

TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT



Trumbull Conservation Commission Virtual Special Meeting
Friday, July 17, 2020
4:00 pm

Present: Chairman Mary Ellen Lemay, Commissioners Richard Post, Tim Coughlin, Joanne Parsons

Also Present: Janet Epstein, Richard Ruby and Rob Leiphart

Absent: Commissioner Kim DiCorpo

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by Chairman Lemay. The purpose of the Special Commission meeting was to review and approve an advisory report generated for an Inland Wetlands Watercourse Commission (IWWC) application for 198 Old Dike Road. A copy of the draft report was sent to the Commissioners prior to the meeting for review.

The application to the IWWC requested permission to remove twenty trees. The property is located on the shores of Pinewood Lake and it also has Booth Hill Brook that runs through it. Most of the property is within the regulated area which requires approval from the IWWC. A site walk was done on July 10 and Mr. Coughlin, from the Conservation Commission, was invited to participate. He is a CT licensed arborist. Based on this walk, some recommendations emerged. The Conservation Commission has an advisory position and is able to provide recommendations to IWWC.

The report has four basic advisory recommendations or statements based on the site walk.

Recommendation #1 discussed the inventory of the trees to be removed and stated replacement of the removed trees should be native hardwood species such as Maple, Oak, Hickory, Eastern White Pine, Birch, Hemlock, Beech, Spruce or Juniper. Plant location was also addressed.

Recommendation #2 discussed erosion in the stream and the effect of the stream side trees on the ecosystem and lake health. Storm water management was also addressed with regard to the trees proposed for removal. This was determined by calculations from a data collection program from I-Tree and based on this information a recommendation for tree replacement was determined to effectively manage the storm water at the current rate that the mature trees are providing. The replacement plan from the landscape architect was reviewed. The recommendation from the Conservation Commission was discussed with regard to replacement ratios depending on the size of the trees removed.

Recommendation #4 discussed the fact that the property is a highly sensitive watershed location that acts as a main tributary point for Booth Hill Brook into Pinewood Lake and the effectiveness of the current trees on the property. Removal would increase the risk of deterioration of the stream bank when the roots and trunks decay. Storm water management of the trees keeps the quality of the lake water high.

This report is a science-based recommendation that emerged from observations from Mr. Coughlin on the site walk. He discussed the reasoning behind the recommendations he made and noted he was only looking at the application before IWWC for removal of the trees and their replacement not whether the trees were hazardous. The twenty trees should not be replaced with landscape plants or short-lived trees but with hardwood trees that will be there a long time. After discussion, Recommendation #1 will remain as written.

Discussion was held regarding the placement of trees in the landscape plan with regard to stump removal and planting ease. There is room on the property so there is an opportunity to plant trees to avoid problem locations. Mrs. Parsons discussed tree selection in the plan. The tree selection includes all natives but she was unsure if some of the trees would be successful in this location. She proposed the landscape architect should include a method for planting the trees in the vulnerable spots so that, during storm washouts, the new roots and the stream bank are protected. This would provide long term success of the plantings. Mr. Coughlin noted he didn't see erosion at the stream side currently but by removing some of the trees there will be an increase of erosion in that area.

The Commission felt the homeowner needed to be cautious and not go in and cut down trees. Shade value, energy value and real estate value needs to be considered in keeping these mature trees. They do not want a hasty decision to be made on the part of the resident that would have a negative impact on the lake community.

Mrs. Lemay will add two illustrations from Don Watson, former Conservation Commissioner, regarding the value of stream side buffers. Mr. Coughlin stated it would be beneficial if the Conservation Commission had more time in regards to applications to be able to provide more input to final design of the replacement plan. In this instance, they could provide suggestions to help maintain the water quality in the lake. Mr. Post suggested that a statement be included to suggest the Conservation Commission be able to review the final revised landscape plan. The plan could be altered to include other plantings along the streams that would provide protection better than those suggested. This could be determined with a more in-depth evaluation of the property. Mrs. Lemay will include a statement that the Conservation Commission be allowed to review the entire riparian buffer and have an opportunity to review the final amended landscape plan.

Discussion was held regarding more input from the Pinewood Lake community as they have a vested interest and should be allowed to voice their opinions on this application. It was noted that many people do not connect the quality of the lake water to the land that surrounds it. What is done on individual properties affects everyone. After discussion, it will be recommended to the IWWC to conduct a public hearing.

Mrs. Lemay will revise the letter to the IWWC and send a final draft to the Conservation Commission members for review. Once approved, it will be submitted to the Chairman of the IWWC.

Motion was made by Mr. Coughlin to approve the Conservation Commission report on the IWWC application with the additions as discussed. Seconded by Mr. Post and approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Coughlin to adjourn the meeting at 4:54 pm. Seconded by Mr. Post and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk