

**CITY OF TORRINGTON  
INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 9, 2024**

Present: Jay Bate, Jr., Chair  
Christine Altman, Vice Chair  
Randall Stelma, Member  
Steve Thompson, Member  
Adrienne Barbe, Member  
Joe Paganini, Member

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

**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 remote meeting via Microsoft teams meeting.

**2. Roll Call and Announcement:**

Chair Bate announced present in person City Hall Auditorium are Commissioners Christine Altman, Adrienne Barbe, Steve Thompson and Jay Bate. Commissioners present remotely via teams are Joe Paganini and Randall Stelma (remote in at 7:06 p.m.).

**3. Minutes for Approval:**

a. March 12, 2024

MOTION by Ms. Barbe to approve the March 12, 2024 minutes, seconded by Ms. Altman, motion unanimously carried.

**4. Old Business:**

None

**5. New Business:**

a. Cease and Correct Order  
Order to Show Cause  
Inland Wetlands Violations  
Property Owner: Paul Church, Jr.  
Location: 494 Newfield Road and 446 Newfield Road  
(Assessor Map 233 Block 003 Lot 004 and Map 233 Block 003 Lot 005)

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus screen shared the Cease and Correct Order sent to Mr. Church. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus noted there is a Zoning court case going on now which is not relevant to this case.

While at this site, Sergeant Dustin Baldis noted a large manure dump at the edge of the property. Upon inspection, the manure pile was found to be off site and in a wetlands area, a tributary of the Naugatuck River. Photos of the site were screen shared. It is clearly an intermittent tributary with wetlands. There are no permits associated with this activity. A Cease and Correct Order was issued.

Paul Church Sr., 441 Newfield Road, Torrington, CT appeared before the Commission and stated his name is Paul Church Sr., not Paul Church Jr. Mr. Church stated the town of Torrington is in contempt and the visit to his property was unethical. Cease and Correct Order needs to be resent to him with his name, Paul Church Sr. No one has directly spoken to Mr. Church, but spoke to her (pointing to Audrey Curtiss in the audience).

Chair Jay Bate redirected Mr. Church back to wetlands issues, not zoning issues.

Mr. Church stated this manure site has been filled for 70 years. There was a farm and horses nearby. Much old farm debris such as bones, bottles, old equipment had been already cleaned up from the site by Mr. Church.

Mr. Church explained how he handles the manure with shavings, lime, limbs, hay, mud, etc. Mr. Bate stated these items should not be put into the wetlands.

Mr. Church indicated he did not put all that debris in the wetlands, another former owner dumped there for over 70 years. There were 1,000 horses nearby. Mr. Bate reiterated nothing should be placed in the wetlands.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus redirected Mr. Church back to wetlands issues, not zoning issues.

Mr. Church stated he is not responsible for what happened for over 70 years, as he has been there for only five years.

Mr. Thompson inquired if manure is being placed elsewhere on the property. Mr. Church responded he has been placing it in the rear of his property. Mr. Thompson inquired if Mr. Church owns the property that is being dumped on, and Mr. Church responded he owns some of it. The property map was displayed and property boundaries discussed. Mr. Church stated he was given other differing information from his real estate agent.

Mr. Thompson stated it is a property owner's responsibility to know where their property lines are. This manure site is visible from the road and Mr. Thompson saw it this evening from the road. Just because a former owner dumped debris there does not give Mr. Church the right to continue dumping.

Mr. Church said he is not responsible for all this stuff, and who is going to reimburse him for all his clean up on site, and he is still cleaning up the site.

Mr. Thompson stated when a property is purchased, you become responsible for whatever is on the site. It is good Mr. Church cleaned the neighboring site, but that is the

property owner's responsibility. Mr. Thompson relayed his observations of the site as seen from the road. Mr. Church is partially responsible for the hay, bedding, etc., that was placed on this site.

Brief discussion by Commission members and Mr. Nardi-Cyrus on the proper procedures for restoration of the area. It is not as simple as a grass mix or other trees placed on site, it should mirror the natural vegetation of the area.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus noted the best practice is to have a professional make an assessment, or the Commission can make a site visit and make a determination on restoration. Ms. Altman explained even natural organic materials cannot be placed in wetlands, as it would not have been there naturally and it impedes the way the wetlands work naturally.

Mr. Church said this material does not interfere with the water. Ms. Altman responded wetlands is about the soil type, and how the water moves through the ground, and that is determined by the types of soils. Further discussion followed on this manure, hay, etc. followed, with Mr. Nardi-Cyrus outlining how the timeline would work in conjunction with the implementation of wetlands regulations in the 1970's.

Mr. Thompson proposed a site walk to make a fair and equitable solution. This is a significantly large area, and there are trees in the area. An excavator cannot easily be brought into this area, and the area is not owned by Mr. Church, but he is responsible for dumping in this area.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus will review historical aerials. Property ownership of the affected site was discussed, with Mr. Church stating the previous owners are deceased.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus screen shared historical aerials, and the sites were reviewed from different angles.

A site walk will be scheduled and a corrected letter with Mr. Paul Church's name will be sent. Margerie Curtis, 446 Newfield Road, Torrington, CT appeared. She asked if they can start moving material, and the Commission and Mr. Nardi-Cyrus responded yes.

Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Church to take photos of all work done, and materials removed.

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus stated the wetlands boundaries are apparent, and a wetlands survey may not be necessary. The Commission will schedule a site visit per Mr. Nardi-Cyrus.

## **6. Staff Report:**

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus reviewed there will be a public hearing on April 15, 2024 at the City Council meeting regarding the new Inland Wetlands Commission Membership roles, and a public hearing the same evening on proposed wetlands fines.

### **a. Enforcement Report – update**

2904 Winsted Road, Show Cause issued. The property owner got in touch with Mr. Nardi-Cyrus and put up silt fencing, which is not completely working. The property owner has been cooperative. Bill Colby is the engineer preparing the plans.

919 Guerdat Road – disturbance of wetlands, an application will be coming most likely in May. The owner has been cooperative.

b. Agent Determinations:

There were no Agent Determinations.

**7. Adjournment:**

MOTION by Mr. Thompson to adjourn at 7:47 p.m., seconded by Mr. Paganini, motion unanimously carried.

---

Land Use Office