

Country Club of Woodbridge (CCW)

Constructability Review

At the request of the Woodbridge Selectmen, a technical review of the materials that have been submitted has been performed. The reviewers are Kristine Sullivan, our Land Use Analyst, Jim Pretti, P.E., a principal at Criscuolo Engineering who's firm has provided consulting professional engineering services for the Town's Inland Wetlands Agency and Town Plan and Zoning Commission for 20 years and Terry Gilbertson, our Building Official.

The review is necessarily limited to the materials and testimony of the two proponents provided at the two public hearings about this matter and the general knowledge of the community of the reviewers.

The goal of the review is to identify technical areas of concern should the Selectmen wish to inquire further of the two proponents.

The Town purchased the land and assets of the former Woodbridge Country Club on August 28, 2009 following a Town Meeting. As is well known, for several years, the property was operated by several golf management companies and following the closure of the golf course, the Town operated the outdoor pool for several more years.

The technical issues are identified by subject matter, but as in most things quickly become interrelated.

Traffic

The land has significant frontage on Connecticut Route 243 ~ Ansonia Road and two Town roads, Johnson and Woodfield. The two proponents should be prepared to hire a traffic consultant to provide a detailed study about the effect that their individual proposals would have on both State and local roads. If either project went forward, it is likely that a State Traffic Commission Certificate (STC) would be required, so the level of a detailed study should be reflective of the standards that a STC would require.

The proponents should also engage in a detailed conversation with the local State Department of Transportation District 3 located at 140 Pond Lilly Avenue, New Haven, about topics such as sightlines for project roads, curb cuts and signage.

Both proposals show the main driveway accessing onto Ansonia Road (Rte. 243) in close proximity to the intersection of Connecticut Route 313 ~ Rimmon Road. This intersection occurs at an obtuse angle and is heavily travelled. It is complicated because the town road ~ Park Lane enters at yet another angle onto Fountain Street, which becomes Ansonia Road. Either proponent will need to address the additional traffic to that intersection.

One possible consideration for the intersection would be a traffic circle which could accommodate the various and geometrically competing traffic movements thru the intersection.

Alternatively, avoidance of a main entrance at that intersection, with limited emergency access only and provision of a main entrance from Woodfield Road is an option that should be explored, with the attendant traffic study.

Wetlands

A review of the Town's Tax GIS mapping for the subject property and surrounding area indicates that the subject property has wetlands and watercourses throughout it. Because of those onsite wetlands, any project will require a permit from the Woodbridge Inland Wetlands Agency as part of the approval process.

While it would be expensive at this stage to ask the proponents for an accurate surveyed wetland mapping of the property, in the short term it would seem appropriate to ask that the onsite wetlands be inventoried by a professional soil scientist so that there is more information available as to the location of the onsite wetlands (which include springs and intermittent streams) so that there can be a more informed basis for locating potential accesses to the site and consideration of the least intrusive development of the site from a wetland perspective.

The head waters of an extensive wetland system originate onsite in the upland area of the northeast corner of the property. It is unknown at this time what the source of water from that area is and that source(s) should be identified.

From that area, a watercourse flows northerly from the site exiting under Ansonia Road (Rte. 243) to the westerly side of the intersection of Ansonia and Rimmon Roads (Routes 243 and 313). The wetlands feed northerly to a system of ponds on the northerly side of Rimmon Road south of Lines Road and thence southwesterly back under Rimmon Road to intersect with a stream to the east of the School House on Johnson Road, and thence back under Ansonia Road to the CCW at the southeast intersection of Johnson and Ansonia Roads. It appears that the watercourse is piped for a distance under what had been the former club house and tennis courts and outlets to daylight where the stream runs in a southerly direction, parallel with Johnson Road, feeds into a small pond on the southeast corner of the site and the exits the site in a southeast direction through a wetlands that continues south under Johnson Road by the intersection of Johnson and Woodfield Roads.

