

Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
February 7, 2008

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Lisette Henrey, Eric Brower, Renee Seblatnigg, Sue Baker, Nancy Dickinson, Alexander Brash, Gary Silberberg and Suzanne Graham

Staff: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience present: Richard Schulze, 28 Dublin Hill Road; Catherine Farello, Stanwich School/parent; Rick Margenot, 8 Cat Rock Road; Alec Crawford, neighbor; John Williams, Stanwich School; Bruce Kiley, Stanwich School; Chuck Standard, 8 Druid Lane; Nancy Standard, 8 Druid Lane; Marcia Heffering, neighbor/GRALU; Scott Mitchell, Stanwich School/parent; Patricia Chadwick, Stanwich School/parent; Jay Bicans, Cat Rock Road; Alvin Abrams, neighbor; Sara Meisel, neighbor; John Chadwick, Stanwich School; David Ogilvy, Stanwich School/parent; Loraine Gordon, Stanwich School; Jackie Ekholm, Stanwich School; Don Lucey, Stanwich School; J.T. Coe, NEGA; Cindy Meeker, Stanwich School; Gregory Bedrosian, Stanwich School; Jane Ghajarossion, Stanwich School; Tom Galvin, Stanwich School; Matthew Hickman, Stanwich School/parent; Michael Farello, Stanwich School/parent; Jerry Knorr, Stanwich School/parent; Caryl Bate, neighbor; Jenny Judge, Stanwich School/parent; Chris VonKeyserling, RTM District 8; Slavka Button, 127 Dingtletown Road; George Weissman, 17 Chapel Lane; Carl F. Anderson, 130 Hendrie Avenue; Forest Crossman, 17 Chapel Lane; Endy Anderson, 130 Hendrie Avenue; Jim O'Brien, Boy Scouts; Charlie Andruss, 201 Cat Roack Road; Mary Lou Lange, the President of Greenwich Residence for Appropriate Land Use; Andy Healy, founder of Greenwich Residence for Appropriate Land Use; Terry Coates, GRALU; James Riley, GRALU; Anne F. Dayton, Fogarty Cohen Selby & Nemiroff, LLC; Jon Sheer, Stanwich School; Rajkumar Makam, 15 Ferncliff Road; Anthony D'Andrea, Rocco V. D'Andrea, Inc.; Peter J. Pratley, GRALU; Sheila Wilson, Stanwich School; Gail Khosla, Stanwich School/parent; Pat Young, Stanwich Headmistress; Bruce Cohen, Fogarty Cohen Selby & Nemiroff, LLC; William Kenny, William Kenny Associates; Myra Waine, Stanwich School/neighbor, Marten Waine, Stanwich School/neighbor; Ty Tregellas, Stanwich School; Eric Roise, The SLAM Collaborative; Kyle Slocum, The SLAM Collaborative; Mark Lancor, DYMAR, 325 Main Street, Southbury; Rob Brunetti, Pecora Brothers; John Dugan, Haley & Aldrich, Inc.; Caroline Weiser, Stanwich School; Elizabeth Koldyke Rodbol, Stanwich School; Anastasia Brien, Stanwich School; Kathy C. Epstein, Stanwich School; Laura Dianis, Stanwich School; Melissa LoParco, 114 Blueberry Drive, Stamford/Stanwich School; Elizabeth Presumey, Stanwich School; Garsy Priseumey-LeBlanc, Stanwich School/student; Gordon Mackenzie, neighbor; Sally Mackenzie,

neighbor; Sally Mackenzie, neighbor; Lori Konolige, 26 Hill Road; Tracy Smith, Stanwich School; Barrie Richmond, Stanwich School; Frances Long, Stanwich School; Ted Walworth III, President of North/East Greenwich Association; Ken Lockyer, Stanwich School; James Healy; Steven Healy; Charles Coates, Whitman Breed Abbott and Morgan; James Riley, Whitman Breed Abbott and Morgan

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Rutherford

- 1) Review and approval of draft minutes of January 3, 2008 monthly meeting: A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Dickinson to accept the minutes with the following correction on page 3 should read “Greenwich Residents”. The motion was carried.
- 2) Review of Correspondence:
 - a) *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine was distributed to the Commission members.
 - b) Environmental symposium *Nature at Home in your Garden: Suburban Landscapes to Help the Planet* with keynote speaker Douglas Tallamy, Ph.D. is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at the Cole Auditorium, Greenwich Library.
 - c) The Conservation Commission members received a copy of the operational plan. The plan is prepared annually by the department head and submitted to the Selectman’s Office.
 - d) An inquiry from the Greenwich Hills Condo Association was discussed. The designated open space on their property had been encroached upon and the neighbor claims adverse possession over the encroachment. The Conservation Commission and P&Z had been asked for help in protecting the open space and resolving the dispute. Savageau requested that Rutherford and Brower follow-up on this during her absence.
- 3) Staff Report:
 - a) Selectmen’s Environmental Task Force: Several subcommittees were formed. Savageau encouraged all Commission members to join the task force and select one of the subcommittees.
 - b) Cos Cob Power Plant: A joint meeting of the Conservation Commission and Board of Parks and Recreation took place on Wednesday, February 6, 2008. Silberberg prepared a spreadsheet analysis of the *2001 Opinion Survey* done on the Power Plant for discussion. Commission members had the opportunity to provide their own comments regarding the most beneficial uses of the space. Savageau summarized the history of the site and its limitations in terms of the future development and uses.

