

**GLASTONBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
(INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES AGENCY)
MEETING MINUTES OF THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023**

The Glastonbury Conservation Commission (Inlands Wetlands & Watercourses Agency), along with Ms. Suzanne Simone, Environmental Planner, in attendance, held a Meeting via ZOOM video conferencing.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members-Present

Frank Kaputa, Chairman

Mark Temple, Vice-Chairman

Kim McClain, Secretary

Brian Davis

Anna Gault Galjan

James Parry

Jim Thompson

Chairman Kaputa called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. and explained the public meeting process to the applicants and members of the public. The Chairman welcomed Mr. Thompson.

I. FORMAL RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission for a Section 4.11 Flood Zone Special Permit concerning proposed lighting at the approved pickleball courts at Riverfront Community Center - 300 Welles Street – Reserve Land & Flood Zone- Daniel A. Pennington, Town Engineer for the Town

Dan Pennington, Town Engineer, noted that Ms. Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation, will also be in attendance. Mr. Pennington stated that the project will begin in early April. He explained that they have secured funding which will cover 100 percent of the lighting costs. Mr. Pennington recapped that the application was approved for 4 fenced pickleball courts. He also recapped the approved drainage plans. Mr. Pennington stated that they propose twelve 20-foot dark sky compliant luminaires. He said that a total of six double-headed light fixtures and six single-headed fixtures are proposed. He explained that the double-headed lights are at an angle and parallel to the ground, which will limit unnecessary light spill. Mr. Pennington explained that the electrical conduits will be installed from the light pole foundations around the perimeter of the court. He noted that questions about timers on the lights can be answered by Ms. Zerio.

Ms. Zerio explained that the lighting would be similar to the basketball courts. Ms. Zerio said that a push button allows for the lights to be turned on and operated on a timer, with an indicator light that allows the users to extend the light operation for an additional time period. She explained that the controller for the lights will be programmed to turn off automatically at 10:00 pm, with an additional 10 minutes of lighting provided to allow for a safe exit from the court at night. Ms. Zerio added that the lights can be monitored remotely.

Mr. Pennington pointed out the existing, buried contamination, soil area. He stated that no excavations will be conducted in that area and remarked that the suggestion was made by Vice-Chairman Temple to put on the record. Mr. Pennington said that Mr. Thompson had advised the Town on the buried contamination area.

Mr. Kaputa said that this recommendation concerns just the lighting. Commissioner Davis noted that the lighting plan does not show any spill. Mr. Pennington pointed out that the light spill quickly goes to zero just a few feet beyond the edge of the court. Mr. Davis asked if the proposed pickleball courts are consistent with what other communities have. Mr. Pennington explained that some communities have larger pickleball court installations, but this proposal is consistent with most communities.

Secretary McClain remarked that it is great that the proposed lighting is dark sky compliant and on timers and asked if it was feasible to install solar-powered lights. Mr. Pennington stated that he would be happy to research it, and added that if it is feasible and affordable, given the budget, they would be happy to implement solar lighting. Mr. Davis noted that the Krieger Lane application reviewed last month will utilize all solar lighting in the parking lot. Ms. McClain said that solar lighting can save the Town money. Mr. Pennington stated that hardwired lighting may be required to ensure the lights work when needed and noted that they can look into dual lighting. Mr. Kaputa noted that it might be more expensive and added that it is great that they are willing to look into dual lighting. Mr. Pennington noted that there may be a potential to include some solar lighting because of the State grant funding.

Motion by: Secretary McClain

Seconded by: Vice-Chairman Temple

MOVED, that the Conservation Commission recommends to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission approval of a Section 4.11 Flood Zone Special Permit application for the installation of lighting at the pickleball courts at 300 Welles Street, in accordance with plans entitled “Plans Depicting Pickleball Courts Located at 300 Welles Street, Glastonbury CT.”, Dated May 7, 2021, Revised June 30, 2022:

MOVED, that the Conservation Commission recommends to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission approval of a Section 4.11 Flood Zone Special Permit for the Proposed Lighting at the Pickleball Courts at Riverfront Community Center, located at 300 Welles Street.

Result: Motion passes unanimously. (7-0-0)

II. INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Proposed 3,550 linear feet of 4-foot wide concrete sidewalks on Bell Street, from Gideon Lane to Bellridge Road, traversing two wetland areas – Daniel A. Pennington, Town Engineer for the Town

