

**COVENTRY INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

By: Mathieu

Time: 7:10 p.m.

Place: Town Hall Annex

2. ROLL CALL:

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Martin Briggs	X	
	Patricia Laramee		X
	Lori Mathieu	X	
	Sam Norman, Treasurer		X
	Thomas Woolf, Vice Chairman	X	
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Open		X
	Mike Powers		X
STAFF:	Todd Penney, Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent	X	
STAFF:	Emily Perko, Wetlands Agent	X	

3. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

No one wished to speak.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Public Hearing

1. #19-32W – Folly Lane Bridge – Applicant/Owner: Town of Coventry; Proposed replacement of Folly Lane Bridge over Skungamaug River

Mathieu read the legal notice for this public hearing.

Cardinal Engineering Project Manager Jerry Gerro; Scott Stevens, Soil Scientist, were

present.

Gerro presented using the prepared PowerPoint presentation. The replacement of the Folly Lane Bridge is funding from LOTCIP. The Town is responsible for the design fees. This bridge is functionally obsolete as it is not built to dimensional standards. This is not a highly traveled road; the bridge is one lane. The existing structure could not handle a flood flow. The foundation has large gaps in it.

The bridge will be longer and wider. Curb to curb the bridge will be 22' versus the current 15'. Prestressed concrete is the preferred material for the supports. The stream bed will not be touched. Rocks will be placed in the river for fish spawning per DEEP specifications by a Fishery expert. There will be little change to the road profile. The design will create more area for the water to flow underneath. Temporary coffer dams will be placed along the edge of the river to protect the construction site and the river. The road will be closed during construction which can take up to six months. The abutments and downstream side will have riprap placed. DEEP has had input in how to protect the environment during the project. A flood contingency plan must be in place, a plan for storing and staging of materials, and invasive species will be eradicated. The standard design criteria for a crossing at this location is for a 100-year flood.

Woolf asked Gerro to explain what a coffer dam is and how it is constructed. This is a structure that is put into place to prevent river water from flowing into the excavation. The material of the dam is suggested by the contractor with the approval of the engineer and the consultant. The coffer dam will be designed for a two-year flood. Penney stated that similar to the Jones Crossing bridge project a full-time inspector, hired by the Town, will be on site. The consultant does have to be on the pre-approved State list. Mathieu is concerned about attention being paid at all times – that no sediment gets downstream, for the water quality and the river. An extreme storm can cause all kinds of chaos. Form 8-17 of construction specifications is a new document that was published last year. The Town does not have a form that has good quality control so 8-17 was chosen for completeness of specifications that is very thorough. This is a book of controls. Materials will not be able to be stored at the low point in the road. Equipment there will have to be moved if a large storm is predicted.

Scott Stevens of Soil Science and Environmental Services out of Rocky Hill spoke next. There is a watercourse and wetland on the fringe that is out of the project area. He found flood plain soils and disturbed soil types that are capable of supporting wetland vegetation. The upland soils were mostly outwash soils with fill materials along the road and on the golf course. The biologist found some invasive species. The wetlands to be lost are mostly poorly drained soils. The direct impact to wetlands is kept to the minimum.

The contractor will have to hire a biologist to eradicate any invasive species in the limit of construction using the guidelines of DEEP. The plan has to be approved by the engineer in charge subject to any conditions of the permit or the plan can be reviewed by the IWA when it is submitted. The structure will be on bedrock so it does not wash away. Some of the bedrock will be drilled out to place the new abutment. Widening of the bridge will reduce velocity. A catch basin and drainage pipe are to be replaced.

What the footprint is for invasive species? Contractor has to hire a biologist to eradicate any found in the construction limit of construction. Depends on how the plant is eradicated. They have to use the guidelines by DEEP on how to get rid of. Plan to put together and the engineer in charge has to approve subject to any conditions of the permit from the IWA. Or Staff commented that the plan can be brought to IWA for approval when received. Stevens at the time of sight inspection there was no flow. Marty - how much above rock. The abutment is on rock on one side on easterly side. They will have to chip some of it out to get the new abutment in. The structure will be on bedrock so it does not wash away. During 500-year flood it will stay and not wash away. They will be drilling the bedrock.

