



CITY OF DANBURY
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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT COMMISSION
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**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT COMMISSION
MINUTES
CITY HALL – 155 DEER HILL AVENUE
City Council Chambers
Wednesday, July 13, 2022
7:00 p.m.**

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BY: 

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Bernard Gallo called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Present were Commissioners Mary Cronin, Tom Giegler, Geoff Herald, Mark Massoud, and Alternate Elizabeth Falk. Absent: Matt Rose and Alex Wolk. Staff present: Abby Lewis, Public Health Inspector, and Mary Larkin, Staff Secretary.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: June 22, 2022

Motion to accept the Minutes of June 22, 2022 was made by Geoff Herald; seconded by Mary Cronin. All in favor with Ayes by those eligible to vote: Mary Cronin, Geoff Herald, Tom Giegler, and Bernard Gallo.

NEW BUSINESS:

#1172 53 Newtown Road, City of Danbury Water Pollution Control Plant, (L12014), IG-80 Zone, improvements to the Water Pollution Control Plant

Will Edgerton, Project Engineer with Wright –Pierce Engineering, Middletown, CT presented the application. Mr. Edgerton explained there are two project locations. Project A is located on the east side of the project campus across from Plumtrees Road, and Project B is on the south boundary of the wastewater treatment plant campus. Project A was used as sludge drying beds until the 1970s, a practice which was stopped in the 70s. They are overgrown with brush with concrete walls/subdividers.

Project B includes existing stormwater infrastructure. Stormwater drainage from a basin offsite is collected through the collection system, conveyed to the southern part of the campus, discharged just to the south through an endwall, it flows through an intermittent stream, through an existing box culvert, through two plunge pools, and then is conveyed through stormwater piping across the southern boundary of the

campus around and discharged to a tributary stream that eventually drains to the Limekiln Brook. Historically, this area is prone to flooding and the existing infrastructure was designed for the 25-year storm. Debris and sediment flows into the wastewater treatment basins from significant rainfall events, compromising treatment efficiency and sometimes causing damage to the treatment plant equipment. In 2021 remnants of Hurricane Ida caused existing structure to be compromised. Banks upstream were washed out. The stormwater surge washed away the existing blockage and damaged the culvert structure. At the other project on east side of the campus, there is an electrical substation in the drying beds, which is the main power feed to the treatment plant. During Ida, the beds flooded and almost breached the substation. If that had happened, the main power supply to the treatment plant would have shut down. Per Mr. Edgerton, the goal is to prevent any type of flooding and repair the damage.

Commissioner Geoff Herald asked if the electrical situation had been addressed. Mr. Edgerton explained that a temporary measure of an earthen berm is in place. Mr. Herald inquired about a generator and Mr. Edgerton explained there were two existing emergency generators now, and they have automatic float switches.

Proposed improvements to Project B include: remove a box culvert that was damaged during Ida and replacing with a storm water plunge pool that will feed into the (inaudible) plans. A wetlands scientist has flagged the wetlands boundaries, and those are reflected on the maps by the surveyor. Easement boundaries were identified and David Day, Public Utilities Supervisor, is working with the abutters who will be impacted.

Project A drying bed No. 1 – Electrical substation located in this area. Concrete walls which had been left in place to divide the bed parcels, actually trap the stormwater. In order to capture surface runoff and stormwater discharge, the plan is to construct a reinforced concrete swale to collect and convey stormwater away from the treatment plant and substation. He explained other alternatives. The City required a resolution that would require minimal maintenance.

Mr. Edgerton explained that during the construction, typical erosion and sediment control measures would be followed, and details are included in the drawings that were provided with the application. Commissioner Tom Giegler asked if removal of the concrete barriers would change the grade. Mr. Edgerton said the concrete barriers would be demolished, and the plan is to regrade the drying beds. The City plans to use the area as a “lay down” area. Commissioner Mark Massoud asked the genesis of the project--was it due to the impacts of Ida or was it a longer-range plan? Mr. Edgerton said that Project B was especially in response to Ida to increase hydraulic capacity of the stormwater infrastructure and hopefully mitigate risk of additional damage. Mr. Herald asked if this will increase our total capacity? Mr. Edgerton said it will increase the total processing capacity around the site. He further explained the old system was to pass the 25-year storm. The new improvements were to model 25-year and 100-year storms.

