

Windham Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency

Minutes of meeting held on August 9, 2007

Call to order

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:13 P.M. Those present were: Jerry Iazzetta, Chairman, Joseph Marsalisi, and Susan Johnson, Vice Chairman along with Town Engineer Joe Gardner, and Town Planner, James Finger

New Business

Lowes Home Center, 1562 West Main Street

The Chairman introduced the first item on the agenda as Lowe's Home Centers for off-site improvements of property located south 161 Chronicle Road, Aka C.C. Lounsbury, seeking a wetland permit to increase storm water runoff into an approved drainage pipe system Willimantic River. This application came to the Board about a year and a half ago. The off-site improvements weren't detailed at that time, and so the approval was given for just the improvements planned for the (project) site itself, and the applicant was asked to come back for the off-site improvements; which is what this application is for. Is there someone here for the applicant? The Chairman clarified that as he understood the procedure, the Board was only taking receipt of the application tonight.

Attorney Michael Camilleri from the law firm of Brown Rudnick, 185 Asylum Street in Hartford introduced himself as the legal counsel for Lowes Home Centers Inc. for this application. As the Chairman mentioned, we've been before this Board before in April '06 – you approved the on-site wetlands ... and now we're back to seek approval of the off-site improvements. He explained that this project will require Zoning approval as well, and they will be moving forward with that during the next few months.

When we went through the hearing process for the original design, we didn't have the details on these off-site improvements, and so we're back to fill in those details now. The Chairman stated that the public hearing that was held did not have any of this information, which is why we only approved the on-site portion

Camilleri agreed, and clarified that it was their hope that given the nature of these details that the Board would find that it didn't require a public hearing, but in any case, Lowes wants to be a part of this community. He then introduced Rob Pryor from Langan Engineering, the engineer for the project, and also Jane Haney, the current owner of the property, along with her husband, Jack and Mark Asmar of our offices.

Rob Pryor from Langan Engineering, then introduced himself as the licensed engineer – representing the applicant for the project. He then gave a brief overview of the project, outlining the existing conditions and use of the site – of warehousing and

lumber operations. In the middle of the site – pointing to an aerial photo of the site, there is an existing pond that will be filled in as was approved last time...in order to build the proposed Lowes store and parking lot.

From a storm water control perspective, Mr. Pryor explained that there is stormwater from upstream that they have to take care of entering the site and the existing pond. During times of heavy rain, the pond fills up, and portions of the site experience minor flooding. We have proposed to fill the pond and further develop the site; the result is that the drainage system downstream of the site that crosses under the existing Railroad Tracks, Recycling Way, and the second set of tracks under the CT. Route 66 Bridge need to be improved or increased in size to handle the increased flow.

Susan Johnson asked where the water in the pond - on site flows, how deep it is, and the source of the water.

Mr. Pryor explained that there is a culvert from the pond that extends to an underground drainage system generally this area (pointing to the map near the abutting Chronicle property), where it's picked up by the existing culverts, and carried under the railroads and Recycling Way. There are no underground streams that he is aware of. It's about two to three feet deep. Essentially, there is a great deal of surface water on site, and drainage systems that comes down from West Main St., and that drains into the pond. During periods of low, or no rain, the pond dries up quite a bit, but maybe not empty.

Susan Johnson asked if it was part of an aquifer, or derives some of its water from the ground water.

Town Engineer Joe Gardner explained that it is not part of an aquifer, and that the Board had already granted approval to fill it in. The Commission walked the site a year and a half ago; and they're going to build the store on top of it. Joe Marsalisi thought it was a man-made pond.

The Chairman cautioned the members to collect their thoughts and questions to ask the applicant's representatives at the next meeting, as the Board was only taking receipt of the application at this time.

Susan Johnson clarified that she was mainly interested in the connectedness of the wetlands and overall drainage systems; and most Rivers have an aquifer associated with them.

