

TOWN OF COLUMBIA
INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSE COMMISSION

Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room

323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Monday, January 6, 2020 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Chairman John Allen, Vice-Chair Tom Archambault, Tip Garritt, William Ross, Ian Dunn, Carol Ann Jaswinski

Members Excused: Secretary Ron Wikholm

Staff Present: Wetlands Agent John Valente, Board Clerk Flo Polek

Others Present: Adam Leston, Cristina Granese, Donald Cianci, Tai Xu, Wes Wentworth

Call to Order: J. Allen called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Roll Call-Seat Alternates: None

Additions/Changes in order of Agenda: None

1. **Audience of Citizens:** On a matter that is not pertinent to this meeting, D. Cianci recommended that everyone should attend the Town Meeting on January 21, 2020 voting to use \$15,000 from the Open Space Fund to purchase a large tract of land that would increase the area for Mono Pond.

2. **New Business:**

2.1 IWWC-1920-10 Application of Adam Leston, 4 Hop River Road, to remove fill from wetlands and request agricultural exception for fill outside of wetlands.

J. Valente introduced A. Leston, C. Granese, and D. Cianci who is representing Mr. Leston and Ms. Granese.

D. Cianci opened the conversation representing A. Leston and C. Granese who purchased the property approximately 18 months ago with the intention to build a horse farm and a horse and buggy western. C. Granese gave the history as to why they are here today. C. Granese stated when she was in the process of clearing the property, the Town was cutting trees and she asked what they would do with the wood chips. The Town employees said they could back the wood chips into the property as she would use them to fill the road. She then called Eric's Tree Service and asked Eric Person if he could supply more wood chips as she was trying to keep the brush down, build a road to the barn, and a former road that once existed on the property. Eric's Tree Service dumped wood chips for about one year. As C. Granese cleared the brush, Eric's Tree Service would dump words chips, level them for the road and area to the barn where there is a horse. The property was vacant for 15 years and was a former pasture but the brush overgrew the area that created slopes everywhere. Wood chips were spread throughout the area and dumped near the edge of the wetlands by Eric's Tree Service. The existing pasture on the property was divided in half to form a road to so C. Granese could train the horses. The project was almost completed when ZEO official, C. Kisluk was completing her inspection of the fences and saw that the wood chips were closer to the wetlands than they should be.

A site walk was completed by the Wetlands Commission on December 21, 2019.

D. Cianci stated that the site walk was important because it shows the field that slopes toward the wetlands and the steep drop where the wood chips were dumped by Eric's Tree Service. The area may have and appears to have been filled-in before by the prior owners. The application reflects the steep of the grade toward the wetlands and shows the standing water at the bottom. The wood chips were dumped along the border and along the steep embankment.

D. Cianci suggested that another site walk be scheduled for the Commission members who were not able to attend the site walk on December 21, 2019. The area is clearly filled prior to the Leston's purchase. Removing the wood chips will require heavy large equipment with significant fees.

J. Valente indicated that the slope is significant, heavy equipment cannot get down to retrieve the wood chips by the wetlands without an excavator. The wood chips were dumped by the town 50 feet from Hop River Road. J. Valente stated that another site walk would benefit the four members who did not have the opportunity to visit on the first sight walk. The applicants would like to have the commission view this as a farm activity which would be exempt. It is likely that the wetlands were filled years ago.

D. Cianci is requested that the application be considered as farm activity.

W. Ross is concerned with the leaking of the surface of the water flow. He suggested some diversion of the water flow that would mitigate some of the flow.

J. Allen stated and thought that J. Valente said that hay bales may be used. J. Valente stated that the flow should be diverted with something like hay bales, a swale or a berm that would divert the water as well and would be satisfactory.

A. Leston stated that there is an existing low spot on the property. It begins in one of the pastures and extends across from the farm trail using the wood chips and continues down away from the bulk of the wood chips. It is not a large rise. A. Leston noted that the rainwater does not flow through the area and he does not know what to show the commission to show that the flow is not heavy. T. Archambault asked if an A-2 Survey was on file. J. Valente stated that there was one and that the water does not flow heavily through the area. A. Leston and J. Valente will get together to discuss. In the end, the material must be removed from wetlands and the water flow must be diverted.

J. Valente, T. Archambault, and W. Ross conversed on several issues: contamination, water flow, and diversion.

John Valente read the **RECEIVED** document into record:

J. Allen **MOTIONED** to **RECEIVE** Application IWWC-1920-10; T.Garritt **SECONDED**;
MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0

A site walk is scheduled on January 11, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. I. Dunn will coordinate a time with the owners.

J. Valente stated that the owner of Eric's Tree Service, Mr. Person, should have some responsibility for the removal of the wood chips. W. Ross stated that the tree service should share in the cost of the removal and is sympathetic to the current owners. D. Cianci will proceed based on the response from Eric's Tree Service. J. Allen stated that the amount of wood chips is 148 cubic yards and the total area

of wood chips is 2200 which is a small amount to be removed or 4%. J. Valente stated the number of wood chips outside of the wetlands is greater.

2.2 IWWC-1920-09 Application of Oasis Auto, Owner Tai Xu, to locate a detention basin within 100 feet of wetlands for commercial activity expanding a car dealership.

Tai Xu appeared along with W. Wentworth. W. Wentworth opened the discussion and showed the map the location of the area, with 2 acres. Tai Xu has purchased this property to build a new 4000 sq. ft. repair garage. There is no sign of concentrated runoff. There is no outflow through the area. No wetlands are on the site of the area. The area is filled with mostly boulders.

J. Valente stated that a portion of the basin is within 100 ft, with the railroad tracks higher. The flow activity cannot impact wetlands.

W. Wentworth stated that there will be no electrical outlets in the building, electrical switches, waste oil will be and secured, as long as it is above 4ft from the finished floor.

J. Valente read the **RECEIVED** document into record:

J. Allen **MOTIONED** to **RECEIVE** the Application **IWWC 1920-09**; W. Ross **SECONDED**.
MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0

2.3 Proposed Regulation Changes -State DEEP revisions to Town of Columbia IWWC Regulations

J. Valente read the Regulations that the State is changing. The changes can be inserted into the Columbia regulations easily. This is the 1st step in the approval of Columbia regulations.

3. Old Business:

3.1 Election of Officers

C. Jaswinski **MOVED** to **APPROVE** J. Allen as Chairman of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission; T. Archambault as Vice-Chair, and R. Wikholm as Secretary, T. Garritt **SECONDED**;
MOTION APPROVED: 6.0.0

3.2 Bylaws

Discussion led by J. Valente on the order and suggested changes to the order.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2019:

C. Jaswinski **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2019, as written, W. Ross **SECONDED**; **MOTION CARRIED: 6.0.0**

5. Audience of Citizens: None

6. Communications/Correspondence: None

7. Commission Open Discussion:

J. Allen raised a question regarding the leaves and if they are a problem if used as fill. J. Valente stated that leaves are not a problem. W. Ross stated that wood chips condensed, creates the alcohol content, and the heat gets generated from the chips.

8. Administrative Reports:

J. Valente discussed the activities at all the lake walls. First, 48 Route 87-O'Neill, which is in good shape. The second sight is working well and is in good shape. The third sight is 36 Erdoni Rd which is on the beachside of Erdoni Road. Lot is very wet and is a big job to complete. There is one complaint, the Botticello property and Wheeler property with the water flow.

9. Adjournment:

C. Jaswinski **MOVED to ADJOURN**; T. Archambault **SECONDED**; **MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.