylord Mt. Road will be on November 17, 2020. Mr. Vocelli added that he included information to access the public hearing through Zoom in this month's meeting packet.

e. Adjournment

Mr. Milazzo made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Shadle, and the vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Natalie Barletta, Clerk of the Commission