Dan Pennington pointed out the existing multi-use trail and said that the Town will make safety improvements. He explained that the project objective is to provide a safe, non-motorized means

of transportation for the public to access the Town Center from the Bell Street area. The sidewalk plan will provide a safer alternative than walking and biking in the road within the busy Hebron Avenue corridor. Mr. Pennington said that the project has received a \$600,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) based on its merits in improving pedestrian connectivity. He stated that the funding will offset about 60 percent of the project costs. Mr. Pennington explained that there are 2 areas of emphasis, identified as Wetland Area 1 and Wetland Area 2. The proposed sidewalk installation follows the west side of Bell Street from Gideon Lane a distance of approximately 2,000 feet to the northerly intersection of Bell Street with Somerset Road. Mr. Pennington stated that the sidewalk crosses to the east side just north of Somerset Road and extends approximately 700 feet to connect with the existing sidewalks in the Stallion Ridge Subdivision. The watercourse in Wetlands Area 1 was pointed out. Mr. Pennington stated that the flow moves from east to west. He noted that photos depicting the stone masonry headwall were included in the packet. Mr. Pennington stated that the Town would like to extend the existing cross culvert under Bell Street approximately 15 feet to a new concrete headwall outlet, with installation of a riprap scour hole for outlet protection. He said that the shoulder of the roadway would be built up with gravel fill to support the new sidewalk. Mr. Pennington explained that a new catch basin with sump would be installed in place of the eroded leak-off, with a second discharge pipe incorporated into the new headwall. He said that the catch basin would improve water quality for discharges from Bell Street by reducing erosion conditions. Mr. Pennington explained that the plan would require filling a 15-foot-long section of the intermittent watercourse for the concrete pipe and headwall installation, with an additional 15 linear feet impacted in order to install the proposed riprap scour hole.

Mr. Pennington said the watercourse flow is from west to east. The existing cross culvert was pointed out. Mr. Pennington explained that the construction of the sidewalk in Wetland Area 2 will incorporate a section of modular block retaining wall. He noted that approximately 180 square feet of temporary wetland impact is expected along the length of the wall due to the installation of the silt fence and excavation for the wall footing. Mr. Pennington stated that an existing leak-off from Bell Street at Wetland Area 2 would also be replaced with a catch basin with sump that would be connected to the existing discharge pipe for the cross culvert. He explained that the catch basin would also improve the water quality for discharges from Bell Street by reducing erosion conditions from the leak-off and providing a sump for retention from the roadway. Mr. Pennington noted that this project requires an easement from the nearby property owner (#285 Bell Street). He stated that he has had discussions with the property owner and added that they are willing to grant the easement.

Mr. Pennington said that an alternative to the Town preferred design would involve the installation of a pedestrian bridge to span the intermittent watercourse in Wetland Area 1. He stated that this option is costly and would block maintenance access to the existing headwall and drainage areas. Mr. Pennington noted that it is more expensive to construct and maintain a pedestrian bridge and added that the difference in cost is at least \$100,000. He stated that it is likely to be much more because of the ongoing maintenance that is required. Mr. Pennington stated that both options involve impacts to the wetlands.

Mr. Kaputa noted that the cost difference that was mentioned was \$100,000. He remarked that the catch basin appears to be recently uncovered. Mr. Pennington said that it is correct and added that it was buried by accumulated sediment. He explained that the plans involve putting in catch basins to catch the sediment before it ends up in the watercourse. Mr. Kaputa noted that a beech tree will be removed. There was a brief discussion on the steep slopes in the area and Mr. Pennington noted that they came up with the proposed grade on the plans to avoid having a slope that is very steep and unmanageable. He explained that a rail is proposed on the side of the sidewalk. There was a brief discussion on the location of the cross walk shown at the northerly intersection with Somerset Road. Mr. Pennington explained that they are connecting the sidewalks to the Stallion Ridge Subdivision and that a crossing has to be at an acceptable location. He explained that Bell Street is a winding and narrow road with limited crossing locations that would work. Mr. Temple suggested Mr. Pennington go on the record and state that they have looked into the sidewalks and the Town preferred plans are the most feasible. Mr. Temple asked if the watercourses are intermittent streams. Mr. Pennington replied yes and added that they are flowing now. Mr. Temple wanted to confirm that the proposed 2:1 slope would prevent erosion issues; Mr. Pennington replied yes. Mr. Kaputa said that the plan would result in a loss of 15 feet of watercourse. Commissioner Gault Galjan asked Mr. Pennington if he was aware of any other maintenance or modernization of Bell Street. Mr. Pennington stated that there are no other plans on the radar.

Commissioner Parry remarked that the plans look great to him and added that the 2:1 slope makes sense. He noted that his questions were asked by other Commissioners. Mr. Davis agreed with Mr. Parry. Mr. Kaputa asked Mr. Pennington to move onto Wetland Area 2. Mr. Pennington said that the direction of the flow in this area is opposite of the watercourse in Wetland Area 1. Mr. Pennington stated that the area slopes off fairly steeply and added that a modular retaining wall block would be approximately 4 feet high with a safety rail fence on top. He explained that a sidewalk will be constructed using fill material. He noted that they will use fill material on the street side to construct the sidewalk. Mr. Temple remarked that constructing the retaining wall would result in some direct wetland impact. Mr. Pennington explained that a small area of the wetlands will be impacted in order to construct and install the retaining wall and sidewalk. Mr. Kaputa wanted to confirm that the area would be left in a natural state to vegetate once the construction is completed. Mr. Pennington replied yes and added that the Commission can specify a wetlands seed mix or allow the area to vegetate naturally. Mr. Temple asked if there was any erosion at the existing end pipe. Mr. Pennington remarked that it is a good question and explained that the pipe was covered in snow when he last looked at it. He noted that, if a scour hole is needed, it can be included in the plans.

