

Minutes of the April 21, 2004 Meeting  
Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Building

Present: Quentin Kessel, Lanse Minkler (acting Chairman), John Silander and Frank Trainor.

Absent: Denise Burchsted, Robert Dahn, Jennifer Kaufman, and Robert Thorson.

Town Staff: Grant Meitzler, Inland Wetlands Agent

Guest: Peter Miniutti

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:42 PM.
2. The Minutes of the February 18, 2004 meeting were approved, following a motion by Trainor, seconded by Minkler.
3. It was agreed to change the order of business to accommodate guest Peter Miniutti of the Miniutti Group who was present to discuss W1250/PZC File # 113-2.

W1250/PZC File # 113-2 - Miniutti/Byron Thompson - 706 Mansfield City Road. "Wild Rose Estates" is a proposed nine-lot subdivision utilizing the new zoning procedure. This allows the establishment of a maximum number of single-family homes under the older guidelines and then rearranging the layout, hopefully to maximize, among other things, land set aside for open space. The rearranged layout by the Miniutti Group was viewed positively; however, past and future activities that might negatively affect a very special wetland, one supporting a rare and intact feature of the landscape were discussed at length. The rare feature of the landscape is an unusual and surviving white cedar swamp. For this reason the CC recommended that the applicant be asked to hire a good wetlands ecologist with knowledge of oligotrophic (nutrient-sensitive) systems to address these concerns before approval of the subdivision plan. It had been agreed not to vote on this matter until additional information was presented to the Commission.

Miniutti opened the discussion by reviewing "Watershed at White Cedar Swamp," a map dated 4/8/04. The discussion included a review of soil scientist Harvey Luce's report, "Potential impacts of development of Wild Rose resubdivision on down gradient wetlands, March 23, 2003 (dated 2004 on the inside of the cover page), Milone and MacBroom's report, "Atlantic White Cedar Swamp Vegetation Survey-Wild Rose Estates, Mansfield City Road, Mansfield, Connecticut" dated April 1, 2004 and reviews by Town staff members Grant Meitzler (4/1/04) and Gregory Padick (4/2 and 5/04).

The CC discussion centered on the waterflow toward the swamp. The general consensus was that the current plan marks a significant improvement with regard to protecting the White Cedar Swamp. The CC compliments the applicant and Dr. Peter

Miniutti for addressing the commission's concerns and providing the reports by the soil scientist and the wetlands biologist. It was noted that a pending report from DEP biologist Kenneth Metzler was not available to the CC for the discussion.

#### 4. Remaining IWA Referrals.

W1255 - Chatham Hill - Fern Road. Map date 3/6/04. This application is for a 14-lot subdivision with a plot plan similar to that reviewed April 16, 2003 by the CC. The CC took positive note of the wider greenspace associated with the access to the open space. The CC was disappointed, however, with the minimal changes made in the drainage of the street system and the apparent lack of any change in the location of the septic system on lot 18 which is close to the wetland. Again it was noted that nearly all of the lots proposed would require activity within the regulated area. It was agreed that the concerns expressed in the April 16, 2003 minutes apply to the current application. For this reason the CC voted (Silander moved and Kessel seconded) to reaffirm that the proposed development might have a significant negative impact on the associated wetlands. The motion passed unanimously.

W1256 - Newmyer and Doyle - Center Street. Map date 3/30/04. This application is for yard and beach work along the shore of Echo Lake. Trainor moved and Kessel seconded that there should be no significant negative impact on the wetlands if the sedimentation and erosion controls shown on the map are in place while the work is being done and removed after the area is stabilized. Silander expressed concern that the removal of the vegetation would destabilize the slope. For this reason the CC is concerned that extra care be taken with the sedimentation and erosion controls and that the site be carefully monitored. The motion passed (3 in favor, 1 abstention).

W1257 - Bell - Bassetts Bridge Road. Map date 1/15/04. This application is for a gardening and plant nursery operation. Kessel moved and Trainor seconded that there should be no significant negative impact on the wetlands. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 5. Other Business.

a) There has been no reply from the DEP regarding the CC request that the DEP consider revising their aquifer mapping regulations in view of research showing that their reliance on perennial versus intermittent stream designations is faulty, resulting in inadequate protection of certain aquifers. It was noted that the OPM, because the DEP denies aquifer protection to watersheds drained by perennial streams rejected the CC's request that certain watersheds feeding the Fenton River aquifer be given the preservation, rather than the current conservation designation. The fine article on this issue written by CC member Robert Thorson for a "Place" editorial in the Hartford Courant was discussed.

b) A letter to Town Manager Martin Berliner from the DEP dated 3/5/04 on the Adoption of Aquifer Protection Area Land Use Regulations was reviewed. It notes that the first step for municipalities is to appoint a Municipal Aquifer Protection Agency. Kessel reported that he had been told (email as he recalled) by a Town staff member that such a Mansfield agency was already in existence and that neither the CC nor any of its members individually were a part of this agency. Members of the CC

noted the irony of the CC's efforts to improve the protection for the Fenton River aquifer compared with the level of activity of this apparently existing Town agency.

c) Torrey Boundary Marking Update. Dahn and Kessel have marked most of the boundary with ribbons. Dahn will obtain a copy of the map for the Town-owned property that was deeded to the Town as a part of the Holly Drive subdivision, so that they may complete the job.

5. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Quentin Kessel  
Secretary