Brash made a motion, seconded by Baker, that the final decision on the park redevelopment be delayed to allow for the Commission to provide recommendations on this project. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Old Business:

Stanwich School – PSB #1925, 257 and 247 Stanwich Road – 8:00 p.m. Prior to any discussion, Brower recused himself and left the room.

Dayton addressed issues raised at the last Conservation meeting. Lancor summarized the meeting between the applicant, Conservation Commission Staff, P&Z Staff and DEP regarding the feasibility of relocating the leaching fields away from the proposed conservation easement. D’Andrea spoke about the drainage improvements and the new approach to address the storm water quality. Dayton described the latest improvements to the project’s streetscape.

Savageau responded to the site plan revisions, emphasizing the environmental importance of the relocation of the leaching fields. Rutherford commented on the proposed landscaping plan, pointing out that the planting density may need to be improved to provide for more effective screening. Commission members then asked questions of the applicant regarding the changes. Rutherford than asked for comments from the public.

Coates spoke for the *Greenwich Residents for Appropriate Land Use*, emphasizing that there are existing covenants that may limit the site uses. Lange stated her concerns regarding the location of the leaching fields and the intensity of the proposed site disturbance. Andy Healy, James Healy, Steven Healy, Jay Bican, Rick Margenot, Rajkumar Makam, Alvin Abrams, Caryl Bate, and Peter Pretley also spoke and presented concerns relating to blasting, site overdevelopment, location of the leaching fields, tree removal, increase of storm water runoff and impact on the vehicular traffic.

Speakers voicing support for the project included Chris Von Keyserling and Scott Mitchell. Bruce Cohen presented closing remarks for the applicant

Following the public session, the Commission entered into deliberations. After a long discussion the following motion was made by Brash and seconded by Henrey.

The Conservation Commission recognizes the effort that the Stanwich School has put into the development of a comprehensive site plan that concentrates development on the western side of the property where the school is presently operating. The plan proposes leaving a good portion of the eastern property in a wooded state and providing habitat enhancement in this area. The Commission is

also pleased with the location of the proposed dedicated open space along the eastern boundary of the property except for the leaching field intrusion. It provides a contiguous area that functions as a buffer to neighbors and maintains a green corridor on the property. The applicant proposes to cleanup the hazardous material found on the wood roads and this should be completed. The applicant also proposes to apply for LEED certification and the Commission applauds that effort.

The revised plans have addressed previous comments by this Commission regarding the open space on the property. The current proposal includes 15% open space as dedicated open space along the western boundary of the property. An additional 7.6% is offered as a conservation easement. Access to the open space from St. Agnes will be in the form of an access easement along existing wood roads. Additionally, the applicant has agreed to explore, with the Town and DEP, alternative locations for the leaching fields. This work is ongoing.

Therefore, the Conservation Commission recommends that the Stanwich School plans, as currently proposed, be approved contingent upon the relocation of the leaching fields and denied if this cannot be accomplished. The current leaching field location bisects the open space corridor and is adjacent to neighboring properties and thereby encumbering them. The Commission feels that a location (or locations) that allows for the discharge from the leaching fields to move through wetlands on-site before reaching neighboring properties is in the best interest of the community. The Commission also makes the following recommendations:

- (1) The Commission is pleased that the school has offered a better open space plan than previously presented, however, if the leaching fields are relocated, the open space area should be increased to include this area. Moreover, the Commission feels that there is opportunity for the school to provide for conservation easements on more of the property than has been offered including area around the wetlands system. (See #A-2 in 1-7-08 memo – attached)*
- (2) It is strongly recommended that the applicant re-look at the streetscape and design of the lower fields including lowering the field elevation and increasing the density of plant materials.*
- (3) The storm water management system has been designed for a 100-year storm event. It includes a series of treatments (treatment train) and surface detention that should provide for maintaining and/or improving existing water quality. For final design, details on how storm water will be managed during construction will be something that Conservation will be looking for.*

- (4) *There was discussion about fencing along Cat Rock Road as a disincentive to parking along the road. Any fencing should be designed to allow for the movement of wildlife and for pedestrian access to conservation area.*
- (5) *The following comments from our 1-07-08 memo are also still applicable: The Commission accepts the recommendations of HPI's Archaeology report and as outlined in a memo to the Commission from Nancy Dickinson dated January 3, 2008. These recommendations should be included in any final approval for work on this site.*
- (a) *To provide for better air quality and reduce the carbon impact of the school, a bus-only policy for students should be adopted for the school.*
 - (b) *No lighting of ball fields, tennis courts, etc should be allowed.*
 - (c) *The applicant should be encouraged to continue to work towards LEED certification for the site. As part of this effort, additional low impact development practices should be explored including the use of pervious parking.*

The Conservation Commission received information during its meeting on previous Zoning Board of Appeals decisions. The Commission did not consider this information during its decision making process. As charged, the Commission focused its review on conservation and environmental concerns of the application before us.

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Brash to adjourn the meeting. Motion was carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch