



Town of Hamden
Planning and Zoning
Department

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February 10, 2021

MINUTES: INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting via Zoom teleconferencing technology on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 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:

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. 21-1234 3656 Whitney Avenue – construction of a mixed-use building
 Green Olive Properties Management LLC – Applicant

John Paul Garcia addressed the Commission. The property had already been to the Planning and Zoning Commission to ask for a Zone Change to a T 3.5 Zone. The property is roughly 4 ½ acres, and has a long driveway leading to four wetlands, which are in the middle of the property.

The proposal is to build offices on the first floor, and two rentals upstairs. The parking area has enough parking for 24 cars and 2 handicap, and will be paved. The stormwater will be in catch basins and a rain garden, and there will be an onsite septic system. The application was submitted to QVHD and the Regional Water Authority. Comments from QVHD and Engineering came in Tuesday, February 2 and Wednesday, February 3, and they will get addressed at next month’s meeting.

Mr. Garcia stated that he is only working on the site adjacent to the building. It is a flat site, with not a lot of offsite runoff, and it is a relatively mild proposal given the site’s conditions.

Mr. Shadle asked if the rear lot is occupied. Mr. Garcia answered yes. Mr. Shadle asked if that is going to be remaining. Mr. Garcia answered what is there now will remain after construction. Mr. Shadle asked if by looking at the driveway, if that means that runoff is going to be coming off of the parking system. Mr. Garcia answered that there is an existing driveway, and it’s going to be modified slightly. Mr. Shadle asked if Mr. Garcia had a chance to review the QVHD comments in terms of the septic. Mr.

Garcia said no, since he had only received them a few hours prior. Mr. Shadle commented that he didn't know if QVHD had any concerns. Mr. Garcia said at the moment he has no knowledge of that, but his gut feeling is that they shouldn't. Mr. Shadle asked if the Planning and Zoning Commission approved the zone change. Mr. Garcia said that the zone change was already approved.

Mr. Shadle asked if the area in the southern wetlands portion is something that can be discussed with the client to get a more structured protection for that area and for the wetland. Mr. Garcia said that is something that can be discussed. Mr. Shadle suggested discussing it with Mr. Vocelli. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Vocelli agreed. Mr. Shadle stated those are all of his questions until he sees the site.

Mr. Mack asked if there is an existing septic field considering that there is a structure already there. Mr. Garcia answered that there is an existing tank that is going to get collapsed. Mr. Mack commented that as far as the new septic system, it's less than 30 feet from the rain garden. Mr. Garcia said that is going to change. Mr. Mack asked is there a specific distance. Mr. Garcia said it is 75 feet, and the rain garden discharges in the storm drainage, and it may change. Mr. Mack commented that he noticed that on the wetlands watercourse maps it wasn't signed. Mr. Garcia said he could get it signed if the Commission wished, and Mr. Mack pointed out that there was another map in the packet that was signed.

Mr. Schneider asked what the size of the impervious layer was. Mr. Garcia said one inch, but it may change based on the Engineering Department comments. Mr. Vocelli asked if Mr. Garcia could email the QVHD septic comments so that he can distribute them. Mr. Garcia said tomorrow morning.

Ms. Lakin stated that it is not desirable to have more than a few people doing site visits together. She added that she had discussed how to handle the site walks, and asked if it was necessary for each individual member or two-member team to write a report. Attorney Lee answered if the commission wishes, they can do so. Ms. Lakin asked if a record is needed. Attorney Lee said that Commissioners can mention during the next meeting that they've been at the site.

Mr. Garcia asked what would the Commission members like to see, and reminded the Commission that there is snow on the ground. There is a non-disturbance line, and property line. He suggested using a numbering system, and will send a detailed sheet so that Commission members can identify everything. Attorney Lee asked if the property owner knew about the individual site walks. Mr. Garcia said he will let the owner know. Mr. Garcia said that he will send out information, and will include his cellphone number if anyone has any questions. Mr. Shadle asked about parking. Mr. Garcia said it should be plowed.

Ms. Lakin asked for a motion to table the application.

Mr. Shadle made a motion to table Application #21-1234 for the construction of a mixed-use building at 3656 Whitney Avenue, pending the completion of site visits by the members and the preparation of revisions or additional information by the applicant. Mr. Mack seconded, and all were in favor.

