

Minutes: The Inland Wetlands Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting and Public Hearing via Zoom teleconferencing technology on Wednesday, September 6, 2023.

Commissioners in attendance: Joan Lakin (Chair) Kirk Shadle (Vice Chair), George Schneider, Michael Stone, Lauren Wholey, Brad Macdowall, Jonathon Clapp, Tim Mack

Staff in attendance: Thomas Vocelli (IWC Enforcement Officer), Eugene Livshits (Town Planner), Camile Deans (Commission Clerk), Tim Lee (Assistant Town Attorney)

Chairman Lakin called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Vice Chair Shadle took attendance, and Ms. Lakin noted the Staff in attendance.

I. Public Comment Session

Chairman Lakin called for public comments.

There were no public comments.

II. *de minimis* Request

**Olin Pine Swamp at 475 Putnam Avenue
Environmental investigation and soil sampling activities
Applicant- WSP for Olin Corporation**

Libby Bowen from the Olin Corporation and Jamie Welch from WSP represented the applicant. Ms. Bowen gave an overview of the project and explained that they have a number of monitoring wells and drill borings that they will be working with, and of that number 13 are considered to be in areas of wetlands. Ms. Welch gave a presentation on the technical work that they will be doing. She shared her screen to show the map and pictures explaining the work that they will be doing. She also showed the track marks left from the drill rig. She showed that there was also standing water from rain in some areas. These sensitive areas will be entered by foot and walk-up to prevent the drill rig from getting stuck or from damaging the wetland. They will have to do some clearing; however, they will spread some seed mix to stabilize the soil.

Commissioner Clapp had a question --- he wanted to know if some of the monitoring wells are off the Olin site. Ms. Welch said yes. He wanted to know if they had any agreement with the owners. Ms. Bowen informed him that they do. Mr. Vocelli said that a copy of any owner consent agreement will be needed for the application file.

Commissioner Shadle asked about a spot that was wet and muddy where the boring was supposed to go in the middle. He asked Ms. Welch to show the rest of the commissioners the area. She explained that she didn't get a very good picture since the area was wet from the rain the night before, but she showed the area on the map.

Commissioner Schneider asked about a section on the map that is outside the wetlands area that should be stabilized; were they comfortable that they are able to do so ? Ms. Welch explained that for this phase they have collected a lot of samples. She explained that they may have to go back to some areas. They have finished most of the work outside the wetlands, but they'll return as needed.

Chairman Lakin asked for a motion.

Commissioner Mack moved to approve the proposed drill boring and soil sampling activities that will be located within the delineated wetland at 475 Putnam Avenue, and he further moved to reaffirm the following conditions drawn from the Wetland Officer's August 2nd, 2023 de minimis finding:

- 1. All disturbed areas shall be stabilized with native seed mixes during the Fall 2023 growing season, and then reseeded as needed during the Spring 2024 growing season;*
- 2. Any Pine Swamp remediation project associated with this investigative work shall require a regular wetlands permit from the Hamden Inland Wetlands Commission, unless the remediation is undertaken by a department, agency or instrumentality of the State of Connecticut.*

Commissioner Clapp seconded the motion.

Commissioner Schneider suggested two additional conditions, which were accepted by Mr. Mack and by Mr. Clapp:

- 3. Any additional drill borings or wells beyond the scope of this proposal shall be subject to review and approval by the Wetlands Officer;*
- 4. Vehicle use shall be limited to the Geoprobe track -mounted drilling rig described in the proposal.*

Commissioner Shadle suggested a fifth condition, which was also accepted by Mr. Mack and by Mr. Clapp:

- 5. Any off-site soil sampling shall require property-owner consent.*

All commissioners present & voting were in favor of the amended motion.

III. Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

IWC #23-1255

275 Mount Carmel Avenue

Baseball field improvements, including the installation of EPDM synthetic turf

Applicant- Quinnipiac University

Bernard Pellegrino-Attorney, Sal Filardi- Quinnipiac University Facilities VP, Kevin Fuselier-Landscape Architect/Project Manager, Andrew Goralski - Civil Engineer, and Matthew Sanford-Professional Wetlands Scientist represented the applicant.

Attorney Pellegrino explained the application, the nature of the project and the location of the work. He then turned the presentation over to Kevin Fuselier, Landscape Architect, who shared his screen to give a detailed overview of the project. He explained that they will be changing the entire field to turf, and he showed the existing surrounding areas and the dugouts. He also gave the dimensions of the field and the depth, and he explained that there are also stone layers under the field. Engineer Andrew Goralski explained the storm water runoff. He addressed storm water volume and infiltration concerns, and he answered questions regarding same.

Commissioner Shadle had a question regarding the bottom of the stone depth and what the full depth of the field is. Mr. Fuselier explained infill and a section above the basin, and he said it depends on what section of the field they are reviewing. Commissioner Shadle asked about a specific area which Mr. Fuselier pointed out and then clarified the specifics. Commissioner Shadle also had a concern about a pipe and a basin on the drawing. Mr. Fuselier apologized because he realized that he was pointing to the wrong diagram which was causing confusion. Mr. Fuselier pointed out that they have one area drain that will tie into their drainage system. Soils will be retained on-site as well. He also described the synthetic turf material and fabric.

Commissioner Stone asked how the footprint of the proposed field compares to the existing field in size. Mr. Fuselier explained that the field shifts a little, but the size remains the same. He showed all the areas of shifting on the map.

Commissioner Mack asked if they would be using the same field turf that was used on the soccer field, and Mr. Fuselier said that is correct. Mr. Mack also asked him to explain the pre-wash procedure. Sal Filardi, Facilities VP, explained that they had some concerns about the material that they wanted to use, but they eventually went with rinsing at an off-site location with a procedure that requires washes multiple times.

Commissioner Mack noted that there has been a lot of controversy around artificial turf fields and that California has passed a ban to block PFAS materials (a-k-a “forever chemicals”). There are also bills pending in Connecticut and in other areas of New England that would ban artificial turf. He asked how they would address using it if there is the possibility of a ban on artificial turf in Connecticut. Attorney Pellegrino explained that they did a lot of research, and there is a lot of misinformation regarding turf fields and the different materials associated with it. Mr. Fuselier explained that there are many different types of PFAS, and he also said that the state of Massachusetts regulated six different types and left thousands which aren’t regulated. He also explained that the turfs must be approved and tested, and they have gone through rigorous testing. He introduced Andrew Dijack to speak more about the issue of artificial turf and Field Turf Ecosense. Mr. Dijack explained that the proposed turf was manufactured in Germany and does not use the materials that were previously mentioned. He also explained that the synthetic turf undergoes rigorous testing to meet all health-related and chemical requirements. He also said they will be happy to provide test data for the carpet type proposed for this application.

Commissioner Mack asked if they want to provide testing that was already done, or if they want to test the turf they will be supplying to Quinnipiac University. Mr. Dijack said he wasn’t suggesting the latter; rather, he has existing test results that they are happy to share.

Commissioner Shadle explained that it would be very helpful to have the certifications. Mr. Dijack explained that the testing is always done through a third party, but it could be a condition-of-approval that the PFAS test data be submitted.

Commissioner Shadle also asked about the difference in lot numbers of the certified products going in the field. Mr. Dijack explained that this could be managed and accounted for.

Commissioner Mack asked if they do periodic PFAS testing of their synthetic turf. Mr. Dijack explained that they do. Commissioner Shadle asked if they did any field testing with water samples. Mr. Dijack said yes, they do, and he would be happy to share that test data as well.

Commissioner Shadle asked if they had any elevated PFAS results what they would offer to the university as a safeguard. Mr. Dijack explained that they don't currently have warranty language. . He also explained why they don't have a warranty, and he reviewed environmental factors and other things that can come into play which would make it hard to have such a document.

