



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Colchester Conservation Commission

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
Wednesday, July 12, 2023
Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, room #2
Minutes of Regular Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Falk von Plachecki, Chairman; Rebecca Meyer, Vice
Chairperson; Susan Bruening; Michael Rogers; Michelle Kosmo; and Carol Szymanski,
Wetlands Enforcement Officer.

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Gayle Furman
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TOWN CLERK

1. PUBLIC HEARING 7 p.m.:

- A. Chairman von Plachecki called the public hearing to order at 7:03 p.m.
- B. Roll Call determined that all five members were present and there is a quorum.
- C. **W2023-3078: 203 Amston Road; Stephen Fedus**—applicant/owner; Assessor's Map 21-00-003-000; 20 proposed apartments and 46 parking spaces on 8+ acres with upland review area impacts. Chairman read the exhibits that have been submitted for this application into the record. Stephen Fedus, owner, made a presentation saying the application is actually only for 19 apartment units and stressed that affordable rental units are scarce in the region and that two of the 19 units will be affordable. Most units will not have basements. Chairman asked if anyone wanted to speak in favor or against the application. Greg Cerniglia of 163 Amston Road asked if there was a traffic study yet because traffic has increased on this road in recent years and Chairman replied that traffic studies are a zoning issue. Mr. Cerniglia asked if fill that was recently brought on site had been spread in the wetlands because the pile is gone now and Mr Fedus replied that there was a low spot on the property which is not wetlands where the fill has been spread. Stephen Dickson of 155 Amston Road spoke against the application citing noise concerns that will displace animals and adversely impact humans and the runoff pollution from parking lots may adversely impact the wetlands. Commissioner Meyer made the motion and Commissioner Kosmo seconded the motion to continue the public hearing to the August 9, 2023 meeting. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.
- D. **W2023-3081: 155 Westchester Road;** Jeffrey and Donna Naples—applicant/owner; Assessor's Map 05-14/016-000; reclamation plan and proposed pond within regulated wetlands area. The Chairman read the exhibits into the record. James Sipperly, soils scientist, spoke as the agent for the applicant as Mr. Naples was not present. He stated that locust trees that were dead were cut down in the upland review area and some dead vegetation was clearcut in the wetlands themselves. The Fire Chief had approached Mr. Naples previously to build a fire pond in the wetlands to service the firefighting needs of the Westchester area. Mr. Sipperly believes that there is an artesian well on the property that can be uncapped to provide water for the pond. The

upland review area will be restored with plantings. Mr. Sipperly addressed some of the comments of Bob Russo, the town's consulting soils scientist. He stated that Mark Reynolds will do a hydraulics and hydrology study. Pond size may be enlarged as a result. Fire Chief Steve Hoffmann spoke in favor of the application because it is difficult to access water in the Westchester area to fight fires. He has several questions about the actual usability of the pond and its replenishing rate. He would also like a pull off area for the fire truck and a maintenance easement for the pond itself. Vicki Veltri had questions as to the validity of the mailing since it was not certified mail and she thought the requirements called for certified mail. She was concerned about the impacts of the pond proposal on her water pressure as well as the quality of her drinking water. Mr. Sipperly stated that since the condominiums are at a much higher elevation, he did not think this proposal would adversely impact any of the neighbors' water issues or concerns. Eric Jackson was concerned about maintenance of the pond itself and a possible mosquito infestation if water in pond remains stagnant and has no moving water source to feed the pond itself. Vicki Veltri was concerned about liability for the town if the fire department took over maintenance of the pond for the long-term. Linda Clark stated she had received a letter from the applicant stating that a gas station was proposed on the site. The Chairman stated that this was probably a template letter that was mailed out to alert abutters that a proposal was before one of the Commissions (ZBA) for a new building on the site. Commissioner Meyer made the motion and Commissioner Kosmo seconded the motion to continue public hearing to the August 9, 2023 meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

2. **REGULAR MEETING (following public hearing)**

- A. **CALL TO ORDER**; The Regular Meeting was called to order at 8:07 p.m.
- B. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**: None.
- C. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Commissioner Kosmo made the motion and Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2023 meeting. The motion passed 5-0.
- D. **PUBLIC COMMENT**: None.
- E. **PENDING APPLICATIONS** — **W2023-3078: 203 Amston Road**; Stephen Fedus—applicant/owner; Assessor's Map 21-00-003-000; 19 proposed apartments with upland review area impacts. (Date of Receipt: 5/10/23; 35 day extension granted=August 16, 2023). Commissioner Rogers made the motion to table action on the application and continue the public hearing to the August 9, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kosmo. The motion passed 5-0.

W2023-3081: 155 Westchester Road; Jeffrey and Donna Naples—applicant/owner; Assessor's Map 05-14/016-000; reclamation plan and proposed pond within regulated wetlands area. (Date of receipt: 6/14/23). Commissioner Kosmo made the motion and

Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion to table action on the application and continue the public hearing to the August 9, 2023 meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

W2023-3079: Norwich Avenue; Linwood Development LLC—applicant/owner; Assessor's Map 29-00-002-000; two lot split for two duplexes with upland review impacts and previous encroachment into URA and reclamation plan. Commissioner Rogers made the motion and Commissioner Bruening seconded the motion to **approve** the application. Motion passed 5-0.

W2023-3080: 19 Cato Corner Road; James Bailes—applicant/owner; Assessor's Map 4W-09/018-000; proposed single family residence and septic system within Upland Review Area. Commissioner Meyer made the motion and Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion to **approve** the application. The motion passed 5-0.

F. **NEW APPLICATIONS:**..None.

G. **OLD BUSINESS** -- Staff updated the Commission on the start date for Sablitz open space parking lot. Work to begin Monday, July 17, 2023.

H. **NEW BUSINESS** ---- Chairman Falk read an email from First Selectman asking Commissions for ideas on spending the \$47,000 the town receives from the state for the nip bottle returns.

I. **ENFORCEMENT** —None.

J. **CONSERVATION:** None.

K. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- A. Wetland Administrative Permits Issued: 66 Bigelow Road (shed)
- B. Staff Updates & Other Correspondence: None

L. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Meyer made the motion and Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Falk von Plachecki,
Chairman