

**TOWN OF MANCHESTER
MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION/INLAND
WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES AGENCY
JUNE 3, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Person: Patrick Kennedy, Acting Chairman
Michael Stebe, Secretary
Teresa Ike
Daniela Luna
Michael Farina

ALTERNATE MEMBERS SITTING:

Electronically: Maliha Ahsan

ABSENT:

Eric Prause, Chairman
Chris Schoeneberger
Zachary Schurin

ALSO PRESENT:

In Person: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Economic
Development
Megan Pilla, Principal Development Planner
Electronically: David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner/Wetlands
Agent
Nancy Martel, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the Business Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

JULIANO’S POOLS – Relocation of septic leaching field and construction of a new in-ground pool with patio and safety fence at 37 Pondview Drive. – Inland Wetlands Permit (IWP-0051-2023)

Ms. Danielle Levasseur, representing Juliano’s Pools, stated that the proposal is for a 20 x 34 ft. mountain pond in-ground pool, a surrounding patio and a 4 ft. self-closing, self-latching safety fence. The project involves moving the septic tank and leaching fields slightly to ensure that the pool meets the setback requirements.

Mr. Stebe commented that the majority of the plan is in the inland wetlands. Noting that the overall leaching field size is to be reduced, he asked where the mechanicals for the pool will be located. Ms. Levasseur said they will be as far away from the leach field as possible.

Ms. Pilla reported no technical comments.

Mr. Laiuppa noted that, during the determination of significance discussion, temporary impacts, other than silt fences, were not discussed. He reported that, typically, if stockpiled on site, the excavated material should be outside the upland review area and as far away from the wetlands as possible.

Ms. Levasseur explained that there will be temporary stockpiles, though it could be hauled away from the site, if the Commission desired. Clean fill would be brought in as necessary.

Mr. Stebe questioned the tracking plan for the machinery used, as it will either go around the house or on top of the existing and relocated tanks.

Ms. Levasseur reported that they will use tracking, though they could go around the house, if the Commission prefers.

Mr. Laiuppa pointed out the anti-tracking pad shown on the plans to prevent tracking on the road.

Inland Wetlands Permit (IWP-0051-2023)

MOTION: Mr. Farina moved to approve the inland wetlands permit for the relocation of septic leaching field and construction of a new in-ground pool with patio and safety fence at 37 Pondview Drive, with the modification that the Inland Wetlands Agent approve the soil stockpile area.

Mr. Stebe seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval is that the proposed activity does not disturb the natural or indigenous character of the wetlands by significant impact or major effect.

The approval is valid for 5 years. The work in the regulated area must be completed within one year of commencement.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PUBLIC WORKS DEPT – Parking lot improvements including pavement replacement, grading to drain, installation of new drainage swale within infiltration trench, replacement of wooden barrier rail, and ADA improvements at 864 Middle Turnpike West. – Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significance (IWP-0007-2024)

Mr. John DiBiasi, Assistant Town Engineer, introduced himself. Mr. DiBiasi detailed the location of Laurel Marsh Park.

The Town plans two phases for the Laurel Marsh Park:

- Phase I includes the parking area and construction of a crossing over Middle Turnpike West.
- Phase II includes future work in the north end of the lower marsh area.

Mr. DiBiasi presented an aerial image and described the crossing area and parking lot area. He further described the need for the project. The parking area has had failure of the pavement, which also requires regrading. ADA needs will be addressed, providing access to the recreation area. There has been a long-term issue with lack of lighting and security.

The primary goal of the project focuses on the parking lot itself. There will be complete pavement replacement with complete removal down to the base. The site will be subtly regraded to ensure proper drainage and proper striping to designate parking areas. Also included in the plans are signage replacements by the Department of Recreation. A utility pole will be installed to accommodate lighting and a security/surveillance camera.

Mr. DiBiasi walked through the details of the parking lot project, all in accordance with the Town's Public Improvement Standards. He reported that the work area is buffered on all sides by the review area. The project is a small piece within the Hockanum River watershed area, which is significantly large.

Functions and Values of the Watershed:

The river and the adjacent wetlands are a habitat for a variety of plants and animals. It is located within the floodway for the Hockanum River, which comes with restrictions. Another function is providing recreation access to trails. The wetlands adjacent to the river itself function as a trap for sediment and nutrients. There is an educational value and it is in close proximity to two schools.