It will be critical to understand how these wetlands would continue to work with the proposed intensification of the use of the land.

Storm water

As with any development, a critical component is the design and implementation of a storm water management system that would address the increased drainage on the site due to impervious surfaces such as roofs, roads and landscaped areas and the achievement of zero % increase in the rate of storm water runoff and maintenance of water quality consistent with the Towns obligations under the State wide MS4 mandate.

While one of the proponents appears to indicate how the storm water might be directed to the wetland system near Johnson Road, the other offers no indication at all and neither proposal appears to encompass enough land area for properly sized detention/ retention areas for storm water management and treatment.

Public Water Supply

The CCW is presently served by a water supply that comes from the Regional Water Authority (RWA) via a RWA pipe terminus at a small pump station on the Woodbridge or northeasterly side of Fountain Street after the Merritt Parkway Bridge crosses Fountain Street.

It is noted that Beecher Road School on Beecher Road is also supplied with water by the RWA, but from a water line that feeds down Beecher Road from Connecticut Route 114, Center Road.

The proponents should consult with the Regional Water Authority on the best method to provide a public water supply that would be adequate for their needs.

Fire Protection

If either project were to go forward the Woodbridge Volunteer Fire Department would need to be consulted for their recommendations for fire protection in terms of water sources as well as emergency vehicle access.

Public Sewer

The CCW property is currently served by a branch gravity sewer owned and operated by the Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority (GNHWPCA) along Woodfield Road which feeds into the sewer system on Fountain Street.

At some distance up Ansonia Road, Route 243, a gravity sewer drains to the GNHWPCA's Ansonia pump station on the east side of the Race Brook River. A gravity feed system largely serving Beecher Road School connects to that pump station, which pumps down Ansonia Road and Fountain Street into New Haven.

Either proponent will need to consult with the GNHWPCA to determine if that system is adequate to handle their respective projects.

Electricity

The CCW is presently served by a large aging electrical service from Woodfield Road. The proponents should consult with United Illuminating about the availability of adequate electrical service required by their projects.

Proposals for electrical services to structures should consider underground services and distribution facilities, full cut off exterior lighting on both roadways and structures.

If the existing electrical service to the present CCW structures is planned to be abandoned, a method to remove and make safe with legal disposal should be proposed.

Should land not the subject of the proponent's interests, owned by the Town, require electrical service, an adequate sized service should be provided.

Zoning

The property is presently zoned as a Residential A District that allows a single family dwelling on individual front lots of 65,000 square feet of buildable land with rear lots requiring 87,500 square feet of buildable land. Buildable land must be contiguous and cannot include slopes over 25%, wetlands, any part of an easement for ingress and egress, any right of way and must be able to accommodate the 150' square inside of the required front, rear and side setback lines.

Development on the parcel of the nature that the two proposals entail would require the Town Plan and Zoning Commission to change the present zoning. Any change to the Zoning Regulations requires a finding by the Town Plan and Zoning Commission (TPZ) that the proposed regulation change is in conformance with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development.

Changes to the Zoning Regulations are subject to a public hearing by the TPZ.

While a zone change might be a straight forward method, another option to consider would be the institution of a Planned Development District that would allow considerable discretion over the design of a project including effective buffering from adjacent long standing residential neighborhoods.

The TPZ has the regulatory authority to have a discussion on what path would provide the best result and protections to the Town.

Sale of Town Property

Prior to the sale by the Town of its real property, Connecticut State Statute 8-24 requires the Selectmen to refer the potential sale to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission for a report.

The Residents of the Town then must vote favorably on the sale.

If the Selectmen were inclined to ask each of the proponents to respond to these areas of concern, we believe a clearer picture of the most reasoned approach will emerge. It is possible, depending on the vigor of the responses that the Selectmen may wish to add additional resources to the review team to further evaluate the issues and we stand ready to respond to such a request.

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