

**CITY OF TORRINGTON  
INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
January 22, 2024**

Present: Jay Bate, Jr., Chair  
Joe Paganini, Member  
Randall Stelma, Member  
Steve Thompson, Member

Also Present: Nate Nardi-Cyrus, Assistant City Planner  
and Inland Wetlands Enforcement Officer

Not Present: Christine Altman, Vice Chair  
Adrienne Barbe, Member

**1. Call To Order:**

Chair Jay Bate called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.; City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT, and via Microsoft teams meeting.

**2. Roll Call and Announcement:**

Chair Jay Bate announced present and serving in person this evening is Jay Bate. Commissioners present and serving via Microsoft teams are Joe Paganini, Randall Stelma and Steve Thompson. Also present in person is Nate Nardi-Cyrus, Assistant City Planner.

**3. Minutes for Approval:**

a. November 21, 2023

MOTION by Mr. Stelma to approve the November 21, 2023 minutes, seconded by Mr. Paganini. Voting in favor of the motion are Mr. Paganini, Mr. Stelma, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bate. Motion carried.

b. December 19, 2023

MOTION by Mr. Paganini to approve the December 19, 2023 minutes, seconded by Mr. Thompson. Voting in favor of the motion are Mr. Paganini, Mr. Stelma, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bate. Motion carried.

**4. Old Business:**

a. Applicant: James Mazzarelli  
Location: 137 Babbling Brook Road (Assessor Map 221 Block 003 Lot 054)  
Activity: Piping of 130' of watercourse, creation of armored ponds before and after piped stream, and backfilling of adjacent wetlands to extend lawn.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus noted Mr. George Logan of REMA may be present at 7:30 p.m. regarding this application.

James Mazzarelli, resident of Torrington, appeared before the Commission.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus provided some background history on this site. We have reached the end of the statutory time line per CT General Statutes and a decision is needed tonight as no more extensions are permitted.

Mr. Mazzarelli reviewed that two years ago in July he got a letter from Mr. Nardi-Cyrus asking him to get a permit. Violations were addressed afterwards, and this activity occurred fifteen years ago and he realizes there is no statutory limit for this activity. More technical details of the applications and the \$750.00 fee noted and were provided by Mr. Mazzarelli; all of this was done at great cost. There was a site walk on the property in November.

Current conditions of the site were presented, along with George Logan's plans, and Mr. Mazzarelli's preferred plans. Commission members reviewed the plans and made inquiries (portions inaudible).

The 12/18/23 REMA revised plan was proposed and discussed along with Mr. Mazzarelli's subsequent modifications. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus said he will not recommend the modified plan, as work is not permitted within the wetlands.

Mr. Mazzarelli said that thirty years ago, Mr. Nardi-Cyrus' predecessors approved this site. He is trying to find common ground here moving forward. Discussion followed on the various versions of the proposed wetland mitigation plan, referring to screen shared plans.

Mr. Thompson stated that unless it is for actual agricultural use, inland wetlands areas cannot just be claimed and make into lawn area. The point is not to disturb the wetlands. The idea of a tractor path and a burn pit goes against the entire point of remediation and moving the line limit back defeats the point of remediation.

Mr. Bate said Area 1 of the lot was to make up for the piped stream to take care of invasives in that area. Mr. Thompson noted that was part of the trade, to not remove the pipe and pond, and to remove invasives in that area as well.

Per Mr. Mazzarelli, the work this Commission wants him to do will cost tens of thousands of dollars. Mr. Bate responded the Commission is aware of this, however a pipe and pond were put in without permits and this Commission could legally say this whole area has to go back to wetlands, remove the pipe and pond; or alternatively do the remediation and leave the pipe in, remove invasives and delineate the inland wetlands area with a fence, and stay out of that area. The path could be walked on, but no ATVs, etc. to be used on the path.

Mr. Bate said this Commission thought REMA's proposal was fair, and then it was changed to an unacceptable new proposal. Mr. Mazzarelli disagreed this was fair.

The original plan dated 12/18/23 from George Logan of REMA is to be used, and the note for split rail fence to delineate the inland wetlands area. The solid red line is to be removed and the dotted red line shall be used.