- b. 21-1235 1656 State Street Rear (a-k-a 180 Park Rd) - Hamden section of East Rock Park
Construction of maintenance & storage buildings
City of New Haven – Applicant

Giovanni Zinn, Engineer for the City of New Haven, addressed the Commission and introduced Zachary Shapiro, Chief Structural Engineer. The project is at East Rock Park, and consists of a small workshop area, and a maintenance area for public works. A lot of the buildings are historic, as they were built in the late 1800s/early 1900s. The maintenance area is 22,325 square feet, and the storage area is 7,200 square feet. Mr. Zinn then pointed out where the wetlands are on the property. They are going down the road through the site. He reviewed the vegetated area on the site as well as the wetland. He also added that much of the usage predated the current wetland regulations. Mr. Zinn continued by saying that improvements on the site will include a new storage building with plans to organize the site better. There will also be a new vehicle wash, new maintenance building, new curb, decorative fence, trees, and possibly a new play area. There is a sloping planted area between that and the street, and it brings a gradual workup on the site. Driveways will be regraded, and there will be a new parking area with 70 spaces that will make a lot of the parking more organized. This will provide a level pad for the building, but will not allow sheet flow in the inland wetland.

Mr. Shadle asked if the vehicle wash station is closed, and will it be all inside of the structure. Mr. Zinn answered that there will not be any outside washing, as the City is trying to eliminate all of that, so they want to make sure that it is a closed system. Ms. Lakin said that vehicles will not be stored outside. Mr. Zinn said that the City is trying to cut down on that, and expects that the new parking area will be employee vehicles, so the bulk will be inside. Ms. Lakin said that this is in terms of oil leaking and things of that nature.

Mr. Shadle asked if vehicles will be fueled on site. Mr. Zinn answered that fueling is on Middletown Avenue. Mr. Shadle said that there is no vehicle fueling on site. Mr. Zinn answered no. Mr. Mack commented that there is no phased construction plan, but there are 5000 cubic yards of fill. Mr. Zinn commented that he doesn't believe that it's covered, but there are hay bales and silt fencing. He added that he is open to input, and most of the soil movement will be from the new parking area to the new maintenance area.

Mr. Zinn reviewed the grading plan, and added that he worked with Mr. Austin and used shading to demonstrate to the Commission where the improvements are. Mr. Zinn then went through all of the plants that could be used on the project, and added that he welcomed input. Mr. Mack said that in regards to all of the plants, there are a lot of invasive species, and asked have there been any thoughts on remediation of invasive in the wetland. Mr. Zinn said that he will be more than happy to follow the recommendation to do so, and will be working with the Natural Resources Department of the City of New Haven to get those out.

Ms. Wholey said that she was wondering about the impervious coverage, and if that will be increased. Mr. Zinn said that he thinks it will go up a little bit.

Mr. Clapp commented that he didn't see anything about Public Works when he visited. Mr. Zinn said that they merged to Parks and Public Works, and they are all now one department.

Ms. Lakin said that she wanted to discuss the site walks. Mr. Zinn said that it's not an area that's open to the public, and he would like to give someone a heads-up that it's okay for members to be there. He added there is a lot of truck traffic, and the stakes will be in the parking lot. Mr. Zinn said that they will try to tweak the map to help members visualize where things are, and where improvements are made. Mr. Zinn said that the gates are open at 7:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, but he can open the gate at other times if needed.

Ms. Lakin asked if anyone had any suggestions. Ms. Wholey said that she is inclined to come on a weekend, and suggested coming at 15 minute intervals. Mr. Zinn said that he can set up 15 minute time slots, and the site is large enough for multiple people to be there while practicing the proper social distancing protocols. Ms. Lakin suggested to have some during the week and one on the weekend. She asked if that's okay. Mr. Zinn said that he can work out some dates and go from there. Ms. Lakin asked if there were any issues. The Commission was in agreement. Mr. Vocelli commented that it would be challenging to visit the site and get a good sense of it due to heavy snow cover. Mr. Zinn said that the topography is stark enough so that they can see it.

Mr. Zinn asked about the site walk regulations. Ms. Lakin explained that it's more focused on the physicality of the site. Mr. Vocelli said a numbered stakeout plan would be feasible. Mr. Zinn said that he will do his best. Ms. Lakin said that dates should be at the end of the month, and asked for a weekend date as well.

