

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION/INLAND WETLANDS AND
WATERCOURSES AGENCY
APRIL 13, 2015**

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Eric Prause, Chair
Andy Kidd, Vice Chair
Horace Brown, Secretary
Susan Shanbaum

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman
Pat Kennedy
Teresa Ike (Sitting)

Absent: Michael Stebe

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner

The Chairman opened the Business Meeting at 7:02 p.m.

MILLER FARMS, LLC - Request a landscaping screen waiver under Article II Section 7.04.03 (b) 1 and modification of the approved landscaping plan at 11 through 106 Gianna Drive – PRD Detailed Site Development Plan Modification (2015-039)

Ms. Liz Koiva of Nordic Builders explained the developers of the Miller Farms estate are near completion of the project and have made some adjustments to the approved landscaping plan. These adjustments, made in part in response to the concerns of unit owners, are mostly to reduce landscaping, to keep maintenance costs low for the condominium owners, and to eliminate plantings which are too large for the proposed locations, while at the same time keeping a nice aesthetic for the development.

Ms. Koiva explained that the original landscaping plan showed large trees in front of each of the units, but the area available for planting is not large enough to accommodate that size tree. Therefore, instead of the large street shade trees, dogwoods have been planted along with other similar ornamental trees in front of the units and these trees will remain.

Another proposed change according to Ms. Koiva was a request to maintain a grass trail around the detention basin as opposed to the stone dust trail called out in the plans. She said the applicants believe the grass trail will be easier to maintain, more attractive, and adequate for the proposed recreational aspect of the detention basin. Ms. Koiva also explained the request for a waiver to plant a landscape border along the southerly part of the property of Miller Farms which abuts the wooded portion of the property owned by the church immediately to the east. Because the church property is already naturally wooded, planting these evergreen shrubs along the property line would serve no buffering purpose.

Mr. Prause said he understood the problem with the trees, but asked if they could be replaced

with some other material. Ms. Koiva reviewed the plan and photographs submitted as part of the request and reviewed the location of trees which had been already installed and which would remain as well as those locations where they would be removed if the waiver were to be approved.

Mr. Brown noted that the church could eliminate the trees and expand their parking or otherwise remove the wooded area, which would then expose their site to the condominiums. Ms. Koiva replied that that was Church property and she did not believe they could develop in that area.

Mr. Kidd said he felt the proposed landscaping plan seemed reasonable. He said there are sometimes tendencies to over landscape properties which become a maintenance burden. He said he had no objection to the request. Ms. Shanbaum noted that Ms. Koiva, during her presentation, stated that the Homeowners' Association had requested the changes to the landscaping plan and asked if Ms. Koiva had anything in writing from the Homeowner's Association in that regard. Ms. Koiva said she did not have anything but could get it if required. Mr. Prause asked if Miller Farms had any discussions with the neighbors, and Ms. Koiva said she had no conversations and there was no feedback on the application.

PRD Detailed Site Development Plan Modification (2015-039)

MOTION: Mr. Kidd moved to approve the PRD Detailed Plan Modification and to grant a screening landscaping waiver at 11 through 106 Gianna Drive with the modification that eight black gum trees be replaced with eight cherry trees. Mr. Brown seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING DEPARTMENT - For removal of remnants of a former dam, stabilization of eroding banks, channel realignment, in-stream fish habitat features, and floodplain connectivity at 375R, 381, and 401 Adams Street. – Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significance (2015-032)

Mr. Matt Bordeaux, Environmental Planner, explained the proposed project to the Commission. He said the staff was only requesting a determination at this meeting, and would return at a subsequent meeting for either a public hearing or business item depending upon the Commission's determination.

Mr. Bordeaux said that the project involves work in the stream channel and in the surrounding wetlands area of the former Hilliard Pond located just to the north of Middle Turnpike West. He said that the dam was blasted in response to order from DEP that the dam either be breached or replaced. After the dam was breached the brook was allowed to find its own course and over the years has meandered around the debris of the basin, resulting in obstruction of fish passage and causing significant erosion and bank destabilization.

Mr. Bordeaux added that the property is now subject to a long-term easement to the Manchester Land Conservation Trust for a nature preserve and there is a walking trail which the trust and the Hockanum River Linear Park Committee have coordinated on to create. Mr. Bordeaux explained that the Town had engaged the firm of Milone & MacBroom to conduct the environmental assessment and develop plans for dam removal, bank stabilization, and channel establishment. Those plans have been completed and the Town has received the necessary permits from the Army Corps of Engineers and the state DEEP for the project. He said the local

wetlands approval is the last permit required, at which point the project would be put to bid and the work would commence.

Mr. Bordeaux described the location of the pond, the location of the debris, and the existing characteristics of the project area. He explained that a construction entrance would come off of Adams Street and be built to a point where there would be temporary culverts to create a crossing of the brook to allow access to the remains of the dam for removal. He said there would be no blasting but the contractor would hammer. He said the channel would be reestablished and then the banks would be stabilized and vegetated. Part of this work would include the removal of invasive species.

Mr. Bordeaux said that because there will be work in the stream channel as well as the eroded side banks, and because of the extent and activity related to the removal, there is a possibility that there will be increased turbidity in the stream channel during construction. He said that in his opinion because of this potential for increased turbidity during the activity and disturbance that the project should be determined to have a significant impact and a public hearing should be required.

Mr. Kidd said he did not think there would be a significant negative impact because this is not really a natural channel and the erosion already exists. Ms. Shanbaum said that the erosion is a remaining problem that needs to be addressed at this point. Mr. Brown tended to agree with Mr. Kidd but did not feel strongly one way or the other.

Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significance (2015-032)

MOTION: Ms. Ike moved to find the proposed activity at the above referenced location as shown on the Inland Wetlands Permit application 2015-032 may have a significant impact on the watercourse as it has the potential to cause substantial turbidity, siltation or sedimentation and therefore will require a public hearing. Ms. Shanbaum seconded the motion and Mr. Prause and Mr. Brown voted in favor. Mr. Kidd voted against the motion. The motion passed four to one.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Pellegrini reported regarding the Town's Hillstown Road widening project and the recommendation that the no left turn restriction into the recently opened McDonalds be removed and a left turn be allowed. Mr. Pellegrini said the Commission's requirement to post a no left turn sign for southbound traffic on Hillstown Road into the McDonalds was based on recommendations from the Town staff at a time when there was no opportunity for a bypass lane at this location because of the width of Hillstown Road. At the previous Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, when the Town Engineering staff presented the plans for the widening of Hillstown Road, it was noted that with this widening and other improvements associated with the Hillstown Road and Spencer Street project there will be room for a bypass lane for southbound traffic if there is a vehicle waiting to make a left turn into the McDonalds. Mr. Pellegrini said the question raised by the Commission was whether McDonalds would have to return to the Commission to have that modification removed from the approval.

Mr. Pellegrini said he spoke with Administrative Staff Attorney Tim O'Neil, and they agreed that because the action is being taken by the Town of Manchester to widen the road, and since the Town of Manchester has the control over the right-of-way and is the traffic authority, the Town of Manchester should request a release of the modification. He said McDonalds should be

notified of this action but that because it is related to a Town project on property under Town jurisdiction the Town should make the request to the Commission.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

MILLER FARMS, LLC – PRD Detailed Plan Modification (2015-039) – Request a landscaping screen waiver under Article II Section 7.04.03 (b) 1 and to modify the approved landscaping plan at 11 through 106 Gianna Drive.

The Chairman closed the business meeting at 8:15 p.m.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

June 15, 2015
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS BUSINESS MEETING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.