Mr. Bate inquired if George Logan will oversee this work. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus responded there will be inspections and oversight by a qualified professional. Conditions can be added to this clear, and wetlands signage can be added.

Mr. Paganini asked for the original drawing to be used by REMA dated 12/18/23 to be clear, and not use this changed plan. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus responded we can use the unaltered 12/18/23 REMA plan.

MOTION by Mr. Thompson to accept the original mitigation plan prepared by REMA dated 12/18/23, and not the revised plan presented this evening. The boundary will be set to the dotted red line and has the same seed mix and fill not struck through in area 3. Motion seconded by Mr. Paganini. Voting in favor of the motion are Commissioners Mr. Paganini, Mr. Stelma, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bate. Motion carried.

b. Applicant: Jim Mazzarelli  
Location: 516 Mountain Road  
Activity: Jurisdictional Determination Application.

Mr. Jim Mazzarelli appeared before the Commission. A sketched map dated 1/19/24 was screen shared. Mr. Mazzarelli reviewed that he had bought the property as a farm with all hay equipment and barns on site. He has expanded the hayfields, and sells approximately \$10,000 - \$15,000 of hay a year. Permits for the pond were discussed. Mr. Mazzarelli said the City Staff said the CT DEEP Dam Division should monitor this dam site. Staff from the CT DEEP met with Mr. Mazzarelli on site and said they won't govern it as if the dam blew out, it would not affect anyone's property.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus provided his comments regarding agricultural activity within the wetlands areas (at 44 minutes). Mr. Mazzarelli provided his site detail comments, noting the beavers on his property, and the ponds and orchard patches.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus screen shared wetlands mapping from Mr. Mazzarelli's previous applications. A determination could be made Mr. Mazzarelli is converting to agricultural purposes.

Mr. Thompson does not see an issue with this site and proposal, Mr. Stelma agreed.

Mr. Paganini inquired if this site would be open to the public, or remain private. Mr. Mazzarelli responded the pumpkin fields would be opened to adults with children to pick a pumpkin for free, the same with the apple orchards. Mr. Mazzarelli does not need money at this time in his life, and wishes to share.

MOTION by Mr. Stelma to accept the application as proposed, and that this is a permitted as-of-right agricultural operation, seconded by Mr. Paganini. Voting in favor

of the motion are Commissioners Mr. Paganini, Mr. Stelma, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bate. Motion carried.

- c. Applicant: Alfano Group LLC  
Location: 87 Eagle Ridge  
Activity: Modification to redesign approved restoration plan

Ms. Tiana Terine, soil scientist, appeared via Teams representing the applicant Alfano Group LLC. A map was screen shared and discussed, Ms. Terine explained the areas and the plans to soften the look and change to a planting border, and reviewed the plants to be used to go along with the remediation plan in place, adding to them. This modification is in place of the boulders, grey and silky dogwoods will be used, and they colonize and form a solid border, in lieu of the boulders.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus provided back ground history on this site. Mr. Thompson likes this plan better than the boulders, and referenced past UCONN studies. Mr. Bate agreed with this, especially in a residential area.

MOTION by Mr. Thompson to accept this application and that this is not a significant activity requiring a public hearing, seconded by Mr. Stelma. Voting in favor of the motion are Commissioners Mr. Paganini, Mr. Stelma, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bate. Motion carried.

**5. New Business:**

- a. Set public hearing date for adoption of City of Torrington Inland Wetlands Map dated January 2, 2024.

MOTION by Mr. Stelma to set a public hearing date of February 13, 2024, seconded by Mr. Thompson, motion carried with Commissioners Paganini, Stelma, Thompson and Bate voting in favor of the motion.

**6. Staff Report:**

- a. Enforcement Report – update

No new updates to report other than what is already on the agenda earlier this evening per Mr. Nardi-Cyrus.

- b. Agent Determinations:
  - . 591 University Drive - briefly reviewed by Mr. Nardi-Cyrus.

7. **Adjournment:**

MOTION by Mr. Stelma to adjourn at 8:13 p.m., seconded by Mr. Paganini. Motion carried unanimously.

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Land Use Office