Motion to table until the next regular meeting on July 27, 2022 pending review was made by Geoff Herald; seconded by Tom Giegler. All in favor with Ayes from Mary Cronin, Tom Giegler, Geoff Herald, Mark Massoud, and Bernard Gallo.

OLD BUSINESS:

#1170 65 South King Street, D. Ben Benoit, West End Danbury, LLC, (E10095), RA-40 Zone, to build on existing trails and create a farm for the personal use of the family.

Dainius Virbickas, P.E. with Artel Engineering Group, was present to answer any questions the Commissioners might have. Mr. Herald said that after the presentation last time, he was prepared to act on this tonight.

Motion to grant a summary ruling with seven conditions of approval was made by Geoff Herald; seconded by Tom Giegler. All in favor with Ayes from Mary Cronin, Tom Giegler, Geoff Herald, Mark Massoud, and Bernard Gallo.

#1171 75 South King Street, D. Ben Benoit, West End Danbury, LLC, (E09094), RA-40 Zone, to build on existing trails and continue farming for the personal use of the family.

Public Health Inspector Abby Lewis addressed the Commission to bring attention to the size of the greenhouse. Ms. Lewis explained the greenhouse will be approximately one-third of an acre, which is larger than any commercial greenhouse in Danbury. The greenhouse is slated for personal use only, but she is concerned about other projects of this size that might impact on surrounding wetlands. Mr. Herald asked the size of the lot. Ms. Lewis said 60 acres. Mr. Herald said this is well within the percentage for the size of the lot. Mr. Herald asked Dainius Virbickas P.E. with Artel Engineering Group, if this will be a year-round greenhouse that is not commercial? Mr. Virbickas confirmed he is correct. Mr. Virbickas does not know what or to what degree they are growing anything. Owner's consultants advised them what size to build. Mr. Herald asked if this would be a specialized greenhouse, such as a hydroponic greenhouse? As far as Mr. Virbickas knows, he thinks this will be just a typical greenhouse. Mr. Herald asked if there would be a single-family home on the property at some time? Mr. Virbickas said there might be a single-family home somewhere on the property, but at this point the property owners are going piece meal. Mr. Herald asked Ms. Lewis if her concern about the greenhouse on the property is that other people will say they can build a one-third acre greenhouse on another property. Her response was (inaudible). Mr. Herald said if there's no sanitary facilities, they have a long way to walk to get to a facility. Mr. Giegler suggested they might use temporary facilities if needed. Mr. Gallo asked if it might be converted to growing marijuana? Mr. Massoud said if this intends to be registered as a farm, a farm is a non-regulated activity with respect to Inland Wetlands making it difficult for the EIC to get involved in uses. If it is defined as a farm, it is not regulated by EIC. In terms of marijuana/cannabis, it is out of our purview.

Motion to grant a summary ruling with seven conditions of approval was made by Geoff Herald; seconded by Tom Giegler. All in favor with Ayes from Mary Cronin, Tom Giegler, Geoff Herald, Mark Massoud, and Bernard Gallo.

VIOLATIONS: 21A Virginia Avenue, Danbury, CT

Mr. Gallo reported they have to do another on-site for Virginia Avenue.

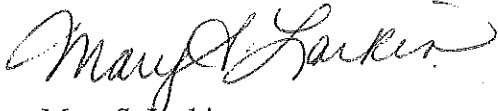
Tabled to the next regular meeting on July 27, 2022 for soils tests results per request of Arthur H. Howland & Associates, P.C.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Massoud asked if an on-site visit at the Water Pollution Control Plant had been conducted. Mr. Gallo explained this is the first time on the agenda. Mr. Gallo agreed that a site visit could be scheduled.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mark Massoud; seconded by Mary Cronin. All in favor with Ayes from Mary Cronin, Tom Giegler, Geoff Herald, Mark Massoud, and Bernard Gallo. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary S. Larkin".

Mary S. Larkin
Secretary