

**COVENTRY INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021**

By: Mathieu

Time: 7:02 p.m.

Place: Virtual

1. ROLL CALL:

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Martin Briggs	X	
	Suzanne Choate		X
	Patricia Laramee	X	
	Lori Mathieu, Chairperson	X	
	Thomas Woolf, Vice Chairman		X
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Mike Powers	X	
	Vacant		X
STAFF:	Todd Penney, Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent	X	
STAFF:	Mindy Gosselin, Wetlands Agent Assistant	X	

2. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS (2-minute time limit):

No one was present to speak.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

A. 20-51W – South Street Reconstruction and Pedestrian Improvements – Applicant: Town of Coventry; Owner: Same; Agent: Todd Penney – South Street Reconstructions and Pedestrian Improvements.

a. Public Hearing for #20-51W

Penney, Professional Engineer, Town of Coventry’s Engineer/Wetlands Agent began the presentation.

Penney gave an overview of the project. The town is reconstructing south street from Daly Road roundabout to the just north of the Holy Grove (~2,880 linear feet) of roadway construction with drainage improvements. The regulated activities span ~ 1,225 linear feet of that total. A sidewalk is also being installed. This road has a scenic designation so the design will be mindful to that.

Penney explained that this application was received by the Agency on December 16th, 2020 and it was deemed a significant impact, thus requiring a public hearing. The public hearing was opened at the January 27th, 2021 meeting and remained open. At the hearings, the consulting engineer, Ken Razidone – BL Companies, explained the design. Eric Davidson, professional soil scientist, also gave a presentation.

Penney explained that at the February meeting, the minutes reflect the Agency was favorable to the project but was looking for mitigation for the wetland loss due to the sidewalk construction. The discussion centered on the use of a permeable surface for the sidewalk in the regulated areas to promote infiltration to the groundwater. At that meeting it was decided to continue the public hearing to allow the Town of Coventry Engineering Department to explore the whether the permeable surface could be funded by CDOT. Two months later, CDOT has finally allowed the use of the permeable surface and will be funding a significant portion of the costs. CDOT will be funding the price of a concrete sidewalk, which is comparable to a permeable sidewalk. The town will be fronting ~\$2 a sqft for the permeable instead of ~\$10+. Therefore, Penney thinks that they can comply with the permeable sidewalk request, he suggests it be a condition of the permit. The permeable sidewalk will be used only within the limits of the regulated area.

Penney shared he screen and pointed out where the sidewalk, vegetative ditch, and 3-sided box culvert will be located. There will be a total permanent loss of 4,780 square feet of field delineated wetland soils to accommodate the proposed improvements. The permeable surface will be located from station 15+50 R to Station 27+50 R (~1,225 linear feet).

Penney stated that they are proposing to recreate the swale and have some wetland plantings and the soil scientist recommended New England Erosion Control/Restoration Mix for Detention Basins and Moist Sites spread out.

Laramee asked about the roadside ditch in relation to the sidewalk. Penney stated that there is an existing roadside ditch and there is a proposed sidewalk on the southerly side. The proposed sidewalk will cause them to recreate the ditch and it will then be maintained by DPW.

Penney stated that the sidewalk will look the same throughout the project/scenic road designation, but the permeable material will only be used in the regulated area.

Briggs suggested that an educational sign be located along the sidewalk explaining the design in relation to the wetland corridor. Penney and Mathieu thought that was a great idea. Penney stated that the educational sign can be a condition of approval.

Briggs asked about the roadside parking situation. Penney stated that the archeologist completed his survey and did not find anything substantial. The road is crowned with no curbing. On the north side of the road, stumping, grubbing, grading and hydroseed is proposed. This will make the northerly side more

accessible/appealing and hopefully discourage parking on the southerly side which is where the reconstructed vegetative swale will be located.

Powers stated that he is pleased with the efforts taken to mitigate the effects and the idea of an educational sign. Penney shared his screen and described where he thinks the educational sign would best be located.

Motion: I move to close the public hearing at 7:24pm and continue to the regular meeting.

By: Powers

Seconded: Laramée

Voting:

For: Powers, Laramée, Mathieu, Briggs

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

b. Regular Meeting Discussion on #20-51W

Gosselin read her memo, dated 4/28/2021, for this application aloud which included recommended conditions of approval.

Laramée asked about the no parking signs. Penney stated that there are 5-7 signs and they will just be reset.