The project work falls within the previously disturbed area. They are trying to maintain the existing footprint, minimizing adjacent disturbance. The parking lot is basically a replace-in-kind project. Mr. DiBiasi detailed the contour lines representing the grading. The bioswale will be a mixture of plants and subtle grading which includes an infiltration trench. It will require removal of some brush, bushes and trees immediately adjacent to the parking area. Fill cannot be introduced into the floodway area, which would reduce the capacity to hold flood waters during large storm events.

Mr. DiBiasi detailed the parking lot and traffic modifications. There will be a new dedicated van-accessible space with a paved traversable surface.

The overall disturbance is under 0.5 acre; the work within the regulated area itself is under 0.1 acre. Mr. DiBiasi displayed and detailed the floodway line, noting that the work is in the floodway.

The Natural Diversity Database review found that there are wood turtles in the project area. In Town projects, Mr. DiBiasi includes the fact sheet from DEEP that provides information on what to look for and where to expect them. Silt fencing will be utilized for erosion and sedimentation control as well as an exclusionary fence to keep turtles out of the construction area. All erosion and sedimentation controls will be in accordance with the latest state guidelines.

Mr. DiBiasi reported the alternatives that were considered in the planning of the project.

Funding for Phase I: Funded by State of Connecticut Urban Act Grant administered by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Phase I Timeline:

- Design work is complete.
- In the middle of working through the final steps of permitting with the State of Connecticut for encroachment to do work within the state highway right-of-way, as well as securing the Inland Wetlands Permit approval.
- Bid and award the project sometime in July.
- Start construction late July/early August; wrap up in September.

Mr. Stebe noted the alternatives considered and asked about permeable pavement. He sought confirmation about the directional island.

Mr. DiBiasi stated that, based on current practices in the Department of Public Works, a gravel or processed aggregate stone parking area would be the likely choice. They are in the process of an internal discussion about the use of permeable asphalt. In terms of maintenance, sand is the worst thing for permeable asphalt and the Town does not have the appropriate equipment for it. If he were to pick a project for the first permeable parking area, it would not be a project in a regulated area. Mr. DiBiasi reiterated that the island design will be modified to better receive vehicles traveling westbound and turning in and provided details.

Mr. Laiuppa stated that none of the work is in the wetland and most of the parking lot is not within the upland review area. The Commission should consider the areas within the upland review area, as well as any impacts. He went on to detail the elements for consideration for this project.

Inland Wetland Permit – Determination of Significance (IWP-0007-2024)

MOTION: Mr. Stebe moved to find the proposed activity at the above-referenced location as shown on the inland wetlands permit application IWP-0007-2024 will not have a significant impact on the wetlands and therefore will not require a public hearing. Mr. Farina seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – Potential acquisition of 1041 Main Street, 22 Maple Street, and 25 Eldridge Street – Mandatory Referral (MR-0001-2024)

MOTION: Mr. Farina moved to amend the agenda to make the mandatory referral for the acquisition of 25 Eldridge Street a separate vote. Mr. Stebe seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – Potential acquisition of 1041 Main Street and 22 Maple Street. – Mandatory Referral (MR-0001-2024)

Mr. Anderson stated that the mandatory referrals are dictated by Sec. 8-24 of Chapter 126 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Any time the Board of Directors considers purchasing or selling

a property, the Planning and Zoning Commission is required to make a report prior to that final action.

The properties relate to the planned downtown library, which has been a several year process, which was explained in detail. Mr. Anderson noted that the Town voted to move forward with bonding for the library project with these three properties included in that library question.

The plan was displayed, with Mr. Anderson pointing out each property, stating that they total approximately 1.45 acres. The property at 1041 Main Street currently houses a one-story Webster Bank, ATM drive-through, teller drive-through, and associated parking. 22 Maple Street, a fenced area, is vacant but used for some parking. 25 Eldridge Street is a wooded area leading out to Eldridge Street.

The library building will be located at the corner of Maple and Main Streets. It will be a partially 2-story/mostly 3-story building. There is a privately-owned lot that is not a part of this proposal, Mr. Anderson said, noting that the Town has been engaged with multiple property owners in an effort to acquire property that would allow for construction of the project. The bank plans to purchase the former Heritage Bank building, currently owned by the Full Gospel Church.