Commissioner Schneider asked if the Town Engineer requested infiltration data. Mr. Fuselier said that no on-site tests were run, so they used NRCS data..

Commissioner Shadle had a question about the recommended snow removal method. Mr. Fuselier and Mr. Filardi said yes, there was a recommended snow removal procedure to keep snow piles out of the watercourse and within the fenced area.

Commissioner Shadle asked about the trees shown on the plan --- are they existing trees ? Mr. Fuselier said yes. Commissioner Shadle had some recommendations regarding the landscaping at the edge of the watercourse that he said would help with erosion control and with beautification. Mr. Filardi assured him that they have a stream-bank which they have been maintaining, and he said it's not eroding. Mr. Filardi said, however, that they would be happy to propose a vegetative buffer.

Public Hearing Comments

Chairman Lakin called for public comments for and against the application. There were a few comments.

Public Hearing Comment 1

Franz Douskey
50 Ives Street, Hamden

Mr. Douskey explained that the commission covered most of the areas of concern. He read an article regarding cancer and other respiratory issues caused from toxins. He also explained that his issue was water spillage and leakage.

Public Hearing Comment 2

George Grande
70 Four Rod Road, Hamden

Mr. Grande explained that this was one of the best proposals he has seen from Quinnipiac University in terms of the environment and making this field fit.

Public Hearing Comment 3

Linda Remetz
188 Ives Street, Hamden

Ms. Remetz explained that she has been a nurse for 40 years, and she has seen people with cancer and with health issues that developed from these toxins. She also spoke about Hamden being at risk for water contamination.

Chairman Lakin asked for a motion.

Commissioner Schneider made a motion to continue the Public Hearing to the October 4th meeting in order to allow for the presentation of additional information and test results. Commissioner Clapp seconded the motion for purposes of discussion. The motion was discussed and then brought to a vote. Commissioner Clapp was opposed, and all other commissioners present & voting were in favor.

IV. Other Business**a. Review of July 5th, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Schneider made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Clapp seconded the motion, and all commissioners present & voting were in favor.

b. Storm Water Catch Basins

There was nothing to report.

c. Site Inspections

Mr. Vocelli said there are none pending.

d. Maintenance Plan- Town Center Park Rain Garden & Stormwater Pre-treatment System.

Mr. Vocelli explained that the Town is working with Save-the-Sound and with Connecticut DEEP to construct a rain garden at Town Center Park. Save-the-Sound has prepared an Operations & Maintenance Manual that he sent to all commission members. Mr. Vocelli recommended that the commission approve the Draft manual.

Commissioner Schneider made a motion to approve the Draft Operations and Maintenance Plan for the Town Center Park Rain Garden (dated August 20, 2023) with the stipulation that any significant revisions shall be referred to the Wetlands Officer for review by the Commission.

Commissioner Clapp seconded the motion. All commissioners present & voting were in favor.

e. Election of Officers

Assistant Town Attorney Tim Lee explained the election procedure.

He asked for nominations for Chair: Commissioner Mack nominated Jonathan Clapp for Chairman. Commissioner Lakin seconded. All commissioners present were in favor.

Vice Chair: Commissioner Schneider nominated Kirk Shadle for Vice Chair. Commissioner Lakin seconded. All commissioners present were in favor.

Secretary: Commissioner Wholey nominated Michael Milazzo for Secretary. Commissioner Mack seconded. All commissioners present were in favor.

Updates: Commissioner Schneider gave an update on the voting districts of IWC members.

Town Planner Livshits and Assistant Town Attorney Lee gave an update on land-use training requirements and opportunities.

f. Adjournment

Chairman Clapp asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mack made the motion and Commissioner Schneider seconded it. All commissioners present & voting were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Camile Deans Commission Clerk