Motion: I move the Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency approve application 20-51W – South Street Reconstruction and Pedestrian Improvements – Applicant: Town of Coventry; Owner: Same; Agent: Todd Penney – South Street Reconstructions and Pedestrian Improvements with the following conditions:

- Use of a Permeable surface for the sidewalk with the regulated areas of the project (Station 15+50 R to Station 27+50 R (~1,225 linear feet).
- The activities (3-sided box culvert, retaining wall, drainage and sidewalk) required in the wetland corridor at the road culvert crossing shall be done during the dry season of the wetlands to minimize wetland disturbance.
- The project will maintain the No Parking signs to discourage parking in the newly constructed vegetative swale.
- The Town of Coventry create and install an educational sign explaining the project design in relation to the wetland area/corridor.
- The Town of Coventry submit the Coventry Inland Wetland's Storm Water Mitigation Feature Inspection Report of the newly created vegetative swale every year as per the form's requirement.
- The vegetative swale shall be planted with the Soil Scientist recommended New England Erosion Control/Restoration Mix for Detention Basins and Moist Sites by New England Wetlands Plants, Inc.
- Hold a preconstruction meeting with the applicant and any other subcontractors prior to the start of activities to review construction sequencing.
- Additional erosion and sedimentation controls maybe required by the Wetlands Agent as the site conditions and/or weather may warrant.

- Any substantive change to the approved plan shall be approved by the IWA under its modification process.

By: Briggs

Seconded: Powers

Voting:

For: Powers, Laramée, Mathieu, Briggs

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

B. 14-07W (MOD.) – 145 Edgewater Drive – Applicant: James and Edyta Rotundo; Owner: Same; Agent: None – Landscaping Plan

James Rotundo, the applicant, was present.

Penney explained that there was a previous wetlands permit issued for 145 Edgewater Drive. Since then, there has been additional clearing and beach sand added.

Penney described the original plan that proposed two rain gardens. However, there has been more clearing due to dead trees. Penney requested a new landscaping plan that incorporates the rain gardens and some plantings, but keeps some existing lawn and mulches areas.

Penney explained the landscaping plan that he created when he did a site visit to the property with the Rotundo's. There will be larger trees, larger bushes, smaller bushes, and hydrophytic vegetation, closer to the lake and one large rain garden. There is a proposed stone inlet that will interact with the water that is flowing down the valley between 145 Edgewater and its easterly neighbor. The water will flow down through the stone inlet into the rain garden mulched area. There is a grass area to the westerly side of the property near the beach sand that will serve as a place for the dock in the winter.

Mathieu asked if the stone inlet will go into the lake. Penney stated that it will, there is a lot of cobble sized native stones currently on the property. These stones would be placed in that area to create the inlet.

Motion: I move the Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency approve application 14-07W (MOD.) – 145 Edgewater Drive – Applicant: James and Edyta Rotundo; Owner: Same; Agent: None – Landscaping Plan with the following conditions:

- The applicant/owner shall submit to the Wetlands Agent a proof of inspection for each storm water mitigation feature once a year in the spring on the "Storm Water Mitigation Feature Inspection Report" form to be provided by the Town of Coventry.
- Landscape Plantings be reviewed and approved by Town staff prior to the start of construction activities.
- Hold a preconstruction meeting with the applicant and any other subcontractors prior to the start of activities to review construction sequencing.

By: Laramée

Seconded: Powers

Voting:

For: Powers, Laramée, Mathieu, Briggs

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. 21-05W – 118 Cheney Lane – Applicant: Steve Minicucci and Cindy Harrigan; Owner: Same; Agent: None – Install sidewalk with two steps to existing steps on lake edge. Received 4/8/21 and Withdrew 4/13/21.**

Gosselin explained that the Minicucci's withdrew their application before it came to the Commission. They found an alternative that would not require them to come to the agency, they were on a time crunch with the lake level.

Penney explained the new permitting system in the Land Use office and how this permit number was assigned and could not be reassigned to a later permit.

- B. 21-07NJ – Sweeney Subdivision, North School Rd – Applicant: Brian and Valerie Sweeney; Owner: Same; Agent: Andrew Bushnell – Three lot Resubdivision.**

Andrew Bushnell, the applicant's engineer and agent, was present.

Penney explained the non-jurisdictional ruling. By statutes, subdivisions have to go to wetlands for review. There are wetlands on the property but all activity is outside the wetlands and the upland review area. The agency would agree or disagree that it is a non-jurisdictional ruling.

