

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY  
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT  
March 2, 2022 Minutes**

A meeting of the East Granby Inland Wetlands Agency/Conservation Commission was held on Wednesday, March 2, 2022. Members present when Chairman George Cornelius called the meeting to order at 7:18 PM were Jennifer Frank, Michael Malloy, Trish Rondeau, and John Rusnock along with alternate members Lisa Griffin and David Tobin. Voting in place of absent members Daniel Methot and Carl Landolina were Lisa Griffin and David Tobin.

**PRESENTATION TO THE COMMISSION**

A. Eversource Transmission Vegetation Management Presentation

Dan Burns, Kathy Ferrier, and Nick Ganacoplos from Eversource Transmission Vegetation Management provided an overview of the current removal of vegetation along power lines in East Granby. According to these Eversource representatives, their high voltage lines are normally maintained on a four-year cycle. The most recent project, the Transmission Right of Way Reliability Program (TRRP), was completed in addition to that four-year cyclical work. The program itself was established in 2015 as a result of research completed after the storms of 2011 that showed that most of the trees that took down the transmission lines were located within their easements but outside of the currently maintained area. The goal of the project is to expand the maintained width to reduce the potential of trees falling onto the wires.

Eversource representatives outlined the clearance standards of the TRRP, which consist of three zones. The “wire zone” is the area 35 feet from the outermost wire on the transmission tower on either side of the right of way. This zone will transition into a low-growing shrub and grassland area with vegetation that matures to a height no taller than 15 feet. In the “border zone” beyond the wire zone, trees with a mature height of 25 feet or less may remain. Lastly, the “additional right of way to be cleared” is where the TRRP expansion is occurring and encompasses the area from the border zone to the edge of the easement area or 100 feet from the outside conductor, whichever is less.

The project involves a jurisdiction exemption: “Docket No. 95-08-34 – DPUC Investigation of the Process and Jurisdiction over Siting Certain Utility Company Facilities and Plant in Connecticut.” Jennifer Frank asked whether this exemption takes precedence over the regular basis of approval of a high voltage line project like the previous ones completed by Eversource in East Granby. Eversource noted that there is a difference between larger scale capital projects and right of way clearing. Gary Haynes clarified that the Commission has expressed that there seems to be a discrepancy in the way wetlands are handled during the design and construction stage versus during the preventative maintenance stage. Eversource confirmed that they do flag all wetlands ahead of the project and complete construction mapping for the TRRP expansion; the

exemption is from getting permitting from the IWC. Michael Malloy noted that with both the GSRP and TRRP, Eversource came to the IWC not for permission but for informational purposes. Eversource also confirmed that the Town was notified by letter of the work to be conducted.

Eversource outlined their due diligence completed for the project, which includes an internal project review with multiple steps to determine if known resources are present in the project area and how to minimize impacts, as well as submittal to and review by regulatory agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers for any wetland matting and the Natural Diversity Data Base for state-listed rare species. Work is not done in a NDDB polygon area until a determination is received from the NDDB. NDDB polygons are reflected in maps prepared for the project and a sample of the detailed mapping prepared for work crews was shown.

Gary Haynes asked how long it typically takes for the vegetation that was cut down to grow back. Eversource replied that it could be, and often is, within a growing season. Haynes also asked about a future maintenance schedule and was told that the process is on a four-year cycle and that the goal is not to mow down all vegetation each time, but to maintain compatible existing vegetation. Eversource will follow up with a selective oversight program to target hardwood saplings and tall-growing species and preserve the compatible species that are becoming established. According to Eversource, a barren right of way is not the intent; the goal is to create and preserve a low-growth shrub habitat.

Lisa Griffin clarified that when talking about the 15-foot height, for example, vegetation is removed that is expected to grow higher than this. Everything is not cut to a 15-foot height and the vegetation is taken all the way down if it is something that is expected to grow higher. The plan is more about selecting species that remain versus maintaining an overall 15-foot height. Eversource confirmed this point and commented that the species do not have to be 15 feet tall before they are removed. They are removed based on expected future growth.

Contact information for Eversource's Vegetation Management Hotline was provided, including the e-mail address [CTVegMaintenance@Eversource.com](mailto:CTVegMaintenance@Eversource.com) and phone number 888-673-9943 for the public.

