

MEMORANDUM

**INFORMAL DISCUSSION AGENDA ITEM# I
MEETING OF September 15, 2022**

To: Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency

From: Suzanne Simone, Environmental Planner

Date: September 8, 2022

Re: Informal Discussion for proposed parking lot expansion and reconfiguration and new building addition at The Community of Saints Isidore and Maria at St. Paul Church, Main Street

Attachments: Project Narrative (including wetland reports)
Plan Set (dated August 1, 2022)

Proposal

The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency is asked to provide comment on the current proposal for parking lot expansion and reconfiguration at Saints Isidore and Maria at St. Paul Church on Main Street. The proposal includes regulated activities resulting in direct (both permanent and temporary) impacts to wetland and upland areas.

The Agency is also asked to provide feedback on whether the Agency is likely to deem the pending application as significant and call for a public hearing.

Review

The proposed regulated activities require a permit from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency. The property is located within a flood zone and requires referral from the Conservation Commission.

The property is not encumbered by a conservation easement. The current plan proposal identifies a conservation easement to encompass the wetlands and a portion of the upland review area.

The property is not identified as an area of interest in the June 2022 Natural Diversity Database map edition.

The Engineering Department has not reviewed the plan submitted for this informal discussion. Engineering Department comments will be provided to the Agency when a formal application has been submitted.

The proposed plan provides stormwater treatment to improve the quality of water prior to discharge into the surrounding wetland area. A linear rain garden basin (approximately 210 feet in length) in the western portion of the proposed parking lot is designed to drain into the sediment forebay of the wet basin and discharge into the proposed wetland enhancement area to the south of the basin.

The project site consists of two land parcels totaling 7.25 acres. The site contains 55,000 square feet of wetland soils (1.26 acres).

The direct impact to approximately 5,500 square feet (0.12 acres) of wetland area is proposed to include 3,550 square feet (0.08 acres) of permanent impact from filling and paving with impervious material and 1,950 square feet (0.04 acres) of temporary impact from regrading and planting. The direct impact to approximately 33,726 square feet (0.77 acres) of the 100-foot upland review area is proposed to include 22,340 square feet (0.51 acres) of permanent impact from grading and paving with impervious material and 11,386 square feet (0.26 acres) of temporary impact from regrading and vegetation planting.

To compensate for the net loss of 3,550 square feet (0.08 acres) of wetland area for the expansion of the parking lot, the plan includes the proposal to enhance 45,130 square feet (1.04 acres) of wetland area. The enhancement area will incorporate the “area of seasonal ponding” in the southwest portion of the site and labeled on sheet #4.

A new addition to the plan is the incorporation of a split rail fence along the edge of the wetland area, to provide protection and discourage the dumping of grass clippings and landscape debris, in addition to providing an area for posting conservation easement markers.

Documentation presented to the Agency beginning in 2018 identifies the wetland areas on site to be compromised by previous disturbance (utility easements traverse the wetland areas) and densely vegetated with the non-native invasive plant species Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*). The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group, based out of UConn, identifies Japanese knotweed as “posing a significant threat to riparian areas”. The plans include a multi-year management plan for the removal of non-native invasive plant species.