



# WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

## FLOOD & EROSION CONTROL BOARD

TOWN HALL, 110 MYRTLE AVENUE  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880  
(203) 341 1120 www.westportct.gov

### MINUTES

Flood & Erosion Control Board Meeting of July 6, 2022

Present for the Board: William S. Mazo (Chair)  
Aimee Monroy-Smith  
Phillip Schemel  
Robert Aldrich

Present for Department of Public Works: Edward Gill, Engineer II

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William S. Mazo, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

1. **2 Owenoke Park / WPL-11555-22;** *Application of Environmental Land Solutions on behalf of the owner, Bluewater Owenoke 2, LLC, to demolish an existing single-family residence and construct a new single-family dwelling with a pool, patio, and driveway, with associated grading and landscaping. The proposed activity is within the WPL area of Gray's Creek and the Saugatuck River.*

The application was presented by William Chappa of Chappa Site Consulting, LLC, on behalf of the owner, Bluewater Owenoke 2, LLC.

There were questions from the Board regarding the history of flooding on the property and the proposed uses of the lower level.

Per the Chair's request, Edward Gill summarized the Engineering Department's review. He noted that the comment he included about footing drains was addressed and the Applicant did not plan to install any. He also stated that the drainage report would require an additional sheet prior to obtaining a Zoning Permit, reporting the existing directly connected impervious areas and the proposed directly connected impervious areas to show compliance with MS4 standards, per the Town's updated Drainage Standards. He also stated that he is in favor of approval.

There were questions from Paul Winn at 5 Owenoke Park regarding the proposed drainage, whether the new house would have a basement, whether any variances would be required, and the type of foundation that would be constructed.

The chair asked if there were any additional questions from the Public. There were none.

The Board went into Work Session. It was agreed that the following Standard Conditions of Approval were deemed necessary: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

DECISION: Proposed Project Approved, 4(Y)-0(N).

2. **296 Compo Road South / WPL-11559-22**; *Application of LANDTECH on behalf of the owners, Niv & Kim Harizman, to construct a new single-family dwelling, in-ground swimming pool, driveway, and associated site improvements. The proposed activity is within the WPL area of Gray's Creek and the Saugatuck River.*

The application was presented by Andy Soumelidis of LANDTECH, on behalf of the owners, Niv & Kim Harizman.

There were questions from the Board regarding the history of flooding on the property, where the pond discharges, and the nature of the pipes on the property.

Per the Chair's request, Edward Gill summarized the Engineering Department's review. He noted that the main drainage pipe on the property must be located and inspected to ensure construction does not adversely impact it, that the 10' easement for the abandoned pipe from the street drainage in Compo Road South must be abandoned, and that similar to the previous application, the drainage report would need to include an MS4 compliance worksheet when they submit a Zoning Permit application.

The chair asked if there were any questions from the Public. There were none.

The Board went into Work Session. It was agreed that the following Standard Conditions of Approval were deemed necessary: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

DECISION: Proposed Project Approved, 4(Y)-0(N).

## DISCUSSION

The Chair opened a discussion about the prioritization of stream improvements. Phillip Schemel noted that he had heard talk of people who may be interested in joining the Flood Board.

Mr. Gill recounted a meeting he and Chair William Mazo had shortly after the June meeting. From that meeting, as well as a follow-up between Mr. Gill and Director of Public Works Peter Ratkiewich. From those meetings, he had some answers to the questions that the Board had posed at the June meeting.

To begin, the advice from the Flood Board about prioritization of stream improvement projects would be best as a comprehensive list of the recommended projects, but to buy time to compile such a list, Mr. Ratkiewich said that the Board could work out which project would be the number one priority, then they could take more time to work out the rest of the list.

Mr. Aldrich asked if they would be focused on bridges as bridges or on bridges as flood projects, and Mr. Gill responded that their focus would not be on bridges in general, because some bridges that are not in good shape and may need replacement do not have any impact with respect to flooding, which is the purview of the Flood Board.