Michael Malloy stated that during the construction project, he was very impressed with the effort that was taken to delineate the wetlands and the species that were being protected. The first time a lot of trees were left and the change was very nuanced. But this time, Malloy commented that the land was almost clear cut. Trees were taken down that were left previously. Eversource clarified that there is a difference between the projects—during construction, the only vegetation that was removed was that which was required to install the new towers. The TRRP work was deferred until after construction was completed, and trees that had been left in place were removed under this project to meet the reliability goals of the project.

Malloy reiterated that his greatest concern was the inattention to any of the wetlands that took place with the current project and that he personally did not observe the flagging of the wetlands or the hand-selection of species within them. He observed no delineation between wetlands and non-wetlands in the clearing process. Eversource replied that the reliability program is set up differently than GSRP and the purpose is to avoid an impact to the wetlands with mechanical equipment. Eversource suggested that they would be happy to do a field walk with concerned Commission members so that an arborist can point out the reasons specific work was done in the way it was done.

A resident of 169 Newgate Road was in attendance and commented that he would like a field walk for his property as well, as he has trees on his property that screen the towers that are more than 100 feet from the towers but are still slated to be removed.

Additional East Granby residents questioned the status of trees on the two small islands in the Farmington River downstream from where the dam was previously located. Eversource did confirm that have discussed this area with the National Park Service and the Farmington River Watershed Association. Because the lines cross from Bloomfield into East Granby over this area, there are some trees on the edge of the islands that do need to be removed. Mitigation plantings to help revegetate the island are being discussed.

Additional questions submitted by residents were addressed by Eversource. One was an inquiry as to future plans for the installation of additional infrastructure for poles on the right of way. Eversource indicated there are no immediate plans in the next five to ten years to expand but that the electrical system is constantly evolving and will require new studies to be conducted periodically. Another inquired about Eversource's plans to re-landscape, and Eversource stated that they work with affected private property owners on an individual basis based on the impact of the project.

In conclusion Gary Haynes reiterated that he received many complaints regarding the mechanical handling of the wetlands and that a site visit with Eversource representatives to clarify concerns might be beneficial. He also stated that the preventive maintenance that Eversource is currently conducting is providing a valuable habitat in town. Although removing the existing vegetation appears destructive, doing so provides an ecology of meadow grassland and fringe woodland that is not plentiful in East Granby.

## **MINUTES**

A motion was made by Jennifer Frank and seconded by Trish Rondeau to approve the minutes of 02/02/2022 as submitted. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Commission received:

- PZC Minutes for the 2/08/2022 meeting.

- E-mail dated 03/01/2022 from the owner at 10 Connecticut South Drive withdrawing Application #CC21-04.
- Application #CC22-01 by Gary Ginsberg for a boundary amendment and upland review for 46 East Street.
- Application #CC22-02 by HARP Realty LLC for 10 Connecticut South Drive which replaces Application #CC21-04.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Director of Community Development**

b) Wetlands Enforcement Report – None.

c) Administrative Approvals – None.

d) Other Business:

Greenstone Hollow Annual Report – Gary Haynes provided a synopsis of the Greenstone Hollow Annual Report, which detailed their bird walk activities and maintenance conducted in the past year.

a) Application Acceptance:

A discussion was held regarding the new procedure required for accepting applications to the Commission as a significant activity or insignificant activity within an upland review area.

Gary Haynes described the 18,000 square foot building that is being proposed for 10 Connecticut South Drive as being constructed 80 feet away from the wetland area with paving as close as ten feet to the wetland area. The Commission determined that the application involves a significant activity within an upland review area because of the ten-foot proximity to the wetlands.

A motion was made by George Cornelius, seconded by Mike Malloy, to accept application #CC22-02 located at 10 Connecticut South Drive as significant activity within an upland review area. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Mr. Haynes then reviewed the plans for 46 East Street, a new single-family home to be constructed within 58 feet of a wetland area, with minor grading within 35 feet. Mr. Haynes stated that the applicant is also applying to amend the wetland boundary because they found it to be different than the wetland boundary on the Town map. While the activity is insignificant because the house is being built so far away from the wetlands, amending the boundary will automatically trigger a public hearing.

A motion was made by George Cornelius, seconded by John Rusnock, to accept application #CC22-01 located at 46 East Street as an insignificant activity within an upland review area. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Harp Realty (CC#21-04) 10 Connecticut South Drive/upland review  
(rec'd 12/01/2021) (d/d con't to 03/02/2022)

This application was withdrawn and replaced with Application CC#22-02.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by John Rusnock and seconded by Trish Rondeau to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 PM. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hall  
Land Use Administrative Assistant