Mr. Temple asked Ms. Simone to detail the procedure. Ms. Simone explained the application procedures, and said that, if there are significant issues, the applicant will be asked to come up with prudent and feasible alternatives. Mr. Temple asked Mr. Pennington to provide plans that are at 1"=10' scale. He explained that he would like to see the plans outlined in more detail and added that it is a little difficult to see the wetland flags at 20 scale. Mr. Pennington agreed that the wetland flag numbers are difficult to see on the current plans. Ms. Simone explained that the Commission can have a discussion on what they would like the applicants to address, and added that they can request a detailed soil scientist report, a report on the function and value of the

wetlands, and an explanation of what the impacts would do, as well as a restorative plan and planting plan. There was a discussion on the expectations and the next steps. Several Commissioners noted that the wetlands report lacked detail and did not address the quality and condition of the watercourse. The Commission also agreed that, in the past, a multiple page report was provided. Mr. Temple remarked that the wetlands report struck him as deficient. Ms. Simone explained that the initial report was done with the objective of identifying and flagging the wetlands and added that it is not a final report. Mr. Pennington stated that he will work with Ms. Simone who will specify the details needed for the application, as well as getting a supplemental report from a soil scientist. Ms. Gault Galjan asked Mr. Pennington to have the soil scientist look out for any vernal pools. Mr. Kaputa noted that this would need to be done immediately.

Mr. Davis asked if there was any advantage to not building a retaining wall. Mr. Pennington stated that this was not investigated. The Commission briefly discussed alternatives to the retaining wall, including pier supports, and agreed with Mr. Parry's points that the other options would be more expensive and difficult to maintain. Mr. Temple added that the safety rail would only need to be replaced after 60 or 70 years. Mr. Davis thanked the Commissioners for their explanation and said that he has always thought that a retaining wall is more expensive than a pier. Mr. Pennington noted that they have done this and explained that it is more expensive to put in a pier because it would have to go a long way down. Mr. Pennington said that, in addition to pedestrian use, it would also have to accommodate mechanized equipment moving the snow.

Mr. Kaputa said that it is possible that the vernal pool is actually an intermittent stream with a dam. Mr. Pennington stated that he has not looked into it because it is located on private property. Ms. Gault Galjan remarked that this would change things. Mr. Pennington stated that he will coordinate with Ms. Simone and contact a soil scientist. Mr. Kaputa asked about the time frame. Mr. Pennington noted that they would like to see it constructed before the 2023 season. He explained that the application involves a regulatory process and public hearings at the Town Council and added that he is not sure it will be completed before the 2023 season.

Ms. Gault Galjan asked if there was an end date on the grant. Mr. Pennington responded that it is a reimbursement grant and added that it has been extended until 2024. The Commission thanked Mr. Pennington for his presentation.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Meeting of February 9, 2023

Motion by: Commissioner Gault Galjan

Seconded by: Commissioner Parry

MOVED, that the Conservation Commission accepts the minutes of the February 9, 2022 meeting as presented.

Result: Motion passes. (5-0-1)

(Ms. McClain had left the meeting. Mr. Thompson abstained because he was not at the last meeting.)

IV. COMMENTS BY CITIZENS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – None

V. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Chairman’s Report -None

2. Environmental Planner’s Report - None

Mr. Davis asked if the artificial turf issue and the Vessel project at 51 Kreiger Lane would go before the Commission. Ms. Simone said that the Vessel project will go before Town Plan and Zoning Commission and would not come back before the Commission unless the plans change. She stated that she has no information on the artificial turf. Mr. Kaputa explained that the issue was discussed because it was brought up during the comments by citizens during the public comment portion of a previous meeting. He noted that the issue may not come before the Commission.

Mr. Kaputa welcomed Commissioner Thompson. Mr. Thompson remarked that he appreciated listening to the discussions. He noted that he has lived in Glastonbury for 37 years and is an environmental and energy lawyer, with most cases outside of Connecticut. Mr. Thompson said that he has volunteered his time with the Town Manager and the Town Council, as Mr. Pennington stated earlier, advising the Town to clean up the Riverfront Community Center site before redevelopment. Mr. Thompson remarked that he has cut back his work hours and looks forward to serving on the Commission. He added that his experience might be helpful to the Commission. Several Commissioners remarked that they were discussing the possibility of a lawyer joining the Commission, and added that they value Mr. Thompson’s expertise.

With no other business to discuss, Chairman Kaputa adjourned the meeting at 7:32 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nadya Yuskaev

Nadya Yuskaev

Recording Secretary