



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](http://www.oldsaybrookct.gov)

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

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday, June 16, 2022**  
Via Hybrid Meeting  
Town Hall 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room  
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

**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, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, E. Steffen

**Members Absent:** P. DeLisa, S. Roberts, J. Esty

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

**Audience Present:** Seven audience members

**III. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**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:*** Open public hearing, continue or close by 6/16/2022 (NLT 7/20/2022)

Chairman Heffernan read the public notice. Agent Joseph Wren presented along with soil scientist Bob Russo. Agent Wren gave an overview of the site and explained the various areas of wetlands. He discussed the location of the driveway as well as the retaining walls to be built by the two pockets of wetlands near the entrance, which will minimize the amount of fill to be added to those pockets. He also explained how the drainage system and stormwater retention areas will function, as well as the utilities and septic. With respect to erosion and sedimentation control, Agent Wren stated that a silt fence will be installed with a wood chip berm. Soil scientist Bob Russo discussed

the wetland characteristics and soil types of the various wetland areas. He found no vernal pools during three separate visits to the site.

Chairman Heffernan asked for public comment from the audience present, but there were no comments. L. Wacker stated that she received no correspondence from the public.

**MOTION** to continue the public hearing for the proposed application to the next regularly scheduled public meeting on July 21, 2022 at 7 p.m. at the Old Saybrook Town Hall; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by M. Caldarella; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, E. Steffen; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 6-0-0.

**MOTION** to extend with the applicant's consent the 35-day time period for the public hearing by one day for the proposed application to be heard on July 21, 2022; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by M. Caldarella; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, E. Steffen; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 6-0-0.

#### **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: Open public hearing, continue or close by 6/16/2022 (NLT 7/20/2022)*

Chairman Heffernan read the public notice. Agent Edward Cassella presented, and applicants Mr. & Mrs. Solanki were in attendance. Agent Cassella stated that the applicant is seeking to construct a 3-bedroom owner’s quarter on the property to the rear of the existing hotel, which will add 1954 square feet of coverage. He explained the site plan and the location of wetland areas. With respect to stormwater from the roof, Agent Cassella stated that the consulting engineer designed a roof leader to connect to the existing pond on the property. He also stated that the revised plan has the proposed stock pile for the addition in the area next to the pool. The closest point that the addition comes to the wetlands is 60 feet and the existing gravel parking to the south will remain as is. The addition has been located as far to the east as possible in order to minimize the amount of square footage in the upland review area. He also stated that consulting soil scientist Richard Snarsky visited the site to review for potential mitigation and his recommendations to bolster the vegetative area to the east of the pond structure have been incorporated.

L. Wacker stated that she received no correspondence from the public. Chairman Heffernan invited the public to speak.

Brian Robertson, representing the Board of Directors of the Four Seasons, a 55+ community of 16 units bordering the proposed project. He stated that there are two areas in the complex that have considerable water. A number of houses have sump pumps and the water table is high on the

complex. Unit 6 that borders the project has a problem with water drainage. He stated that the Four Seasons does not favor an expansion of the hotel due to concerns about water and drainage.

Bob Sweeney agreed with prior comments and reiterated that drainage is a problem. He stated that Sandy Point Road is flooded in the spring. He also asked if there is a requirement to be a certain distance from the wetlands. Chairman Heffernan explained that anything that is within 100 feet of a wetland triggers the need to get a permit.

P. Kay asked where the Four Seasons is located. Agent Cassella showed the location on the plans.

Bob Sweeney asked if a study was done as to the possible impact on the wetlands. Agent Cassella explained that 35 percent of the property is currently covered by buildings and will increase to 42 percent with the addition. He also stated that the engineers designed the roof water from the addition to go north to the pond, so it would be going away from the Four Seasons complex. Mr. Sweeney also asked if an additional buffer will be put up between the addition and the Four Seasons and Agent Cassella stated there would not be.

M. Caldarella asked if a full basement is still being proposed and the applicants responded affirmatively. C. Heffernan clarified that the basement will be used both for residential purposes and for overflow storage of the hotel.

George Claffey asked where the septic system will be located and Agent Cassella responded that the agent will use the existing septic system. He further asked if the addition is more than 100 feet from the vernal pool by Sandy Hook, which Agent Cassella confirmed. He then asked if the water table is high enough to have a basement and Agent Cassella responded that he did not know.

C. Heffernan clarified that the plans include a silt fence to the south of the addition to protect the wetlands during construction. He also asked when the last time the catch basins were inspected and cleaned. Applicant Mayur Solanki did not know, but committed to inspect them moving forward.

P. Kay asked whether the pipe from the proposed addition north to the pond will result in less water entering the wetlands, which Agent Cassella confirmed.

M. Caldarella expressed concern about the disturbance of the ground with water from the construction of a basement. Without knowing the construction plans and the water table, he is concerned about how such a disturbance would be dealt with. The applicants agreed to a 4-foot crawl space with a concrete floor rather than a full basement. They also agreed that, in the event there is significant water intrusion during excavation, they would come back before the Commission for a determination of where the water would go.

L. Gray asked if other studies need to be done to see what the impact will be on the people who live below. Chairman Heffernan responded that he does not feel they are warranted in this

particular case in light of the pipe draining the runoff. Historically, the Commission has not ordered separate studies for single family residences 60-feet away from wetlands.

M. Caldarella confirmed that construction will be done during the dry season, which means the impact may not be known until the following year.

George Claffey asked about the impact on the pond from the roof's runoff. Applicant Mayur Solanki stated that he has never noticed the pond overflow in the last 6 years and that currently it is very shallow.

E. Steffen briefly stepped out of the room prior to the motion vote below and returned soon after.

**MOTION** to close the public hearing; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by M. Caldarella; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, M. Caldarella, P. Kay; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 5-0-0.

Chairman Heffernan stated his position that given the hotel's layout there is no prudent feasible alternative for the location of the addition. He also thinks that diverting the runoff to the pond will mitigate the impact to the wetlands. Commission members then discussed their positions.

Chairman Heffernan stated that after considering all the relevant factors, including the mitigation plans for the stormwater runoff away from wetlands in the southern portion of property and the applicants' commitment to inspect the catch basins to make sure they are operating as well as the installation of a silt fence to control any runoff to the wetlands during construction, there will be minimal adverse environmental impact that will be mitigated by the use of sedimentation and erosion control as set out in the application.

**MOTION** to approve the application (22-004) "EconoLodge" as amended by the applicants at the public hearing to the extent that they will no longer be seeking to build an 8-foot basement and instead will build a 4-foot concrete crawl space with the representation from the applicant that in the event that during excavation of the basement they run into significant water issues with the water table they will come back to the Inland Wetlands & Watercourse Commission; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by E. Steffen; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, E. Steffen; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 6-0-0.

#### IV. REGULAR BUSINESS

##### A. Meeting Minutes – 5/19/22

**MOTION** to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 19, 2022, as presented; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by P. Kay; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, E. Steffen; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 6-0-0.

##### B. Correspondence & Announcements – None.

**C. Committee, Representative & Staff Reports – None.**

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. to the next regular meeting on July 21, 2022, Old Saybrook Town Hall, 302 Main Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room and via Zoom; **MADE:** by C. Heffernan; **SECONDED:** by C. Savage; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** C. Heffernan, C. Savage, L. Gray, M. Caldarella, P. Kay, E. Steffen; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None; **APPROVED:** 6-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Carolina Maharbiz, Recording Clerk