



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
**Inland Wetlands & Watercourses
Commission**

*J. Colin Heffernan, Chairman
Chuck Savage, Vice Chairman
Laura Parker Gray
Peter DeLisa (Conservation)
Mark Caldarella (Zoning)
Paula Kay (Planning)
Sandra Roberts (Economic Development)*

www.oldsaybrookct.gov

Alternate Members
*Elizabeth D. Steffen, Secretary
Janis Esty*

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, May 19, 2022
Via Hybrid Meeting
Town Hall 1st floor conference room
302 Main Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray (remote), P. DeLisa, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, S. Roberts (remote), E. Steffen (not seated)

Members Absent: J. Esty

Staff Present: L. Wacker, Assistant Town Planner; C. Maharbiz, Recording Clerk

Audience Present: one audience member

III. NEW BUSINESS

22-004 “EconoLodge” Application to Conduct a Regulated Activity

Construction of three-bedroom owner’s apartment at rear of hotel within 100’ upland review area.
1750 Boston Post Road (Map 25/Lot 4)

Owner: RR SAI LLC Agent: Edward M. Cassella, Esq.

ACTION: *Receive application, review for completeness, accept application and determine if regulated activities are significant.*

Mayur Solanki presented for RR Sai, LLC. The applicant is proposing a free-standing manager apartment that will connect to the front office through a walkway. The addition will not increase the hotel room count or capacity, or increase the size of the septic system.

C. Savage asked about the surface where the structure is being added, which the applicant explained was gravel. The applicant also explained that the area is currently used for parking and affirmed that the application includes a 2-year estimate for completion of the entire process.

C. Heffernan asked about the location of the deepest incursion of the wetlands, which was discussed on the plans, and if significant power equipment will need to be used. The applicant explained that in the past, solar panels were added and heavy equipment was able to enter the area to perform that work. In answer to a question by C. Heffernan, the applicant stated that the basement storage would be used both by the owner and the hotel. C. Heffernan further asked for the distance from the wetlands to the rear wall, and was told 18 feet, which was later corrected to be 18 feet to the property line. Members discussed the approximate distance to the wetlands based on the plans as well as the size of the basement, which appears to be 1896 square feet in the drawings. C. Heffernan expressed concern that the erection of a significant structure within the 100' review area constitutes a significant activity requiring a public hearing.

S. Roberts asked how the area will be accessed and whether it will disturb the neighbors. The applicant explained that the entrance and exit will be from Boston Post Road and that the residents of Sandy Point will not be disturbed because they have a separate driveway.

MOTION to receive the application (22-004) "EconoLodge," accept as complete, and that the regulated activities are significant; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by L. Gray; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, L. Gray, M. Caldarella, S. Roberts; **OPPOSED:** C. Savage, P. Kay, P. DeLisa; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-3-0.

22-005 "SPR Oasis, LLC" Application to Conduct a Regulated Activity

Construction of a retail center within inland wetlands and 100' upland review area.

52 Spencer Plain Road (Map 25/Lot 27)

Applicant: SPR Oasis, LLC Owner: Ortho Saybrook LLC Agent: Joseph Wren, P.E.L.S.

ACTION: Receive application, review for completeness, accept application and determine if regulated activities are significant.

Agent Joseph Wren presented along with wetlands scientist Bob Russo. Mr. Wren provided an overview of the site, which is currently wooded. Access is from Spencer Plains Rd. and the property is bound to the north by I95, to the south by railroad tracks, to the west by Spencer Plains Rd., and to the east by wetlands. There are two wetland pockets to the west, which were the result of a dam created for I95.

C. Heffernan asked how close the wetlands are to the berm being built, to which Mr. Wren responded that the goal is to have at least 40 feet between the edge of the development and the wetlands. The area between the edge of the development and the clearing limits would be revegetated with wetland buffer plantings. C. Heffernan further asked if construction equipment would need to enter the wetlands. Mr. Wren stated that such equipment would not enter the wetlands on the east side, but would need to enter the isolated wetland pockets on the west. There will be retaining walls and fill added in the wetland pocket areas. The retaining walls will minimize the amount of wetland loss necessary through filling. A retaining wall will also be used on the east side. The stormwater basin will be on the southeast corner and there will be two limited drainage systems.

Bob Russo, a certified soil scientist, explained that the site is fragmented from other habitats except for the east side. With respect to the isolated wetland pockets close to Spencer Plains Rd., they have various kinds of debris and have been disturbed. Those areas were checked during multiple visits and not found to be vernal pools, with no threatened or endangered species.

M. Caldarella asked whether the entire site will be clear cut. Agent Wren showed the edge of the clearing limits on the plan. The wetlands pockets will only need to be cleared to build the retaining walls and the center portion will be cleared.

P. Kay asked about the cost of the walls being erected and Mr. Wren explained that the more vertical exposure the costlier the wall.

L. Gray asked if a gas station is put in at that location in the future whether that would affect the way the water is filtered. Mr. Wren stated that a gas station usually results in more petroleum on the surface and would require artificial treatment of stormwater. Gas stations are allowed in this zone, but would need approval from IWWC.

MOTION to receive the application (22-005) “SPR Oasis, LLC,” accept as complete, that the regulated activities are significant and that Ordinance 71 fees will be required; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by M. Caldarella; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, P. DeLisa, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, S. Roberts; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0.

IV. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Meeting Minutes – 4/21/22

E. Steffen corrected the heading of the Minutes, which state Meeting Agenda rather than Meeting Minutes.

MOTION to accept the regular meeting minutes of April 21, 2022, as corrected; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by L. Gray; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, P. DeLisa, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, S. Roberts; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0.

B. **Correspondence & Announcements** – C. Heffernan announced that he will be running for State Representative for the 23rd District and intends to continue as Chairman if elected. E. Steffen stated that if SPR Oasis LLC chooses her family’s business to do the refrigeration and AC for the supermarket, she will have to recuse herself.

C. **Committee, Representative & Staff Reports** – L. Wacker stated that there were no administrative permits, permit closings, violations, or complaints during the past month. C. Heffernan gave an overview of the meeting between himself, L. Wacker, and Chris Costa in which they discussed how to streamline the application process, including when Ordinance 71 fees are required. Members discussed other ways for streamlining the process.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. to the next regular meeting on June 16, 2022, Old Saybrook Town Hall, 1st Floor Conference Room and via Zoom; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by M. Caldarella; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, P. DeLisa, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, S. Roberts; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 7-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolina Maharbiz, Recording Clerk