The parcel to be disposed of by the Town is 601 Lydall Street, owned by the Town of Manchester. The adjoining property owner is the current owner of 25 Eldridge Street. Approximately 10 years ago, the owner on Lydall Street was encroaching upon Town land. An agreement was reached, requiring the owner to remove items from the Town property, and a small piece was sold to the adjacent owner. At that time, the owner of 25 Eldridge Street was interested in the entire piece of property, which the Town was not interested in selling. When the Town approached the owner about the Eldridge Street property, this came up and the owner suggested a land swap. The appraisal values of 25 Eldridge Street and 601 Lydall Street were very similar.

Mr. Anderson noted that there are significant wetlands on the Lydall Street property across from a reservoir. There is an existing farm to the north. A stream crosses the middle of the property. It would be challenging to develop the site.

Current Conditions: 601 Lydall Street is essentially surplus water land, wooded, active agricultural, and a challenge to develop.

The Plan of Conservation and Development mentions the library many times, as well as the importance of a downtown library, and the importance of downtown as the center with adjacent neighborhoods. Growth opportunities downtown are limited and a three-story library building on a currently half-vacant, half one-story building lot would fit that description.

In looking at the Conservation and Growth Map in the Manchester Next plan, the Lydall Street area is essentially either preserved conservation or reserved conservation.

Mr. Stebe questioned the utility of 25 Eldridge Street. Even without it, there is a good amount of parking. The Town has the right-of-way to go through from Maple Street to Eldridge Street if so

desired. There are more than 100 parking spots across Main Street and more than 60 in the Yellow Lot across Maple Street. A large discussion item in the current POCD was to encourage people to walk.

Mr. Anderson explained that 51 spaces seem to be a lot but are minimal in terms of this type of development, even in the downtown area. The parking requirement for this in another area would be 200-300 spaces. The parking requirements will be met elsewhere, and people will be encouraged to walk. However, for those who are unable to walk or have small children, on-site parking is important. The design team looked at several iterations of orienting the site to provide enough egress, enough parking, and enough circulation.

Mr. Stebe commented that the Lydall Street location is directly across from a water source for the Town, as well as hiking and trails. He asked whether this was put before the myriad of commissions dealing with trails, conservation, etc., regarding the possible importance of retaining this property. A comment was also made about agricultural exemptions.

Mr. Anderson remarked that, when the owner of 25 Eldridge Street was approached, this was what they were willing to do. The Water & Sewer Administrator is tasked with overseeing water sources. He added that he was not in charge of the negotiations. In the end, the trade-off is: there is a library project; there is a way to accomplish what the current design is, in accordance with the referendum and the approval by the Board of Directors; and it does involve the trade of a separate property.

Mr. Farina commented that the discussion about 601 Lydall Street and 25 Eldridge Street should be reserved to the respective agenda items. He added that 1041 Main Street and 22 Maple Street are absolutely critical parcels for the library; 25 Eldridge Street has been deemed imperative by many members of the Library Building Commission, though he is less enthusiastic.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER

1041 Main Street & 22 Maple Street

Mandatory Referral (MR-0001-2024)

MOTION: Mr. Farina moved to issue a favorable report regarding the purchase of 1041 Main Street and 22 Maple Street as presented at the June 3, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Mr. Stebe seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the favorable report is that the purchase of the properties in question advances the Town's Downtown library project.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – Potential acquisition of 25 Eldridge Street – Mandatory Referral (MR-0002-2024)

Ms. Ike remarked that there was no answer to the question of any other commissions or departments weighing in, other than the Water & Sewer Department.

Mr. Anderson responded that, in his opinion, no one else needs to weigh in. It was his understanding that it went right to the Water & Sewer Department because they are responsible for the land.

Ms. Pilla interjected that the Town-owned right-of-way is not wide enough to be utilized for two-way traffic.

Mr. Anderson added that 25 Eldridge Street was included in the Library Referendum question. He stated that it does not dictate actions. It says that the understanding of the voters is that the library would be in the location shown to the Directors that included a layout similar to this.