Mr. Gill also stated that he would work on the priority list base line that Public Works could suggest so that the Board would have somewhere to begin. He included that the bridge carrying Greens Farms Road over Muddy Brook was by nearly every metric the worst flooding bridge on

the list, and would likely be the one Public Works would suggest be replaced first. He also pointed out that the next bridge project being prepared was for the bridge carrying Hillandale Road over Muddy Brook, upstream of Greens Farms Road on the same watercourse, and that doing consecutive projects on the same stream would be beneficial from an analysis, design, permitting, and possibly even construction perspective.

Ms. Monroy-Smith agreed that those other aspects of doing projects on one stream at a time may be worth exploring more and considering in their prioritization.

Mr. Mazo noted that from his perspective, the impact of flooding on individual homes would seem to be the most important criteria for prioritization of projects. Mr. Gill responded that the reduction of flooding issues due to stream improvements is also a complex metric to analyze, because even if the same number of houses are flooded in a 100-year storm before and after a storm, if the height of the water was reduced and each house suffered less damage, it would still be a positive even though the number of structures that flooded did not change.

Mr. Gill also responded to a question from June regarding criteria to use to compare projects, stating that the three metrics the Board previously discussed, being the cost of a project, the overtopping of the road by floodwaters, and the number of structures within the 100-year floodplain upstream, could also be augmented by a fourth suggested criterion from Mr. Ratkiewich, which was constructability. Some projects may take years to obtain easements and support from surrounding properties in order to be constructed, so it may be worth considering projects that can be constructed sooner even if they may have less impact with respect to flooding.

Mr. Aldrich noted he did not like to see the focus on individual bridges and culverts in a vacuum but rather the focus should include the rest of the streams as well, cleaning the existing streams where they need it in areas between the crossings that need replacement as well. Mr. Gill agreed that cleaning of streams to clear out blockages and buildups of debris or sediment could be possible, but that from lessons learned where the Town has already done such cleaning of streams on private property, obtaining permission from property owners can be difficult, and the cleaning has to be subsequent to downstream crossing improvements because if you increase flow upstream, you may exceed the capacity of downstream crossings. Mr. Gill also noted that for the Greens Farms Bridge, this is the last downstream improvement required before stream cleaning would be appropriate nearly the entire way up Muddy Brook to the Post Road.

Ms. Monroy-Smith added that public involvement with respect to stream improvements was also very important, and that in addition to existing efforts, the Town could also work out a way to add notifications at active construction projects addressing flooding so that the public could be made more aware of the ongoing projects.

Mr. Mazo asked about the expected completion date of the Bayberry Lane bridge project, but Mr. Gill said he did not know the expected completion date.

Mr. Aldrich asked if the Board could make a decision about a number one priority for stream improvements now, rather than wait, if they felt they were confident in their decision. Mr. Gill noted that it was up to the Board to determine what they think a priority should be, and they could do so now if they were confident.

Mr. Aldrich moved to make the Greens Farms Bridge the first priority, and to approach Muddy Brook as a wholistic project to include areas between the Town bridges and culverts as well. Ms. Monroy-Smith seconded, and the Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Monroy-Smith also brought up that public involvement and education about flooding should also be a priority, and that the recent poll regarding Longshore could be used as a model to gain

further input from additional areas of Town regarding flooding concerns. She also suggested that Mr. Gill should try to find five projects that should be next on the list for prioritization, so they can all be compared and examined thoroughly as a next step for determining priorities.

Mr. Aldrich also stated that the elephant in the room was the Saugatuck River, and all the flooding that occurs in downtown Westport. Mr. Gill noted that it is a much different scale project from ones Flood Board is discussing and weighing in on. Mr. Gill suggested that if the Board was interested in advocating for a study regarding a major flood control project on the Saugatuck River, the first step would be to draft a letter to that effect for the Board to discuss further at a later meeting. Mr. Aldrich said he would work on drafting a letter.

Mr. Schemel moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Monroy-Smith. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**William S. Mazo, Chair**  
Flood & Erosion Control Board

WSM/eamg

Cc: First Selectwoman, Town Attorney, Public Works Director, Planning & Zoning Director, Conservation Director, Chair of RTM Environmental Committee, Chair of RTM Public Works Committee, Applicants, [minutes@westportct.gov](mailto:minutes@westportct.gov)

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