

MINUTES
ENFIELD INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES AGENCY
TUESDAY, January 31, 2023, 7:00PM
SPECIAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
Council Chambers; 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT 06082

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2023 FEB -2 PM 4:15

Sheila M Bailey

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairwoman Corbin-Sobinski called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

3. Roll Call

Commissioner Higley took the roll and present were Chairwoman Corbin-Sobinski, Commissioners, Virginia Higley, Nancy Martin, Kevin Zorda and Robert Hendrickson.

Also, present Georgianna Driver, Assistant Town Planner

4. New Business-

a. Wetlands Review of Petition No. 1557- 95, 105, and 113 Raffia Road- Pending Petition with the CT Siting Council for the construction of a large-scale Solar Facility abutting the Scantic River and proposed grading of existing terrace escarpments; Lodestar Energy, Petitioner; LSE Hercules, LLC, Owner; BL, BG, R-33, and R-88 Zones. **(The Public Comment Deadline for Siting Council: 2/5/23.)**

Chairwoman Corbin-Sobinski stated the special meeting was called because the deadline to submit public comments for this petition is February 5, 2023, and their next meeting was scheduled after the deadline. Georgie sent out an email about this petition a couple of weeks ago and members of the Agency submitted questions and concerns about the escarpments.

Ms. Driver said that they were originally discussing this through an email thread, which anyone from the public can request copies for review. She drafted a letter just after she went through the project for the wetlands and aquifer concerns, to hit the key points that the Commission would like to protect. One question was why have CT DEEP staff requested the petitioner to remove one sediment trap that wasn't shown on the original plan. She was not sure what trap it was, she looked at the report and did not find it. Ms. Driver spoke with their Attorney, who said she was not sure of the reasoning for the removal either. The next thing was the petitioner implanting the resource protection program. It mentions proposed environmentally sensitive signage, however this is not outlined in the resource protection program measures on the site plan. She recommended this signage be placed on the property for the project but there is no guarantee it will. Another recommendation made was for petroleum material storage and spill prevention under subsection C to include an additional note that any fueling hazardous materials are to occur on site

Ms. Driver states that she and Laurie were reviewing this report and discovered that the report did not mention anything about terrace escarpments and there is a significant amount of terrace escarpments. The report mentions cutting off tree tops over 30 feet tall in the escarpment areas, cutting out to the tree line and avoiding wetlands, but no mention of the terrace escarpments in their report. As such the reason for having this special meeting today, to see if there is anything the Commission would like to add.

Chairwoman Corbin-Sobinski stated she went through the entire report and was disturbed that there was not mention of the terrace escarpments.

Ms. Driver shared her screen to show a map of where the boundaries are of the escarpments. She showed that she believes they are going right at the boundary of the escarpments.

Chairwomen Corbin-Sobinski stated that she saw a letter dated December 13th, indicating that they will not remove and soils on the property and grating will be minimal.

They are proposing erosion control methods and mentioned that there will be no impact to wetlands. They delineated the wetlands on site. They are installing silt fencing around the entire project.

Commissioner Higley asked, if they are going to grade, can we be sure that they will grade away from the escarpments and the wetland soils?

Ms. Driver stated that it seems on the site plan that they are proposing to grade uphill.

Ms. Driver gave a background of this applicant. This applicant had reached out to her last year in August and they were originally set to go in front of the PZC and IWWA informally. So when they submit to the Siting Council any suggestions or comments can be taken into consideration and they would not have to review their plans so much with the Siting Council. They have decided not to go that route. The person that Ms. Driver spoke with said it would be better for them to just not go informally and just wait for the Siting Council petition period for the Wetlands Agency and the PZC to submit comments that way.

Ms. Driver informed the Commission that they can petition to be an independent party. The Town would apply to be an intervening party and have an actual status in the application process. This is another avenue that she mentioned to the Commission if they want to pursue it.

Commissioner Higley asked what would be the advantage of petitioning as an independent party instead of just sending a letter.

There really is no advantage. The person can make a statement in writing or make an oral statement much like a public hearing.

Commissioner Zorda stated that the whole idea of having solar is to improve, however they do not seem concerned with the Scantic River. He asked how far away is the River from the solar project? Ms. Driver stated that it's about 250 or so feet.

Commissioner Zorda recommended submitting a strong letter, he does not believe they need to go in person. Commissioner Higley mentioned copying PZC on their letter as they seemed concerned as well.

Ms. Driver stated that she would draft a letter with the recommendation that terrace escarpments should be protected from any project impacts in order to protect the Scantic River. She will email the letter to the Commissioners for their review and approval.

5. Adjournment: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Zorda, to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM

Motion passed by a show of hands 5-0-0 vote.

Prepared by: Sandie Barone

Respectfully

Submitted,

Virginia Higley, Secretary