Penney commented that the specifications that are being followed notes how the contractor handles bulk fuel storage although most contractors do not store fuel. However, spill kits will be on site. A crane will be required when setting the new beams. This project will span on construction season. Some trees will be removed.

Audience of Citizens:

Candy Wilson, 1283 North River Road – She lives diagonally uphill from the bridge. Her concerns include the impact to bald eagles, nesting hawks, and noise. The Mill Pond is a major hunting ground for bald eagles. Are you reducing the hunting ground site? Gerro stated that the new bridge will be longer over land so the eagles will still have the hunting ground. Wilson is concerned about the construction noises impacting the nesting broad wing hawks. Sound is amplified up to her house; the hawks are nesting in trees behind her house. Will the noise bother this endangered species? She has reported the presence of the hawks as endangered species to DEEP. Gerro stated that he has had a conversation with Robin Blum of DEEP and Ms. Blum has spoken to Ms. Wilson. The State does not know the location of any nest so cannot provide guidance. DEEP is concerned that the removal of trees takes place before April 1, 2020 so bats are not impacted. There is a 300' – 600' buffer from the bridge to the trees where hawks may be nesting. Wilson stated Lady Slippers, an endangered species, grow where the bridge extension will be. Penney replied that the plan was checked against the natural diversity database; nothing was found to be impacted. Ms. Wilson is also concerned that North River Road not being wide or straight enough to be parking an abundance of vehicles. Gerro stated that vehicles will not be parked along North River Road. Wilson then asked who is to be contacted if she has concerns during the construction? Todd Penney is responsible; you can call the Town Engineering department. The on-site inspector will also play a public relations role and should engage with the public to explain what is taking place during the project should someone come by. Wilson is also concerned that the site be kept clean as we do have a bear that comes around. She wants to protect the area as it is a special place with much wildlife.

John Motycka, owner of the golf course – Heard about the coffer dams being placed during construction. What do the specifications call for after the project is completed? Gerro explained there will be a planting plan. This is typically be grass for stabilization. Immediately adjacent to the bridge it is estimated that four substantial oaks will be removed. The limits of clearing are 6'-7' off the edge of the road. Motycka asked how customers will know to go around to the Goose Lane end of Folly Lane to access the golf course? Penney stated there is a detour plan that will specially mention the golf course. Penney will meet with him tomorrow.

Susan Motycka - How much storage of materials going up Folly Lane will there be that

might limit emergency access to Mrs. Ziel. Penney stated that we cannot block access to private property. Penney has talked to Mrs. Ziel a couple of times. Gerro added there may be one hour during the whole project when her driveway will be blocked and the contractor will coordinate with the property owner to accommodate the person's needs. Penney commented that during the typically held pre-construction meeting emergency services personnel are invited to go over contingencies and provide contract numbers.

Candy Wilson – Add that her house had terrible vibrations when the cell phone tower was being constructed resulting in cracks. Gerro stated a preconstruction survey can be done with someone coming inside her home to take pictures and then compare that post construction should Wilson feel there was impact. Mr. Gerro added that most of the river road could be removed with a backhoe with minimal drilling in the bedrock. He has noted this concern and will provide cautions for the contractor.

Penney stated the Members do have valid concerns about the review of the coffer dam and hazard mitigation plans.

Mathieu asked the Soil Scientist if anything was missed since the review was limited to one season. A neighbor has identified an endangered species. Stevens replied that he was retained to conduct a highway methodology review so he was looking at the soils and delineating the wetland boundary. Mathieu said the IWA has concern to the wildlife and species mentioned. This is a special setting and one of the rivers that the Agency protects within a 150' buffer as a great resource to the Town. Suggestions include bringing the contractor here and the consultant (hired in the next month), including the planting plan, information from Robin Blum, fuel storage, hazard mitigation plan, location of coffer dams. Woolf added that we would then know what we are approving. Penney stated the permit must be in place per DOT to allow the Town to advertise for the contractor and consultant. The permit could be conditioned with having the plans presented to the IWA before implementation. This could be done as a special meeting, not requiring a public hearing, and abutters could be notified as a courtesy.

