

**GLASTONBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
(INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES AGENCY)
MEETING MINUTES OF THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024**

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

Justin Blain

Brian Davis

Anna Gault Galjan

Commission Members – Excused

Dustin Kach

Chairman Kaputa called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M. and explained the public meeting process to the applicants and members of the public. The Chairman spoke briefly about the passing of Jim Thompson, Commission member and environmental attorney. Chairman Kaputa noted that he will be definitely missed.

I. INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES AGENCY

Application of Gemma Power Systems, LLC for an inland wetlands and watercourses permit for stream bank stabilization at 769 Hebron Avenue – Planned Employment & Flood Zones

Mr. Jonathan Sczurek, Project Engineer, introduced himself for the record. An aerial view of the 1.80-acre site was shown. A photo detailing the streambank erosion was displayed. Mr. Sczurek said that the erosion accelerated last fall and added that larger storms were a factor. He added that Ms. Simone took the photos and added that they are a good representation of the issues. The site plan was displayed. Mr. Sczurek directed the Commission to a cross section of the proposed riprap for channel and shoreline stabilization. It will be standard riprap with a 1.25-foot average diameter, 2-foot thick riprap layer, and keyed into the bottom of the stream bed 3 feet. A 2:1 slope is proposed. The riprap will measure 50 linear feet.

Mr. Sczurek said that the project will meet the E&S guidelines. Mr. Sczurek went over the Engineering Comments:

- 2' depth of riprap
- 6" depth of bedding

- 3/8” bedding stone
- Geotextile fabric: non-woven needle punch fabric 10oz weight (suitable for shoreline installations)
- Keyed into bottom of stream bed 3 feet
- Enlarge the cross sections
- Normal base blow is 1.1 ft average depth (will show on sections)
- Flood Zone Certification statement will be submitted in accordance with the Section 4.11 Special Permit Application

Mr. Sczurek noted that work will be done during low-flow conditions. A GIS map detailing the topography of the site and cross section of the proposed standard riprap was shown. Commissioner Gault Galjan said that it looks like quite a bit of riprap was put in. Mr. Sczurek stated that they did not put that in and explained that it was part of the bridge renovation project. Vice-Chairman Temple asked Mr. Sczurek to explain what happened and what caused the failure. Mr. Sczurek has spoken to Assistant Town Engineer Stephen Braun and this problem is happening all over Town. Mr. Sczurek said that storms are larger and are washing away finer material. He directed the Commission to the photo and explained that what is exposed is Manchester sand and gravel soils with nothing holding the soil back. Mr. Sczurek noted that the erosion has been accelerating. Mr. Temple asked for more detail on the cofferdam. Mr. Sczurek replied that the process will entail sandbagging the brook and diverting half of the brook to the north side. Mr. Temple wanted to confirm that it will not be a sheet pile style of retaining wall. Mr. Sczurek replied that it will not and explained that the work is projected to take a few days. Mr. Temple wanted to confirm that the depth would be 3 feet. Mr. Sczurek replied yes and directed the Commission to Figure RR-4 Riprap for Channel and Shoreline Stabilization. Mr. Temple wanted to confirm that the water would be pumped out. Mr. Sczurek replied yes and explained that it would be pumped out in the south side. Mr. Temple asked if the pumped water would be treated. Mr. Sczurek replied yes and added that it is required in the guidelines. He added that there are various methods listed in the guidelines. Mr. Sczurek stated that they will dewater and will comply with all of the regulations. Mr. Temple wanted to confirm that Town staff will oversee the project. Mr. Sczurek replied yes.

Chairman Kaputa said that he wanted to ask the same question about why this occurred. Mr. Sczurek explained that the erosion was happening slowly over time. Commissioner Davis asked Mr. Sczurek to display the first photo. Mr. Davis said that the lawn looks manicured and added that it appears that plants were removed. Mr. Sczurek remarked anything is possible. Mr. Davis explained that once the riprap is put in the look is unattractive and loses its natural stream edge. He stated that he thinks more should be done to return the area to a natural state. Secretary McClain agreed and added that something can be done. Mr. Davis asked if there were any alternative plans. Mr. Sczurek explained that the watershed area is about 4,416 acres and flows over 1,000 CFS (cubic feet per second). He added that there is no vegetative product in the guidelines that can withstand that flow. Mr. Davis said that the stream is lined with vegetation and added that the erosion is not everywhere. Mr. Sczurek remarked that they have to put something in today and not in 5 years when roots establish. The Commission briefly discussed some planting solutions that can enhance and benefit the area. Mr. Kaputa noted that he looked

at Google maps and noticed that the bend is no longer there. Mr. Sczurek said that the corner probably washed away. Ms. Simone added that there are many contributing factors and explained that a watercourse feeds into the brook from the north, immediately upstream from the eroded area, creating a small island upstream. She said that the water volume in this area may contribute to bank erosion. Mr. Temple noted that combined streams result in more erosion.

Mr. Kaputa wanted to confirm that there was no motion tonight. Ms. Simone confirmed; it would happen at the next meeting. Mr. Davis asked if there were any plants, such as small trees, that can be placed around the riprap. Mr. Sczurek replied that they can look into it. Mr. Davis said that he has seen trees growing in rocks and spoke about his experience with a reforestation project involving old coal mines. He noted that the bridge is a manmade structure and the riprap is more appropriate. Mr. Davis asked Mr. Sczurek to look into planting solutions. The Commission continued to discuss possible planting solutions. Ms. Gault Galjan suggested looking into natural grasses. Several Commissioners suggested a combination of grasses and smaller trees and plantings. Mr. Kaputa said that trees can be planted on top of the bank on the south side and asked if this should be added as a condition. Mr. Temple asked Mr. Sczurek to look into this and other possibilities. Mr. Sczurek responded that he would. Commissioner Blain asked when the erosion problem became noticeable and asked if it was years or months. Mr. Sczurek explained that the issue was noticed a couple of years ago and added that the problem accelerated since last summer. Mr. Blain asked about the height difference from the stream bank to the edge of the brook. Mr. Sczurek replied about 5 feet. Mr. Davis asked if the cross section shown was not to scale. Mr. Sczurek remarked that it is exaggerated and displayed a cross section that is to scale. Mr. Kaputa asked Mr. Sczurek to look into some plantings. Mr. Sczurek agreed and thanked the Commission.

II. CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Recommendation to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission regarding a Section 4.11 Flood Zone Special Permit concerning stream bank stabilization – 769 Hebron Avenue – Planned Employment & Flood Zones – Gemma Power Systems, LLC, applicant

Mr. Kaputa questioned that there is no motion. Ms. Simone confirmed and asked Mr. Sczurek about the timeline to submit materials to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission. Mr. Sczurek explained that the site work has to be done in low-flow conditions, July to August, and added that he was looking for feedback from the IWWA before finalizing plans for TPZ submittal. There was no further discussion. Mr. Sczurek thanked the Commission.

III. COMMENTS BY CITIZENS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 11, 2024

Motion by: Chairman Kaputa

Seconded by: Vice-Chairman Temple

MOVED, that the Commission approves the April 11, 2024 minutes as presented.

Result: Motion passes. (5-0-1), with Commissioner Blain abstaining.

Discussion: There was a brief discussion on *Robert's Rule of Order* pertaining to voting on meeting minutes.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Chairman's Report

Mr. Kaputa thanked Secretary McClain for her efforts in organizing a contribution to the Great Meadows Conservation Trust in Jim Thompson's name.

The Chairman welcomed Commissioner Blain and asked him to introduce himself. Commissioner Blain said that he is a prosecutor and explained that his secondary focus in law school was environmental law. He remarked that conservation has always been near and dear to him. The Commission welcomed Commissioner Blain.

2. Commissioner's Report

Mr. Kaputa asked for an update on the ASDRC joint meeting. Ms. Simone replied that she spoke with the Director of Community Development and added that a joint meeting will be scheduled in the near future. Mr. Davis explained that the ASDRC has absorbed the Beautification Committee and that the goal of the meeting is to ensure that there is an understanding among the different Commissions and Boards. There was a brief discussion on native plants versus cultivars and nativars. Mr. Temple brought up the one-page guidance document and remarked that it is fantastic and added that Ms. Gault Galjan's points are in there. Mr. Davis stated that the ASDRC views nativar plants as beneficial and explained that, in many instances, they can be more valuable. He said that nativars might not meet the criteria of native plants and added that the environment is not the same as it was 200 years ago. The Commission briefly discussed native plants and the guidance document. Ms. McClain suggested inviting a speaker to the joint meeting and that this was done in the past when they had a joint meeting with the Beautification Committee. Several Commissioners agreed. Ms. Simone said that she has done some research on nativar plants and found that they could be more advantageous in terms of length of bloom, color, and disease resistance. Ms. Gault Galjan offered that she can try to find an expert from UCONN to speak at the joint meeting. The Commission thanked Ms. Gault Galjan. The Commission agreed that the expert should talk about the advantages of each category: native, nativar, and cultivar.

3. Environmental Planner's Report

Mr. Kaputa asked for an update on 214 Thompson Street. Ms. Simone responded that she will follow up and provide the Commission with an update at the next meeting.

Mr. Kaputa asked about an update on 210 Commerce Street and brought up the propane leak. Ms. Simone provided an overview of the site conditions and noted that many agencies are involved,

with the focus on public health and safety. She added that the applicant's representative requested an extension for the submission of the wetland restoration plan. Ms. Simone said that in the January show cause hearing the IWWA ordered the restoration plan be submitted by March 28. Before March 28 the applicant's attorney requested an extension to April 29, which was administratively approved as there was no IWWA meeting. Before April 29 the applicant's attorney requested an extension to May 17, which was administratively approved as there was no IWWA meeting. The applicant's attorney is requesting to the IWWA that the extension date be granted to July 26, 2024. She explained that several State agencies are involved and are communication with the applicant's representative. Ms. Simone said that she was on-site recently with the property owners representatives and it was determined that current site conditions limit access to the wetlands area. She said that several tanks within the wetland area are rusted and do not have labels and added that the EPA is working with the property owner on a safety plan. Ms. McClain asked if the Town will issue a significant bond to ensure the restoration is done. Ms. Simone said that bonding is topic that is being discussed during court proceedings.

Mr. Davis asked about an update on the Chatham Hill property. Ms. Simone responded that Mr. Jusko reached out about a month ago for clarification on what the Commission wants. She said that they have not been in contact since then. Mr. Davis asked Ms. Simone if she has been on-site. Ms. Simone noted that she has not been to the property and explained that they have been in the area because of an undersized culvert and drainage issues. She added that a Hopewell Rd resident had contacted her about a driveway culvert and the potential need for an emergency repair, and the chairman and vice chairman were advised. Members spoke briefly about the general permit. Ms. Simone said that residents from various locations in town are reporting erosion on their property. She also discussed an emergency situation that happened in the Forest Lane area and reiterated that the general permit is beneficial in such situations.

Ms. Simone discussed the increase in application fees. She noted that the US Army Corps of Engineers is working on the hydrilla control project in Keeney Cove. Ms. Simone provided the Commission with an update on the Open Space Management Plan involving the JB Williams property and the MDC parcel. She said that the objectives included assessing the condition, identifying passive recreation uses, adding trails, identifying erosion or invasive species, and coming up with a forest composition. Ms. Simone noted that the consultant is working on the final draft and will be prepared to present an executive summary to the Recreation Commission on June 17th. She said that the Conservation Commission will be invited to attend and added that the meeting will be noticed as a special meeting in the event that a quorum attends.

With no other business to discuss, Chairman Kaputa adjourned the meeting at 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nadya Yuskaev

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Recording Secretary