

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 21 September 2011
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Peter Drzewiecki (from 8:05p), Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Frank Trainor. *Members absent:* Aline Booth (Alt.), Joan Buck (Alt.), Robert Dahn. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent), William Shakalis (from 8:00p).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:32p by Chair Quentin Kessel.
2. The draft **minutes of the 17 August 2011 meeting** were approved as written.

3. IWA referrals

- a. **W1487 (Wright, Mansfield City Rd.)** The applicant proposes to construct a deck on concrete piers across the back of her house; its edge would be 55' to 65' from wetlands in woods down a gentle slope from the house. The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Silander, Lehmann) with Meitzler's assessment that no significant impact on wetlands is to be expected, provided standard erosion controls are employed during construction. (Lehmann participated in the 26 August IWA Field Trip to this site; his report is attached.)
- b. Revised plans are not yet available for **W1485 (Bell, Bassetts Bridge Rd)**.
- c. Cumberland Farms has withdrawn its application (see W1483) to re-develop the blighted Kathy Johns & Republic Oil site at Four Corners, apparently out of concern about future assessments for extending water and sewer lines to this area.

4. Notifications. Kessel noted recent articles on or by former members of the Commission: a tribute in the Summer 2011 issue of *Connecticut Woodlands* to Sam Dodd (photographed with the late George Russell, another former member, who wrote the PA 490 legislation) and an op-ed piece in *The Hartford Courant* on conserving water resources by Robert Thorsen. He also informed the Commission that the Windham County Conservation Consortium, which brings together like-minded groups and individuals in Windham County, will meet on 26 September.

5. UConn water supply study. UConn has determined that it needs additional water to meet its own needs and its legal obligations to other users (such as the new Storrs Center project). An Environmental Impact Evaluation for the project is being prepared. It will consider various options, of which the most likely now appear to be additional wells in the Willimantic well-field or connecting to Connecticut Water Company mains in Tolland.

6. Vegetation Control in Swan & Mirror Lakes. UConn has applied to DEEP for a permit to use copper compounds to control algae in Swan and Mirror Lakes, as it has in the past. Weeds have been removed by dredging and pulling by hand – as aquatic gardens, these lakes require upkeep.

7. Eagleville Dam repair. DEEP has applied to itself for a permit to undertake minor repairs to Eagleville Dam and its spillway.

8. UConn Hazardous Waste Transfer Station. Kessel observed to those attending a recent Town-Gown Committee meeting that no progress seems to have been made on relocating this facility from behind Horsebarn Hill (in a public water supply watershed) to a more appropriate

site.

9. Agronomy Farm. Facchinetti reported that there has been no response yet from the University to the latest letter from the Storrs Heights Neighborhood Association regarding operations at the Agronomy Farm.

10. Ponde Place. The Ponde Place developers are appealing an adverse DPH ruling that wells drilled to monitor the impact on neighborhood wells of withdrawals from test wells cannot be used to supply water to the development because they are likely to draw pollutants from the old nearby UConn chemical landfill.

11. CL&P Interstate Reliability Project. Kessel believes this proposal for routing what is essentially an electricity pipeline to Fairfield County through the Quiet Corner is now a done deal.

12. Dark Skies. William Shakalis reported to the Commission on his conversations with various individuals interested in reducing light pollution in the area and on what he has learned about state and local lighting ordinances. He believes that the town's regulations are "thin" on light pollution and could be substantially improved. UConn is by far the largest producer of stray light in town, but, as a state agency, it is not subject to town rules; however, it does aspire to being regarded as an environmentally responsible institution and may be approachable on that basis. The Commission agreed that it would be most appropriate to proceed by first getting the town to tighten its lighting regulations and then trying to get UConn on board. In both cases, it should be emphasized that better designed and more efficient lighting can save money, enhance security, and reduce light pollution. To start this process, Kessel and Shakalis agreed to meet with Town Planner Linda Painter to recommend that Mansfield incorporate into its regulations the International Dark Sky Association's Model Lighting Ordinance (or portions thereof).

13. Village Street. The Storrs Center developers have applied to PZC for a permit to construct a road connecting the site of Storrs Center to Post Office Rd. The Commission did not think it necessary to add anything to its original comment on the proposed Storrs Center project, which included this road. See Comment on PZC 1256-57, 18 April 2007.

14. Election of Officers. The present Gang of 3 (Chair Quentin Kessel, Vice Chair John Silander, and Secretary Scott Lehmann) agreed to serve for another year.

15. Adjourned at 8:58p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 22 September 2011; revised 23 September 2011; approved 19 October 2011

Attachment: Report on 13 September 2011 IWA Field Trip

The only site visited on the 13 September 2011 IWA Field Trip concerned IWA 1487 (Wright, 878 Mansfield City Rd). The applicant proposes to add a deck across the back of her house, from which the land slopes gently into woods and – beyond two parallel low stone walls – wetlands about 55-65 ft from the edge of the proposed deck. I did not see anything suggesting a significant wetland impact, as long as silt fencing is in place during construction.

Scott Lehmann