

**GLASTONBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
(INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES AGENCY)
REGULAR MEETING OF MINUTES THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

The Glastonbury Conservation Commission (Inlands Wetlands & Watercourses Agency), along with Mr. Tom Mocko, Environmental Planner, in attendance held a Regular Meeting in Town Council Chambers, second floor of Town Hall located at 2155 Main Street, Glastonbury, Connecticut.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members-Present

Judy Harper, Chairman
Dennis McInerney, Vice-Chairman
Kim McClain, Secretary
Brian Davis
Frank Kaputa
William Shea
Mark Temple

Chairman Harper called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

I. INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Proposed 55-space parking lot at 233 Eastern Boulevard to alleviate current shortage on 259 Eastern Boulevard (Central Rock Gym) – supplemental parking, along with stormwater treatment and landscaping on this vacant, 1.04-acre building lot – Planned Employment Zone and Groundwater Protection (overlay) Zone 1 – Megson, Heagle & Friend, C.E. & L.S., LLC – Alter & Pearson, LLC – Eastern Ave Holdings, LLC, applicant/landowner of #259 – Tammy Villamizar, landowner of #233

Mr. Peter Alter of Alter & Pearson, LLC presented on behalf of his client, Central Rock Gym. He explained the proposal and their plans for a 55-space parking lot to alleviate the parking shortage at 259 Eastern Boulevard. Attorney Alter noted that the applicant entered into a long term 10-year lease with the owner of #233. According to the agreement Attorney Alter outlined, the applicant has the right to buy or extend the lease once the initial 10-year lease is up.

He also informed the Commission that Mark Friend, project engineer and soil scientist from Megson, Heagle, & Friend (not present for the meeting) prepared the plans and demarcated the wetlands edge. Attorney Alter described the lot as one of the smaller lots in the Eastern Boulevard area which have been mostly developed for medical offices. He noted that Central Rock Gym is successful and crowded. The population that makes use of the facility overwhelms the existing parking lot. Many times, there is not enough parking. Attorney Alter explained that Ed Hardy, owner of Central Rock Gym, has made arrangements to use parking across street.

Conflicts have arisen in this situation and he wants a more permanent solution to the parking shortage. No permits were given by The Town Plan and Zoning Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeals. Attorney Alter discussed the rain garden and berm that Mark Friend designed that would aid in the drainage of the runoff storm water. Attorney Alter also noted that they hired a landscape architect and submitted a landscape plan.

Attorney Alter stated that there are 5,000 square feet of wetlands and 20,000 square feet of regulated upland review area at the site. He wants to make the Commission aware of two things: the first being that #233's landowner needs to consent to the requested sidewalks along Eastern Boulevard; and secondly, he will need to discuss the proposed conservation easements with the landowner as well.

Commissioner Mark Temple asked a question about the sheet flow and what measures will prevent someone from digging up the rain garden since easements already exist. There might be issues in the future and no one wants to redo this. Attorney Alter said the easements typically stay and no one has disturbed it, but something could happen. Tom Mocko said the chance is slim that something could happen; the easement was reserved as a contingency plan.

Commissioner Brian Davis had a question about sidewalks. Attorney Alter explained that there are no sidewalks on this part of Eastern Boulevard. Further west, there is a mix of paved bike path and some concrete sidewalks. He also mentioned that around noon time people walk on the road.

Commissioner Brian Davis had a question about lighting. Attorney Alter will talk with Ed Hardy and will provide the commission with the schematics of any lighting plan.

Commissioner Brian Davis asked if the committee should anticipate a pathway greenspace from the new parking lot toward the building. Attorney Alter will discuss with the owner.

Secretary, Kim McClain asked why 55 parking spots? Where does that number come from? Attorney Alter stated that 55 spots is the number that fits. The facility is very busy. The owner owns several climbing centers in New England. It is a very substantial center. There is a real need for spaces. Mr. Alter has also provided examples of the parking needs of the other gym locations. The Watertown, Massachusetts facility is smaller and has 200 parking spaces. The Worcester, Massachusetts location has 150 parking spaces.

Secretary Kim McClain asked if the gym clientele are athletic and can there can be an incentive to bike to the gym. An example would be "bike to the facility and get a discounted gym price". She said in Hartford there is already such a system in place. If you bike to an event, Hartford gives free passes. Secretary McClain said she had just come from a walkability meeting. She also asked about installing a bike rack. Another question she brought up was the permeability of the surface area for the parking lot. It should be feasible because the request is only for 55 spaces. Attorney Alter said he would be happy to make the recommendation to the owner, Ed Hardy. He stated there is no regulation for that. Commissioner Mark Temple thought that Secretary McClain's ideas about biking would be more plausible to some other site.

Commissioner Bill Shea asked if they are sure the water will drain. Tom Mocko said that the land slopes and the parking lot has curbs to keep the water flowing to the north. Ninety percent of the time, the spillway will not be used, unless it is a larger storm.

