IWC Members:

Martha Dumas

Maureen O’Doherty

Jeff Flynn

Nancy Brault

Margaret Keser

Jim Sipperly, Inland Wetlands Agent

Jade Richardson, Clerk     

**PORTLAND INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

Tuesday, January 2, 2024 7:00 p.m.

**Buck Foreman Room (2nd floor)**

**265 Main Street, Portland, CT.**

**Present:** Maureen O’Doherty, Nancy Brault, Jeff Flynn, Martha Dumas

**Other Present:**Jim Sipperly, Inland Wetlands Agent,

Margaret Keser (present for observation)

**1.  Call Meeting to Order**

      Martha Dumas called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

**2.  Introduction of Members and Seating of Alternates**

           The Commission members introduced themselves.

**3.  Accept Agenda**

            Nancy Brualt made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by

Jeff Flynn, all in favor, motion carried.

**4.  Approval of Minutes: 12/5/2023 Regular Meeting**

           Nancy Brault made a motion to approve the December 5, 2023

Meeting Minutes, seconded by Maureen O’Doherty, all were in favor,

motion carried.

**Public Hearing**

**5.** IWCApplication # 23-01: Portland Cobalt Road. Proposed retail fueling

station and convenience store with work within the inland wetland

regulated area. Application of Jannat LLC and property of MJS Realty

Venture LLC. Map 31, Lot 23-2. Zone B-2.

* Jim Sipperly, informed the committee there was a revision to the last set of plans, along with correspondence letters, recently distributed to the committee. To disregard all prior plans, moving forward.
* Kale Harriet, from CLA Engineers of Norwich, a representative for Jannat LLC, reiterated details about the fueling station project with a Convenient store on Cobalt Road, to the committee and to the public. Bob Russo, a Soil Scientist at CLA Engineers from Norwhich, gave his insight re: the Inland Wetland system that runs along the eastern side of the property. Mr. Russo described the current state of the Wetland system, the Hydrology of it, the Vegetation, Erosion, and the Soil of the Wetlands on the site. In his findings, in the north east corner of the site, there is a pocket of isolated Wetland which is transporting water downstream to other Wetlands. The stream does not flow all year round, it’s govern mostly by stormwater, runoff. The proposal generated by Jannat LLC property does not have any direct impact at this Wetland site. Kyle Harriet went over the new revisions on the plans which included; Retaining Walls, Canopies over fuel pump islands will be installed, and Storage site (to help storm water) discharge chambers into the ground, and the configuration of the chambers layout has been changed.
* Public Comment: Norm Ward, 54 Lake Road, extended his appreciation to Mr. Harriet and Mr. Russo for taking Wetlands matters under consideration for Portland.
* Maureen O’ Doherty made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Jeff Flyn, all in favor, motion carried.
* Motion to approve application IWC Application #23-01 made by Jeff Flynn seconded by Maureen O’ Doherty, all in favor, motion carried.

**Regular Meeting**

**6. New Business: None**

**7. Old Business:**

* Complaint regarding discharge of muddy water into Great Hill Pond. Jim Sipperly provided an update regarding the complaint. The First Selectman, the town’s engineer, the town’s planner, the town’s attorney, and Jim Sipperly met prior to the proposal being submitted for review. The town’s engineer collected information while visiting the site. His recommendations included piping and grading which the cost accumulated to over $100k. The First Selectman determined the town will not be able to spend on these recommendations in order to solve the water problem in that area. As a result, a second meeting took place on December 19,2023. It was concluded, another order will be issued to Mark Sokoloff for not complying with his Soil Scientist recommendations, for not stabilizing the site and for not establishing ground cover. Mr. Sipperly drafted a letter in the form of a cease and desist for Mr. Sokoloff, in which the town will send out via certified mail. Mr.Sipperly, informs the public that once the letter has been issued, a town hearing must occur within the ten days after being presented. Mr. Sipperly included in the letter/order a notice of violation to Mr.Sokoloff for not complying with a few of the recommendations (from the soil scientist) was provided with in a timely fashion. Lastly, the City’s Attorney consulted with DEP, which gave minor recommendations that were implemented on the letter issued to Mr.Sokoloff. Further details of the letter can not be disclosed at this time. On February 6th, the town’s engineer and Mr.Sokoloff will be present at the next meeting for a public hearing.
* Michael St.Peter, of 56 Lake road, expressed his frustration regarding the delays of these improvements on Mr.Sokoloff property, which should have occurred long ago, it’s still affecting his backyard to this day.
* Linda & Jim Byrne, of 53 Lake Road, asked Mr.Sipperly and the committee if there were any health concerns they should be aware of due to the smell of mold that is growing in their basement. The excessive water caused by this dilemma has affected their property.
* Parker Jacquier, of 58 Lake Road, stated once the water flow on Mr.Sokoloff property was distributed, it created damages on other residents property including his own. It’s been over a year and nothing has changed nor has Mr. Sokoloff has been held accountable.
* Sharon Yost, of 68 Lake Road, expressed her concerns about the rapid erosion. Within one year’s time, she has lost underneath her trees on her property. (Roots are currently underneath water)
* Jeff Steffman, of 60 Lake Road, voiced his frustration with the commission about this problem. No progress has been done, the problem continues to occur and his property is getting worse. He also reiterated how the mud is contained on his property.

**8. Reports of Officers, Staff, and Committees:**

* Jim Sipperly received a call from Birdon Marina. Due to the rain, silt has been coming down from the Connecticut River, which has affected their launch area. The silt is hitting their out wall, as a result, it has collected between four to five feet of silt. It needs to be drenched, in order to get the coast guard boats to be accessible. It was dredged back in 1995, by the previous planner of the Marina, who received a certificate of permission from CT DEP in order to do the dredging. A pit/ditch was dug up in the upland area, not too far from the river’s edge, where the spoils were placed. Recently, Jim Sipperly received a letter from CT DEP stating another CT DEP certificate of permission was granted to Birdon Marina for dredging. Jim Sipperly intends to give Birdon Marina an agent approval, hence the project can move forward with new dredging and relocation plans on the site, which will be located in the parking lot area.

**9.     Public Comment and General Questions**

       The Commission will hear brief comments at this time from anyone

wishing to speak. Comments may not be made regarding any pending

application. The Committee heard from

(Please refer to section "Old Business" for complete dialogue)

**10. Correspondence: None**

**11.     Adjourn**

       Nancy Brualt made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Maureen

O’Doherty. All voted Unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm

  Respectfully submitted by

*Jade Richardson*