



Town of Woodbury

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency

281 Main Street South
Woodbury, CT 06798
203.263.3467 • www.woodburyct.org

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 27, 2023 -3:00 PM

64 Westwood Road (Three Rivers Park), Woodbury CT 06798

MEMBERS PRESENT

Marty Newell
Don Richards
Kyle Turoczi, Secretary
Mary Tyrrell, Chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Earl Gillette, Alternate
Michael McAloon, Alternate
Ernest Werner

NOTED OTHERS PRESENT – First Selectman Perkinson, Will Agresta (Town Planner), Jami Gore (Director of Parks & Recreation), Mike Lodice (Superintendent of Parks & Recreation), David Taylor, Jeff Sherman, Carol Haskins and Andy Greene

Chairman Tyrrell called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Seating of Members / Alternates – Seated for the meeting were members Newell, Richards, Turoczi and Tyrrell
Conflict of Interest Reminder (CGS §8-11 & Woodbury Town Charter Section 901)

NEW BUSINESS

64 Westwood Road / Map 38, Lot 54-1 / R-40 District / Town of Woodbury (owner) / Flood damage of a section of the riverbank and existing pedestrian trail due to recent storm flooding of adjacent fields. Immediate removal of fallen tree in river and discussion of long-term remediation of slumped riverbank.

The special meeting was called to discuss a resolution for extensive erosion and a tree that had fallen into the river after a recent storm event. The idea was to discuss both a short term and a long term solution for the issues. First Selectman Perkinson stated that the issue was brought up due to the Lions Club Hayride. It was noted that the Town Planner, Parks and Recreation and Public Works met to discuss the situation. They need to find a solution for the water going into the corn field, something that is good for the environment, for the farmer, and for the people that utilize the walking trail. First Selectman Perkinson is looking for the best solution to the problem.

Jami Gore stated they were looking to at least move the downed tree out of the way as the tree is impeding the current waterflow. The river is changing course, which is changing the area. They want to move the tree and then look for a longer term solution.

Mike Lodice stated they wanted to bring equipment in to at least pull the wood material out of the area. Parks and Recreation questioned what to do with the root ball, suggesting they could just flip it to its side to clear the waterway of the canopy of the downed tree.

Member Newell arrived approximately 5 minutes after the start of the meeting and was seated.

Copies of documents and meeting audio are available at the Land Use Office

Andy Greene, was present as a member of the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition (PRWC) noting he is an engineer for SLR. He works with hydraulic remodeling and flooding of rivers. He stated that they are looking at what occurred, not necessarily at the cause. There is a berm that channelizes the river and doesn't allow the water to activate the flood plain. There is no buffer in the area of the incident. He spoke about a buffer that utilizes tree roots that stabilizes the soil and provides roughness so that when flood waters activate the flood plain they slow the water down and they reduce the velocities to prevent this kind of erosion. He expressed the importance of a vegetated buffer that is robust enough to reduce velocities to prevent erosion. He indicated an area where there is no buffer and the area of the berm that channelizes the flow. If you address just this spot, there will be erosion up or down stream. They should look at this holistically, not just fixing one spot. Using the root ball in a certain manner could help stabilize the stream channel. The root ball could be left out in a manner to direct the trunk which will direct the water flow away from the bank back into the river. They could pivot it slightly to a 30 degree angle to the bank. Using the roots, something natural, as opposed to rip rap. It was explained that the tree would remain in place, this would stay for about 25 years until it basically rots. Leaving it there will also slow the velocity of the water along the edge so it doesn't continue to erode the bank. Chairman Tyrrell noted that the idea is to use it as an anchor but there should also be plantings around it. Roots will take hold around it. Member Turoczi expressed concern that there is a gap and just one row of trees, with another storm event there could potentially be another failure. He noted the soils in the area are fine and will not hold against the water. Mr. Greene questioned the importance of protecting a few feet of cornfield. Leaving the tree is a short term solution. The pedestrian trail is a longer term issue. They need to discuss moving the tree in such a way to benefit the current situation. This can be done while they put together a better long term plan to change the trail system. The trail will need to be moved further away. It was noted that Todd Bobowick had explained that the riparian buffers by the rivers are too narrow. Planner Agresta questioned what really happened, as he had heard other theories. Mr. Greene explained the erosion was definitely from the raging river waters. Everything indicated it did not come from the field down. It was questioned if they would need a plan, or someone at the site when the tree is maneuvered. Carol Haskins noted that she talked to Matt Gopolowski at the Fisheries Division at DEEP and he remembered that DOT assisted with similar projects. He would be interested in being a resource. It was noted that Long Island Future Funds granting comes up in the Spring. They can help with funding the design phase as well as the implementation phase. David Taylor requested that Ms. Haskins send a copy of the old application, as it probably won't change much, so that they can prepare.

It was questioned if the town could help coordinate with people to do the work and who would be responsible to develop the plan. Chairman Tyrrell emphasized that the Wetlands Agency agrees something needs to be done, but they want to be sure it gets done correctly. It was suggested that a drone photo could be used to show current positioning of the river, the photo could be used to show the existing angle and using that to draw up a site plan of sorts. It was discussed that a large excavator will be required to move the root ball. It was suggested that they take a lot of the limbs off the downed tree. The limbs could be used as an additional erosion control measure, sticking them in crisscrossed layers into the bank. First Selectman questioned what the best type of vegetation would be to stabilize and hold the bank, she wants to be prepared to be able to budget for this. Member Turoczi noted that there are many riparian species of trees and shrubs that could be used. It was requested they get a list of options. They need to know what they are, where they are going and what they are being used for.

It was discussed that there may be emergency watershed funding, however it is dependent on whether this was a state of emergency. It was confirmed federal, state and local permitting may be required. They should be working with the DEEP.

Chairman Tyrrell will contact Member Gillette to obtain drone photos. They need to get aerial photos with relation to the bank and center of the channel. This will show existing position and identify proposed position. These should be given to Carol Haskins who will assist with getting a drawing that fits how this tree in position can occur to save this area in the short term, whether they can put the branches into the sides of the embankment and if anything needs to be planned right away for planting. A draft motion was requested for next meeting.

It was noted for Parks and Recreation that the buffers need to be expanded along the river. They need to consider options, a smaller/narrower trail, moved out farther away from the river, appropriate plantings and educating people where they can walk.

Planner Agresta clarified that the funding mentioned by Carol Haskins can be used for large scale projects and can fund engineering assessments etc.

It was emphasized that the plan now is the band aid to fix and stabilize the area. Over the winter they should be looking into getting together a more detailed plan for a bigger buffer to be able to act in the Spring.

No action was taken at the meeting. This item should be included on the next regular meeting agenda. An application should be quickly submitted for the emergency work to meet the statutory timeframes. This item will be discussed again at the Inland Wetlands Agency's November 13th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

To adjourn the special meeting at 3:50 p.m. with no objections.

RECEIVED & FILED
IN WOODBURY, CT
This 31st day of Oct 2023
at 3:50 o'clock P M
Maria M. Mancini