



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Website: www.colchesterct.gov

COLCHESTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue

Minutes of Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Falk von Plachecki, Chairman; Rebecca Meyer, Vice Chairman; Susan Bruening; Michael Rogers; Michelle Kosmo; Mary Tremblay (alternate); and Mark Szymanski, Wetlands Agent; and Mark Reynolds for the applicant; and the applicant.

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A. PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman von Plachecki opened the Public Hearing for application W2023-3075 at 7:00 p.m. Five members and one alternate were present to hear the proposal. The site is located at 200 Lebanon Avenue and the proposal is to open a distillery. The application before the Commission is to fill 1,699 SF of wetlands to facilitate a 14 space parking lot in the rear of the building. Chairman von Plachecki read the legal notice and the list of exhibits. Exhibit "N" was added (site plan with revisions to January 25, 2023). The proposal is to remove blacktop in the side yards and replace with pervious gravel. The parking lot in rear will be gravel as well. The traffic circulation will be one way around the building with a dedicated entrance and exit and the applicant is required to get encroachment permits from CT DOT for any work in the state right of way. Commissioner Meyer made the motion and Commissioner Kosmo seconded the motion to close the public hearing. The motion passed 5-0.

B. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman von Plachecki called the regular meeting to order.

C. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Commissioner Rogers made the motion and Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion to amend the agenda and add the Ark Distillery application to pending applications section. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES—January 11, 2023

Commissioner Kosmo made the motion and Commissioner Bruening seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023 meeting. The motion passed 5-0.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS—None.

F. PENDING APPLICATIONS

Commissioner Meyer asked if the zoning commission can reduce the required number of spaces to lessen wetlands impacts. Staff replied they can. Commissioner Rogers moved that the Commission approve the application of ARK Distillery to fill in 1,699 SF of wetlands with the condition that if shared parking can be realized elsewhere in the neighborhood then that

possibility be pursued for purposes of lessening impacts to the existing wetlands in the rear of the property. Commissioner Kosmo seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 and was unanimous.

G. **NEW APPLICATIONS**—None.

H. **OLD BUSINESS**

Letter to Rivereast celebrating 50 years of protecting wetlands has been published.

I. **NEW BUSINESS**

Buyer for 77-acre vacant parcel on Usher Swamp Road may attend next month's meeting if his soils scientist has had the opportunity to review the site more thoroughly.

J. **ENFORCEMENT**—None.

K. **CONSERVATION**

Commissioner Tremblay summarized her efforts to write a monthly or quarterly piece for a town publication on conservation-related issues. She chose the topic of the bottle bill amendments which are in effect as of January 1, 2023 for the next issue of a Park and Rec department publication. Staff noted that the Commission may wish to look into declaring a certain month as "Biodiversity Month" or highlighting another issue that the public should be more aware of.

L. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Property owner's consultant for applying pesticides to a pond at 314 Westchester Road sent the CT DEEP application to the Commission. The Commission reviewed the proposal and was strongly opposed to the pesticide application to this pond given its proximity to Priam Vineyards and a well within 75' on an adjacent lot as well as for the reason that prudent and feasible alternatives such as applying a harmless dye have not been explored first. The Commission directed staff to send a letter to CT DEEP opposing this proposal.

M. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Rogers made the motion and Commissioner Bruening seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Falk von Plachecki, Chairman