Briggs suggested we keep perspective here. The project will protect the river from an aging structure. This is a well thought out plan and someone will be on site all day during construction. If the current bridge falls apart it will really mess up the river. Woolf is in favor of a conditional approval based on wanting to know the detailed plans from the contractor to not impact the area more than necessary. Mathieu feels we must consider the age of the bridge, the construction of the new bridge, and the current opportunity of having the funding. The details are important to look at as well for the protection of the river as well as the impact to the fish, other critters, the noise concerns, wildlife, and species of concern. The alternative is to leave the bridge there and have it fall in. Let's get it done right in an environmentally safe way. Woolf said we want this to go as quickly as possible without cutting corners. That is why the third-party engineer is needed. Having the engineer on site who is communicating with people nearby will be helpful. The detour signage will specifically mention the golf course; the golf course is a community access also.

The hearing is closed.

Motion: I move that the Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency approve #19-32W – Folly Lane Bridge replacement over Skungamaug River.

With the following conditions:

- The IWA reviews and approves the coffer dam design as proposed by the contractor.
- The IWA reviews and approves the hazard mitigation plan as proposed by the contractor.
- The IWA reviews and approves the planting plan.

By: Mathieu

Seconded: Briggs

Discussion: Mathieu asked the question of why grass would be planted where there is currently no grass? Gerro answered that the disturbance will only be 10' beyond the edge of the road. Grass planting would be for stabilization. Penney added there is leaf litter there now. Mathieu would like to see a planting plan to be as natural as possible for the area that is wild and natural and would be beneficial for the habitat. These details should come from the contractor and third-party engineer as they appear before the Agency. Penney can show the trees to be removed on the plan for the February meeting. Mathieu would hate to lose an active nest of a bird such as the broad-wing hawk or eagle mentioned by the audience member. The project should not interfere with the nests and any other concerns of DEEP. Mathieu wants the project activities to be mindful of the concerns raised here tonight. Penney stated that the tree removal is part of the wetlands activity for the bridge construction and will be felled by the Town rather than the contractor to stay outside of the bat nesting season beginning April 15, 2020.

Voting:

For: Mathieu, Woolf, Briggs

Against: None

Abstain: None

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Agent Approvals and Minimal Impact Permit – Review proposed changes to permitting thresholds.

Perko pointed out that a resident mentioned that Lower Bolton Lake does not touch Coventry. Upper Bolton Lake does and maybe a portion of Middle Bolton Lake. The IWA had a review a change at Camp Newhoca because it lies within 500' of the town boundary. The Town Attorney has been contacted to change the error in the regulations as a typographical error or technical correction. If the error cannot be handled this way a public hearing will be required.

Perko explained the Accessory Structure table presented. At those distances or less, an application would have to be approved by the Agency. Mathieu commented that the proposed changes reflect what was discussed. These will be used as a guideline for the Inland Wetlands Agent. It was suggested that Permit Thresholds be used in the title making it Coventry Inland Wetlands Regulated Activity Permit Thresholds and dated January 22, 2020. The document will be revised as suggested and reviewed at the February meeting. It could be included with the Building Permit packet.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Penney commented that there will be a running item on the agenda for Perko to report on the minimal impacts she is permitting under the new threshold document.

7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

A. December 11, 2019

Motion: I move to accept the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting.

By: Mathieu

Seconded: Woolf

Voting:

For: Mathieu, Woolf

Against: None

Abstain: Briggs

B. January 9, 2020 Special Meeting

Motion: I move to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2020 special meeting.

By: Mathieu

Seconded: Briggs

Voting:

For: Mathieu, Briggs

Against: None

Abstain: Woolf

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

Penney reported that the Papa's received the ZBA variance to enlarge the house by 50%. This is an expansion of a pre-existing non-conforming structure.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Mathieu adjourned the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, IWA Clerk

PLEASE NOTE: The minutes are not official until approved by the Inland Wetland Agency at the next Agency meeting. Please see the next Agency meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.