Mr. Kennedy added that a bond is an authorization. It can be spent but does not have to be.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER

25 Eldridge Street

Mandatory Referral (MR-0002-2024)

MOTION: Mr. Farina moved to issue a favorable report regarding the purchase of 25 Eldridge Street. Ms. Ike seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the favorable report is that the purchase of the property in question advances the Town's Downtown library project and was included in the 2022 bond referendum.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – Potential disposition of 601 Lydall Street. – Mandatory Referral (MR-0003-2024)

Mr. Farina referred to the 2009 aerial image, the 2016 aerial image, and the image in the meeting packet. He pointed out the differences between the images, noting obvious building on the Town property, confirmed with the Town Clerk's office. He stated that he does not understand the Water Department's memo stating that this does not feed into our water system, given its location. The property to the east has been on the Town's top priority list for a very, very long time. If the intent is to purchase that property eventually, it would be foolish to give up 601 Lydall Street. He noted that 601 Lydall Street directly connects to trails and, if the property to the east is not acquired, 601 would be the only access point.

Mr. Farina stated that he was not opposed to the Town giving the owner a portion of the land he has likely encroached upon. However, the full 3.28 acres seems excessive for a 0.18 swap. Perhaps an easement on the property could be a possibility.

Mr. Laiuppa stated that the Land Acquisition and Historic Property Investment Committee has been discussing properties in this area, more specifically the farm to the north of 601 Lydall Street. It was recognized that, if that farm – which is on the priority list – was turned into Town land, there is a connection further to the east in a less wet area where the farm driveway is currently. While there may be a paper connection through 601 Lydall Street, it would not be as practical a connection from a trail perspective. If the larger farm parcel was purchased, the more practical connection would be further to the east. There is an exercise currently underway by

staff to look at potential easements that would be comparable in grade and elevation to the road and walkable. From a hydrological connectivity perspective, there is a stream and a wetland there. It parallels Lydall Street to the west with a culvert under the road at the farm to the east.

Regarding agricultural exemptions mentioned by Mr. Stebe, the Commission is well aware of recent violations, both to farms. It is much easier for a farm to have an exemption for certain activities, but in many cases, a permit is still required. In the cases where a permit is not required, a determination of exemption is still required. Mr. Kennedy recalled that, in the Land Acquisition and Historic Property Investment Committee meeting, they were looking more to the east side than the west side for a potential trail. Easements and development rights were discussed because the Town wants farms to continue. If the Water Department does not have any value to it, the Commission does not have any basis or expertise to say they are wrong.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER

601 Lydall Street

Mandatory Referral (MR-0003-2024)

MOTION: Mr. Farina moved to issue an unfavorable report regarding the disposition of 601 Lydall Street as presented at the June 3, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Ms. Luna seconded the motion.

MOTION: Mr. Farina moved to table the item. Ms. Luna seconded the motion. Mr. Stebe, Ms. Ike, Ms. Luna, Mr. Farina, and Ms. Ahsan voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Kennedy voted against the motion. The motion passed five to one.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Laiuppa reported and detailed an administrative approval for the Town of Manchester Department of Public Works for 321 Olcott Street and 864 Middle Turnpike West for the replacement of an existing sanitary sewer wastewater pump station and force main.

Mr. Anderson congratulated Ms. Pilla, who passed her AICP exam last week.

Mr. Farina gave his explanation for tabling Mandatory Referral (MR-0003-2024) and read from Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 20, 2024 – Public Hearing/Business Meeting

MOTION: Ms. Ike moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Stebe seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

1. **VIKING MANCHESTER PARTNERS, LLC** – Resubdivision (SUB-0001-2024) – Subdivision of existing parcel into two parcels each containing an existing commercial

building, with no change in building envelope, parking, or site conditions at 19 Pavilions Drive.

2. **TOWN OF MANCHESTER PUBLIC WORKS DEPT.** – **Inland Wetland Permit (IWP-0007-2024); Flood Plain Permit (FLDP-0002-2024)** – Parking lot improvements including pavement replacement, grading to drain, installation of new drainage swale within infiltration trench, replacement of wooden barrier rail, and ADA improvements at 864 Middle Turnpike West.

The Business Meeting closed at 8:50 P.M.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

June 17, 2024
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS BUSINESS MEETING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.