Mr. Pryor acknowledged her questions, and said that he would go through the entire site plan with the Board. He then proceeded to give an orientation to the site development plan for the new Lowes Home Center store, the parking lot, the loading area, the railroad tracks, and the drainage control features planned for the site.

Currently there is no treatment of the drainage water, and it picks up a great deal of sediment as it empties.

In their design, they have incorporated several water quality features into the drainage system, including a vortech chamber that's proposed on the downstream end. The benefit that you get from that is that... - the surface water that's coming through the system now gets no treatment before it gets to the River. So what they propose is that all of the first flush water will be treated from their site, plus all of the water draining onto the site.

On the rear of the building, they've taken the roof drainage and created an underground detention system and ground water re-charge component to the drainage system. So they are taking the clean roof water and using it to re-charge the ground; as opposed to now where the only re-charge that is occurring is the infiltration from the ground, and that pond which is taking untreated water from all of the developed areas upstream of the site.

From there, the water crosses Chronicle Road to an existing drainage system that crosses under the Rail road tracks, to a couple of open areas with head walls, it then goes under Recycling Way, emptying into an open channel before it reaches another culvert under the second Rail line under the Route 66 overpass.

Because of the increase in the rate of run-off, its necessary to improve or increase the size of the three culverts in place, plus stabilization of the open channel and the creation of a stilling basin at the discharge of the whole drainage system to provide additional water quality treatment because of the vegetation that will be in that sediment basin. Right now the water discharges into the side of an embankment with no treatment or velocity reduction .

Susan asked how they plan to remove the sediment over the time period or distance (inaudible)

Mr. Pryor responded that they would expect very little sediment in this portion of the line (pointing the map) – there's not much drainage area that goes through it. The large sediment that comes in from the upstream side will get treated in this design that's proposed on site. The sediment basin is rather large, and its more to alleviate any velocity effects or erosion at the discharge point; and the basin is planted to provide some nutrient uptake from the discharged water. The plants chosen will be those that remove nitrogen and phosphorus as it will be fertilizer for them.

Susan Johnson asked about the runoff from the oil and other pollutants from the road and parking areas, and later what kind of maintenance it will require, how frequently, and how will they evaluate when it needs to be cleaned.

Mr. Pryor responded that the proposed storm water treatment chamber – as well as removing sediment - also has an oil separation and removal component. So from a storm water quality standpoint, this system will be an enhancement to the discharge water that is reaching the Willimantic River now – approximately 600’ to 700’ away from this discharge point.

The treatment chamber will initially be examined at on a quarterly basis by Lowes personnel. Essentially they start looking at it every 3 to 4 months, then when they see that what’s being collected in the chamber doesn’t need to be cleaned out that frequently, they’ll adjust their cleaning schedule to maybe every six months or whatever is appropriate. They can make this determination based on how full it is – if its less than half full then they don’t have to clean it out as frequently. This evaluation is performed four times during the year two of which are immediately before winter time, and then right after all sanding operations are completed.

The Chairman announced that Commission member Martin Brogie joined the meeting at 7:29 PM.

Joe Gardner suggested having a site walk to orient all the new members to the site, and asserted that what they are going to be doing is to clean up the whole area.

The Chairman then outlined his concerns as follows:

- The drawings say that a wetlands scientist will do the wetlands plantings, but he said he’d like to see what kind of plants are going to be used on the drawings so the Board can review them;
- Note # 3 - Detailed construction drawings to be provided later – what kind of details are to be provided? The Chairman clarified that the Board had approved the plan before with the condition that off-site work which had a similar note on “details to be provided later” – to be provided at this submission, as the Board needs to review and approve those details.
- Another item is the velocity of the water coming out of the 42” pipe

Rob Pryor said he thought he had answered that the water would be coming in at 6 CFS; but he would check it again and provide a formal answer.

Joe Gardner raised a point that the plans showed some dimensions on the lower outlet: 21 ft wide, and 114 ft. long. But he concurred that there needs to be some additional dimensional detail.

Mr. Pryor responded that they typically don’t provide construction drawings at this level of approval; but if the Board requests this, they can do that.

The Town Engineer answered that we don't need construction details of the building, but the Board needs to see the same level of construction details for these activities that are given to a contractor - for the wetlands permit. He added that the plans are almost there, but the need to be clearly shown on the plans. And further as the Chairman stated, we need to see the details of the plantings shown on the plans. He concluded by mentioning details of the headwall that will need to be changed so the back end of the slope doesn't get washed out.

A new Commissioner – Martin Brogie asked for an overview of the plans that he missed.

Town Engineer Joe Gardner explained that they had been given a permit for the on-site work proposed already; but not for the off-site drainage system, and that's what they're here for now.

Martin Brogie then asked if there was any delineation of wetlands soils for the off-site areas (Pryor pointed to an aerial photo). Martin asked if these were flood plain soils associated with the Willimantic River; and whether the activity was within the stream channel encroachment lines (No). has a Soils Scientist submitted a functions and values assessment for wetlands in this area? (Pryor said he thought so) the fill shown at elevation 238 .5 on the south side of the rip-rapped plunge pool – is this for an access around the structure?

Mr. Pryor answered that access to the plunge pool will be limited due its location 20 feet down a steep slope, and across the Railroad tracks; and he urged the Board to conduct a site walk to see the landscape. And as far as maintenance...

Martin asked again about the purpose of the fill along the south side, and how many square feet of wetlands is to be disturbed.

Pryor answered that it serves as a berm for the down hill side of the basin. They don't have the amount of wetland soils to be disturbed.

The Chairman tried to clarify, saying that on the original plans that were approved, they showed a generalized area that they were going to disturb, and that was it. We asked them to provide a stilling basin, etc. (pointing to the map – in a parallel direction to the railroad tracks, rather than perpendicular). So this is what their people came up with to avoid disturbing more area.

Martin repeated his request to see a report from the Soils Scientist on the functions and values of the wetlands, and the total amount of wetland (or flood plain) soils to be disturbed. He wondered whether they were into an Army Corps permit (Pryor asserted that they were not). He then asked when the water reach this area, and when would the water overflow the top of the basin wall- ten year storm?

Joe Gardner answered that all storms will drain into it, but they will have a detention basin for clean roof water on-site, and they will have a stormceptor to remove sediment (pointed to map of location on site near Chronicle Rd.), plus it takes all of the Town's drainage from upstream of the site; and then review the path of flow which all discharges to this point now. He urged the Board to walk the site to see the existing conditions.

A site walk was scheduled for Saturday, September 8th at 9 or 10 in the morning.

The Chairman then asserted that when we heard this application before, we didn't have these details when we held a public hearing, and he felt that we should hold a public hearing for this application, as it is a significant activity. So a public hearing will be scheduled for September 13th, 2007.

Martin asked about maintenance of these drainage structures after it's built. Joe Gardner answered that we won't be maintaining the part on State property, or in the Railroad Right of Ways. The only part that we can get to is the open channel next to Recycling Way.

The Chairman called for a motion to accept the application and schedule a public hearing for September 13th. Susan made the motion as requested, Martin Brogie seconded the motion; all voted in favor.

Other Business – Agent's approvals

The Chairman then turned to a review of applications to Inland Wetlands Agent, as follows:

- a. Leo and Cheri Majnich 192 Jerusalem Rd. – a permit for addition to house in upland. The Agent explained that this was for an addition to the house that was built in the early 1990's. The addition will go in the level grassy lawn area that is quite a ways from the wetlands, and they will have to get approval from the Health District for the larger home. A notice was published in the paper.
- b. Willimantic Whitewater Partnership Inc. installation of sign, and minor clearing of vegetation along river. The Agent briefed the Board on the location of the proposed sign near the Bridge abutment, close to the embankment of the Willimantic River. Also, they plan some minor amount of clearing they want to perform to open up the view to the river, but this will not involve any clear cutting, and they don't want to encourage too much activity because they are not ready to have a presence at the site yet to establish the future park. This was also published in the