Ms. Lakin asked for a motion to table this application to the next meeting.

Mr. Schneider moved to table Application # 21-1235 for the construction of maintenance and storage buildings at 1656 State Street Rear, pending the completion of site visits by the members and the submission of revisions or additional information by the applicant. Mr. Milazzo seconded, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

II. Other Business:

a. Group site inspections have been suspended for the foreseeable future because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Commission members are urged to visit application sites on an individual basis prior to the March 3, 2021 Zoom meeting.

b. Review October 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Mack moved to approve the October 7, 2020 meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Shadle, and passed, with two abstentions from Mr. Campo and Ms. Wholey.

c. Storm water catch-basins

Before turning to the catch-basin medallion update, Ms. Lakin asked Mr. Vocelli for an update on the Slate School project. Mr. Vocelli explained that the Slate School filed an application at 5100 Ridge Road in North Haven. This parcel is very close to wetlands in the Town of Hamden. Ms. Lakin wrote a letter to the North Haven Inland Wetlands Commission asking that Hamden wetlands be buffered

and protected in accordance with Hamden standards. There was a public hearing session held in January, and the North Haven Inland Wetlands Commission then decided to continue the public hearing. Ms. Lakin added that no Hamden commissioners have participated in the hearing.

Mr. Walters then updated the Commission on the medallions. They are in and they are ready to go. He dropped off storm water maps to Mr. Vocelli. Mr. Vocelli said that there were storm water maps, but he didn't get a chance to review them. He asked if Ms. Wholey would be reviewing them. Mr. Walters suggested that Spring Glen and Whitneyville may be two areas that would be good to concentrate on. Mr. Vocelli said that he would be happy to turn over the maps to the Commissioners, and then asked about the availability of the Scouts.

Ms. Wholey thought that some of the Eagle Scouts' work was deciding when and where the medallions would be placed. Mr. Walters added that there is extra money left in the grant for outreach, production, posters, etc. Ms. Wholey said she thought the Commission would be available as advisors. Ms. Lakin said that someone suggested that the Scouts should be identified so that the kids don't get harassed by neighbors.

Mr. Shadle asked if the RWA sends out any informational items, and asked how people are notified. He also asked how many catch basins are there. Mr. Walters answered that there are at least 5000. There was a brief discussion of outreach and execution of the project.

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

Mr. Vocelli updated the Commission and stated that it appears that there may be a draft decision in March, but the deadline was pushed back to May 4, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Vocelli added that if the solar farm is approved by the Siting Council, the Commission can provide input during the DEEP storm water permitting process if it is inclined to do so.

Ms. Lakin stated that a new Charter Revision Commission has been formed and is having meetings. The current charter does not include a provision for alternates on the Inland Wetlands Commission. Ms. Lakin asked the Commission members if they wanted to have alternates. The benefits of having alternates include decreasing the number of Commissioners needed for a quorum for a meeting. Attorney Lee agreed that there should be alternates, and added that he doesn't think there would be a concern about party affiliation. Ms. Lakin commented that she doesn't know if party affiliation mattered in terms of getting an alternate. Mr. Vocelli believes that the Town Clerk does take a look at party affiliation for IWC members, but doesn't know exactly how that is done.

Ms. Wholey said that she doesn't recall if affiliation matters before an alternate becomes a regular member. Attorney Lee suggested that the Commission should ask for two alternates. Mr. Vocelli said that it might be helpful to consult Steve Mendick, since he wrote the current charter. Attorney Lee stated that's what he will do. Ms. Lakin asked Attorney Lee if he was a part of the last Charter revision. Attorney Lee answered that he was not. Ms. Lakin asked if Attorney Lee knew how far along the new charter revision process is. Attorney Lee answered that he did not. Mr. Shadle asked if an alternate can vote. Attorney Lee answered that the alternate will only be able to vote if someone wasn't there. Mr. Milazzo said that the alternate would still be responsible to attend the meetings, but may not be able to vote.

Ms. Lakin mentioned that they are having trouble filling the vacant seat, because of the party requirement. Ms. Wholey mentioned that it might be better to focus on filling the vacant seat. Ms. Lakin also said that there are issues getting a quorum in the summer.

e. Adjournment

Mr. Milazzo made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Schneider, and unanimous in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Natalie Barletta, Clerk of the Commission