




City of Torrington
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA

Thursday May 14, 2020

In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, this meeting will be held remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. Members of the public wishing to listen to the meeting in real time can do so by calling 1-646-558-8656 or using the ZOOM app.
(Meeting ID: 795-950-7035, Passcode 907148).

1. Call to Order:
6:30 p.m., conducted remotely using the ZOOM meeting platform
2. Roll Call & Announcements:
Members: Chris Altman, Jim Fedorich, Dan McGuinness, Tomasz Kalinowski, Robert DeMaille & staff Jeremy Leifert
3. Minutes:
 - a. April 16, 2020 Regular Meeting
4. New Business:
 - a. Preliminary review of Besse Pond cleanup project for possible advisory comment
5. Old Business:
 - a. Continued discussion/schedule for open space parcel inventory and data collection
 - b. 2020 DEEP Open Space Acquisition Grant Round & Leoni Property discussion
6. Communications:
7. Adjournment:


5-7-20

Jeremy Leifert, Assistant City Planner
Staff to Conservation Commission



**CITY OF TORRINGTON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2020 Regular Meeting**

1. Call to Order: In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, this meeting is being held remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform and is open for public viewing using the login information provided on the posted agenda.

Meeting called to order at 6:32 pm

2. Roll Call & Announcements: Members present: Tomasz Kalinowski, Dan McGuinness, Robert DeMallie, Jim Fedorich, Christine Altman & staff Jeremy Leifert.

Members Absent: None

Members of the public: No members of the public logged into the remote meeting.

3. Minutes:

- a. January 9, 2020 Regular Meeting: **Motion to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2020 regular meeting as presented was made by T. Kalinowski and seconded by J. Fedorich. Motion passed unanimously.**
- b. January 19, 2020 Site Walk: **Motion to accept the minutes of the January 19, 2020 site walk as presented was made by D. McGuinness and seconded by R. DeMallie. Motion passed unanimously. T. Kalinowski abstained.**
- c. January 21, 2020 Special Meeting: **Motion to accept the minutes of the January 21, 2020 special meeting as presented was made by T. Kalinowski and seconded by J. Fedorich. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. New Business: No new business on the agenda

5. Old Business:

- a. Earth Day 50 cleanup postponement discussion

Discussion ensued on the impacts of COVID-19 on public gatherings and the inability for the City to host the cleanup event at Coe Park. The consensus of the Commission is to recommend postponement of the event to the date of September 19, 2020 to coincide with the fall "Clean Up the World" event that is already scheduled. Discussions will continue leading up to the fall cleanup, but the advertisement as the "Earth Day 50" cleanup will likely be used for this event.

- b. Continued discussion/schedule for open space parcel inventory and data collection

Concerns were presented by commission members and staff about going to do inspections as groups, so large parcel reviews will be temporarily put on hold. After discussion, consensus is to continue to review smaller parcels that can be reviewed by single staff or commission members. J. Leifert will drive by the smaller parcels to confirm access and contact the commission members to assign review parcels.

c. 2020 DEEP Open Space Acquisition Grant Round discussion

The commission continued discussion on the potential of applying for state land acquisition grant money to for acquisition of the “Leoni” parcel off of Winsted Road near Harris/Machuga Drive. Discussions ensued on the amount of money in the open space budget and how to most wisely spend this money, which is specifically reserved for open space protection and education. Concerns were raised about developing a list of potential target acquisition properties to confirm that the Leoni property is the best use of this money. Discussions also ensued on costs of an appraisal and the current asking price for the property. Staff will communicate with the property owner and decide on beginning the grant application prior to the next meeting.

6. Communications:

- a. Record of meeting – February 13, 2020 (no quorum) – Distributed to the commission for review. No formal acceptance of the meeting record was needed since no quorum was present at this meeting and no decisions were made.
- b. Record of meeting – March 12, 2020 (no quorum) – Distributed to the commission for review. No formal acceptance of the meeting record was needed since no quorum was present at this meeting and no decisions were made.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by chair C. Altman at 7:12 PM.

 4-23-20

Jeremy Leifert, Asst. City Planner
Staff to Conservation Commission
Cc: City Clerk, Mayor's Office

Hydro-raking Services at Besse Pond

1.0 Introduction

The "Applicant", City of Torrington, is seeking approval for an Aquatic Management Program at the 277 Winthrop Street, Besse Park Pond. The overall objective of this management program is to control nuisance aquatic vegetation and accumulated organic matter, to partially restore depth, maintain open water habitat, and suitable water quality. Hydro-rake management activity would serve as the most beneficial management method for the pond's long-term health.

An application for the proposed project along with all supplemental materials are attached for the City of Torrington Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency.

2.0 Problem Statement

Besse Pond has been continuing to lose open water depth and space from the buildup or organic matter over the past several years. The current assemblage of accumulated organic matter is contributing to accelerated eutrophic conditions, degrading fish and wildlife habitat, and contributing to water quality conditions that perpetuate unbalanced pond ecology. The 0.6 acres in the eastern portion of Besse Pond has transitioned from open water to an upland area with dense vegetation. The vegetation is currently impeding on a culvert pipe on Major Besse Dr.

3.0 Site Description

Besse Pond is a small 3.5-acre pond located within Elise Besse Park. The park is located within a residential area, adjacent to Route 8. The park offers recreational activities with a playground, swimming pool, tennis and basketball courts, and the small pond which is mainly used for fishing. The pond is shallow throughout, with an average depth of 4 feet. An upland area surrounds the open water on the eastern side. Reference **Figure 1** for a site Locus of the pond.