Bushnell, professional engineer and land surveyor – Bushnell Associates LLC, stated that in 2019 the Sweeney's owned 235 North School road and this 21.96 acre parcel presented today. The Sweeney's then sold the 235 North School property and moved out of the area. However, they missed the area and their old neighborhood and now they are looking for a 3 lot resubdivision on this parcel. The middle lot will be where the Sweeney's plan to live, and there one lot proposed on either side for future potential use. Bushnell explained that the wetlands were field delineated by John Ianni and Bushnell's company field located those flags in 2019. The parcel as a whole is 21.96 acres, the proposed lot 1 is 3.01, lot 2 is 16.66, lot 3 is 2.29. It will be an open spaced subdivision based on the zoning regulations so there is less frontage allowed. Additionally, due to zoning, at least 40% of the land needs to be in conservation easement. The landowner has subsequently proposed 8.83 acres in the southerly portion of the property to become a conservation easement. Bushnell added that all of the construction work proposed is outside the URA.

Mathieu asked why this subdivision would be non-jurisdictional. Penney stated that there is no activity in the wetlands or upland review area. Mathieu stated that she thinks the Agency should have input because of the wetlands in the backyards, there is a significant wetland corridor. She stated that people get creative with their lots and there will be future activity.

Mathieu asked about the status on the septic system approvals. Bushnell stated that the septic system was approved for lot 1 during the first subdivision 2 years ago. Lot 2 and 3

are not officially approved. He stated that the soils were pretty consistent and good in that area.

Mathieu expressed concern for future development on those proposed properties. Laramie stated that if there are any other activities that are proposed in the future (pools, sheds, etc.), it would need to come back to the Agency for review. Powers later expressed that he is uncomfortable considering future development that is not currently presented.

Mathieu asked if the proposed conservation easement would connect with any other conservation easements. Bushnell stated that it abuts the Kingsbury property which is currently vacant and it abuts a conservation easement on 235 North School road. Mathieu asked if there would be any other consideration to expand the conservation easement to protect more of the wetland corridor.

Penney referenced the wetlands regulation's definition for regulated activity. He continued to explain that if the Agency really feels that these lot developments will have a substantial and detrimental impact to these wetlands, this can be ruled jurisdictional and turned into an application.

Mathieu asked about the extent of the corridor. Penney showed the 2016 and 2019 aerials of the parcel. An intermittent watercourse and portions of the watershed were apparent. After seeing the extent of the watershed, Powers agreed that it needs to be protected in some way. He asked if there could be some sort of signed statement that acknowledges the wetland corridor with the land owner.

Laramie asked if these plans will change. Penney stated that the Agency can condition this non-jurisdictional ruling to state that if any activity goes into the upland review area, it comes back to the agency for review.

Penney stated that there is a large upland area (~2 acres) to the rear of lot 1. It would be hard to get there but there could be future proposed development. It might be worth it to consider that upland area be turned into conservation easement.

Overall, the Agency strongly suggests the expansion of the conservation easement to the PZC to include the wetland corridor/watercourse. Any modification that moves a foot of activity into the upland review area needs to go back to the agency for review.

Penney suggested that the Agency get an opinion from the Town Attorney because there is concern with this application and jurisdiction. Penney will email the Town Attorney and include Andrew Bushnell and Eric Trott.

This application was continued to next meeting.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

A. February 24, 2021 – Public Hearing/Special Meeting

Motion: I move the Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting.

By: Briggs

Seconded: Laramée

Voting:

For: Powers, Laramée, Mathieu, Briggs

Against: None

Abstain: None

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

A. Consortium of Land Use Agencies, April 29, 2021 @ 7pm via zoom

The Consortium agenda was shared and IWA members were encouraged to attend. This is a meeting that includes all of the Town Land Use Agencies and members of the Town Council, it is normally held once a year but the last one that was held was two years ago due to COVID cancelling last years.

B. CT DEEP – Coventry Lake Revised Permit

The members reviewed the revised herbicide permit for Coventry Lake from CT DEEP. The proposed herbicides control the invasive species and what has been done thus far has been working. It is a ~10-year plan.

Penney explained the history of this permit and the invasive species, hydrilla, in Coventry Lake. He stated that he believes that there has not been any biological issues due to the herbicides.

7. DISCUSSION:

A. Staffing Update

Penney stated that Gosselin has been hired as a part time Wetland Agent and Erosion Control Officer at 30 hours a week. She is able to keep up with routine site inspections on projects that are under construction and ensure compliance. Penney and Gosselin will be tag teaming wetlands and in 6-12 months Penney will be gradually pulling back. Penney stated that he will always remain a resource for the Wetlands Agency.

B. Beach Sand – Dr. Kortmann

Penney stated that Dr. Kortmann believes that people have the right to access the water, it can be a managed access.

This discussion was tabled until the next meeting. Members were asked to keep their printed packet materials for next time.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: I move the Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency adjourn at 9:01 p.m.

By: Powers

Seconded: Laramée

Respectfully submitted by Mindy Gosselin,

Mindy Gosselin

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.