

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MAY 4, 2015**

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Eric Prause, Chair
Horace Brown, Secretary
Susan Shanbaum
Michael Stebe

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman (Sitting)
Pat Kennedy
Teresa Ike

Absent: Andy Kidd

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning
Matthew Bordeaux, Environmental Planner
Karen Logan, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. The Secretary read the legal notice for the application when the call was made.

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 (2015-032)

Mr. Matthew Bordeaux, Environmental Planner and Wetlands Agent, presented the background and history of the project, located on Bigelow Brook. Over the last 40 years, the brook has begun to show significant bank erosion and channel instability as the concrete from the former dam lies across the brook's flow area and constricts the floodplain.

The Town of Manchester received an Ecosystem Management and Habitat Restoration Grant from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to remove the remnants of the dam and restore Bigelow Brook. The Town retained Milone & MacBroom, Inc. to complete design plans and prepare state and federal regulatory permits for the project. The town's goals for the restoration project include removal of remnants of the former dam, stabilization of existing eroding banks and floodplain areas, and enhancement of the fishery habitat.

On April 13th, the Inland Wetlands Agency found that the proposed activity may involve a significant impact or major effect as guided by the definition of "Significant Impact Activity" as found in the regulations. The regulations state that the applicant shall submit additional information including soils data, a description of ecological communities and the functions and values of the resources, as well as a description of alternatives.

- Soils Data – the dominant soil on site is the excessively drained Manchester series. The sediment that accumulated behind the dam formed under saturated conditions (Hilliard's Pond), causing the soil to exhibit features which would be typical of wetland areas.

- Alternatives Analysis –
- Taking no action or postponing restoration are not alternatives for consideration. Erosion of the sediment build-up around the former dam structure would continue and as long as the concrete remains, it will continue to collect debris and divert the normal flow. One alternative would be to remove the dam remnants without additional restoration. With the obstructions removed, the stream might self-correct, however this would take longer and the result would likely not occur to the extent of the proposed project.
- Resource Functions and Values – The principal functions and values are floodflow alteration, fish habitat, and wildlife habitat. Enhancement of the floodplain and the ability for floodflows to access that floodplain protect the downstream properties. Bigelow Brook is also habitat for both cold-water and warm-water fish. Removal of the obstructions to upstream passage and enhancement of the channel with boulder clusters will result in an unimpeded watercourse that extends from the Hockanum River to the dam at Center Springs Pond.

The proposed activity will require a local inland wetlands and watercourses permit, an erosion and sedimentation control plan approval, and a flood plain permit. The project has received permits from the United States Army Corps of Engineers and CT DEEP. Staff has reviewed the plans and documents submitted with the application and there are no outstanding comments. At this point, Mr. Prause opened the floor to questions.

In response to questions from Mr. Stoppelman, Mr. Bordeaux said the Town's intent is to re-establish the hiking trail on the site when the work is completed, with the input of the Manchester Conservation Trust. He said the project does not currently include plans for removing the abandoned vehicles on the property, but Town staff will take a look at it. Mr. Stoppelman noted there is some debris in the area where the brook crosses West Middle Turnpike near the Parkade. Mr. Bordeaux said that area is a detention area for a very large watershed area that runs all the way back to the hospital. It is supposed to catch the debris to keep it from running into the Brook.

In response to a question from Ms. Shanbaum, Mr. Bordeaux said some of the material from the construction area would be used to backfill up to the retaining wall to reinforce the parking lot for the condominium complex.

In response to questions from Mr. Prause, Mr. Bordeaux said the coffer dam to divert the flow will be made of sand bags, laid out in a row. He said he did not have details about traffic controls on Adams Street in this proposal because that information usually comes in the bid proposal. He said if it's warranted, there will be police on site, and there will definitely be signs in place, such as "Trucks Entering."

Mr. Prause asked if anyone wished to speak either in favor of or in opposition to this application. No member of the public came forward at this time.

Mr. Stoppelman moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Stebe seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chairman closed the public hearing at 7:30 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 PUBLIC HEARING CAN
BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.**