Commissioner Kaputa asked the question about the existing parking on the northwest corner and pointed out it looks like erosion is going into the wetlands. Attorney Alter responded he had no idea but will find out.

Commissioner Kaputa also noted that on the same property in the northeast corner there is a drive with cuttings and trees knocked down near wetlands. He asked Attorney Alter what is going on there. Commissioner Kaputa also stated that he is in favor of sidewalks. He walked there and witnessed people walking in the street.

Chairman Harper summarized the Commission's requests for the applicant to provide the following:

- The conservation easement on the back needs clarification
- The Town wants sidewalks
- Drainage easement
- Provide information on any outdoor lights
- Question about a pathway greenspace between 2 parking lots
- Bike rack
- Permeability of parking lots
- 2 places of erosion that Commissioner Kaputa noted.

Chairman Harper stated that the project is well on its way and complimented that the gym is so successful that it needs more parking. Attorney Alter thanked the Chairman and the Commission.

II. SHOW-CAUSE HEARING

Resolution of an inland wetlands and watercourses violation involving the piping of a small, intermittent watercourse and filling of its valley on residential property at 68 Hickory Drive – Charles E. Collins, IV & Mary E. Collins, landowners

Tom Mocko explained that the alleged violators are out of town since they already had plans to be travelling. He explained that Show Cause hearings must send out notices within 10 days of the hearing date.

Mr. Mocko explained that there are two obvious options for a resolution here; the first being to excavate for a restored, open/daylighted brook channel (which would require stabilization efforts); and the other opportunity is an application for a allowing the pipe and fill material to remain.

Secretary McClain inquired about offsite mitigation and said other towns do it. Mr. Mocko questioned the legality of it. Chairman Kaputa said it could work if both parties agree. He also inquired about how many feet (the Grindle Brook). Mr. Mocko said it was 150 linear feet with no up-gradient resource.

Commissioner Kaputa asked if it was a natural ravine that the brook previously flowed within. Mr. Mocko said he would say not. He explained that the property had its house built in the 1960s, during which time no wetlands laws were in place.

The Commission members continued their discussion on how to enforce wetlands violations. Some members suggested imposing fines and said other towns do this. Mr. Mocko suggested that Commissioners speak with the Town Council leadership about developing town ordinances for imposing wetlands fines. Vice Chairman Dennis McInerney commented that most people are cooperative about violations and that they will work with the Town.

Commissioner Kaputa asked about a site visit. Mr. Mocko explained that they will need to alert the property owners about a site visit and visit during normal times of day. Commissioner Mark Temple also expressed an interest in a site visit.

Motion by: Commissioner Shea **Seconded by:** Commissioner Kaputa
MOVED, that the Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Agency continue the Show Cause hearing to their February 27, 2020 meeting.

Result: Motion passes unanimously (6-0-0)

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of January 16, 2020

Minutes were approved as submitted.

IV. COMMENTS BY CITIZENS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Continued discussion among the Commission members regarding the enforcement of Wetlands laws. The members were in agreement about researching what other towns do and are open to the possibility of imposing fines on those who are in violation. It was also agreed that educating the public about wetlands violations can be an effective alternative to fines. The Commission recommended to research the issue regarding fines and to consult with DEEP as well as discussing with the Town Council.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Chairman's Report

Chairman Harper discussed the passing of long time Glastonbury Commission member Helen Stern. She brought up the idea to plant a tree to honor Helen. Her husband Peter Stern, who passed away and was also a long time Commission member, has a tree honoring his contributions. The Commission discussed the possibility of adding 2 plaques to the tree and a bench to honor both Helen and Peter Stern. Chairman Harper was asked to speak at the funeral of Helen Stern. The Chairman asked the Commission if they have any memories of Helen to share at the funeral which will be held on February 22, 2020 at 2 pm at the Riverfront Community Center. Secretary McClain shared that Helen was a champion of the rattlesnake. She really cared about their preservation.

The second item Chairman Harper brought up to the Commission is a collaborative meeting with Bob Shipman and the Community Beautification Committee. At the combined meeting, there will be discussion about the mission statement of each group. Tuesday nights do not work for such a future meeting. Another issue that the joint meeting will address is the architecture of the new developments in town. Chairman Harper brought up a concern from Bob Shipman. He does not want every new building to “look like a Chick-fil-A.” A date and time for the joint meeting will be set up and announced.

2. Environmental Planner’s Report

Mr. Tom Mocko has informed the Commission that he received permission to visit the Cotton Hollow property site. He stated that he has been directed by his supervisor to determine what if any wetlands permits are necessary. Mr. Mocko said he needs 2 volunteers from the Commission to join him at the site visit. Chairman Harper and Vice Chairman McInerney expressed an interest in visiting the Cotton Hollow site. Mr. Mocko informed the Commission that 2 to 3 people is acceptable; there cannot be more than three or it will become a quorum. The members agreed that they can visit the site on Friday, February 21 in the morning.

With no other business to discuss, Chairman Harper adjourned the meeting at 8:11 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nadya Yuskaev

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Recording Secretary