4.0 Proposed Management Plan: Hydro-Raking

The project is proposed to take place in the fall each year, with 10 days of hydro raking per event. The mechanical hydro-rake can best be described as a "floating backhoe" with a York Rake attachment. The rake attachment provides an effective means of removing decaying plants and root systems, unconsolidated organic material and debris which helps maintain water depth and reduce oxygen demand in the pond. The barge is paddle wheel driven to facilitate operation in shallow water (<2 feet) and it can effectively work to depths of about 10 feet. It works from the water, thereby preventing erosion and avoiding damage to sensitive shoreline habitat and property.

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Please refer to **Image 1** for a photo of the hydro-rake as well as **Table 1** showing the hydro-raking specifications.



Image 1: The hydro-rake

Hydro-rake approximate weight	8500-lbs
Rake Arm	16-feet
Rake Arm reach depth	10-feet
York-rake attachment width	5-feet
Boom/Dipper lift capacity	500-lbs.
Hull L & W	20ft X 8ft
Minimum operating depth (draft)	18-inches
Propulsion system	Paddle wheels
Engine	diesel
Hydraulic pumps and motors	biodegradable fluid

Task 1. Site Preparation

The entry site for hydro-raking operations is located on the applicant's property at 277 Winthrop St. The hydro rake will be launched at the southern side of the pond. A front-end loader will be deployed on site for material collection. Hay bales and silt fence will be installed by the dewatering area. A straw wattle will be used at the shoreline for erosion control. Reference **Figure 2** to see the Proposed Site Plan.

Task 2. Establishment / Preparation of Staging Area and Mobilization of Equipment

Prior to mechanical operations, SOLitude will mobilize the power washed 'weed free' hydro-rake at the southern end of the pond, off Winthrop street. Hay bales will be employed to prevent soil erosion at the off-load area and dewatering / compost area.

Task 3. Hydro Raking

Hydro raking at Besse Park Pond would take place over a multi-year management plan. Each management year, the hydro rake will target up to 1-acre within the pond, based on the town's priority. This approach will have minimal effect on pond ecology during the activity. The hydro rake will remove aquatic vegetation root mat and organic matter and place into the bucket of a front end loader on shore. The loader will transport the material and place into a dump truck. Please refer to **Image 2** showing an example of the hydro-rake operation.

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Image 2: Typical hydro rake and front-end loader operation

Task 4. Disposal

Once the material is properly dewatered, it will be transported by town DPW to the compost site to ultimately decompose into loam. Refer to **Figure 2** for a map of the proposed off-load area.

Task 5. Demobilization of Equipment and General Clean-up

After the mechanical program has concluded SOLitude will remove the hydro-rake. Plant fragments will be removed from the equipment before transportation from site.

5.0 Additional Management Plan: Clearing of Upland area

In addition to hydro raking, Parks & Recreation department is proposing terrestrial vegetation clearing within the 0.6 acres of upland area to the east. An additional contractor will be used to manage this portion of the project. A site visit will be conducted with Inland Wetlands prior to any work being done in this area to assess proposed area and necessary equipment.

6.0 Alternatives Analysis

Alternatives to the proposed Aquatic Management Program were considered, among the various proposed management methods. Solitude evaluated all available strategies:

Physical: Not Recommended

Physical controls, such as the use of bottom weed barriers (i.e. Aquatic Weed Net™ or Palco™) are effective for small dense patches of nuisance vegetation but are not cost effective or feasible for large areas. Weed barriers are expensive to install and maintain at ~ \$1.00 \$1.25/ft² (material & installation). Semi-annual maintenance to retrieve, clean and re-deploy the barriers would be expensive and time consuming.

Covering expansive areas of the pond bottom may also have detrimental impacts on

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invertebrates or other types of wildlife. This method will not achieve depth restoration, water quality and habitat improvement.

Sediment Excavation/Dredging: Not Recommended

Dredging nutrient rich bottom sediment is sometimes used as a strategy to control excessive weed growth. Conventional (dry) or hydraulic dredging would require the expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars in design and permitting fees alone. This method would negatively impact pond ecology during the process.

Do Nothing: Not Recommended

If organic matter is not removed from the pond, eutrophication and filling-in of the pond will continue to occur at an accelerated rate. Anoxic conditions would degrade water quality and potentially impact fish and other aquatic organisms. Stagnant conditions will also increase water temperatures promoting both algae and bacterial growth as well as providing extensive mosquito breeding habitat. The pond's recreational and aesthetic value would be significantly degraded.

7.0 Impacts of the Proposed Management Plan Specific to the Inland Wetland and Watercourse Act

Protection of public and private water supply – The Pond is not used directly as a drinking water supply. Mechanical hydro-raking will not have any adverse impacts on the public or private water supply.

Protection of groundwater supply – According to available studies, there is no reason to believe that the groundwater supply will be adversely impacted by the application of mechanical hydro-raking.

Flood control and storm damage prevention – No construction, dredging or alterations of the existing floodplain and storm damage prevention characteristics of the pond are proposed. However, in some instances, abundant and excessive aquatic plant growth can contribute to high water and flooding. Most commonly this occurs in the vicinity of waterbody outlets or water conveyance channels and structures. The unmanaged, annual growth and decomposition of abundant plant growth is also known to increase sediment deposition at an accelerated rate. Therefore, the mechanical removal through hydro-raking along with, may increase the capacity of the resource area over the long-term to provide flood prevention and habitat for native aquatic flora and fauna.

Prevention of pollution – No degradation of water quality or increased pollution is expected by mechanical hydro-raking. This results in a slow release of nutrients from the decaying plants, reducing the potential for increases in nutrients that can cause algae blooms. Removal of the excessive growth of aquatic vegetation will contribute to improved water circulation and a reduction in the potential for anoxic conditions. The post-treatment decrease in plant biomass will help to decrease the rate of eutrophication currently caused by the decomposing of excessive plant material.

Protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat – In general, excessive and abundant plant

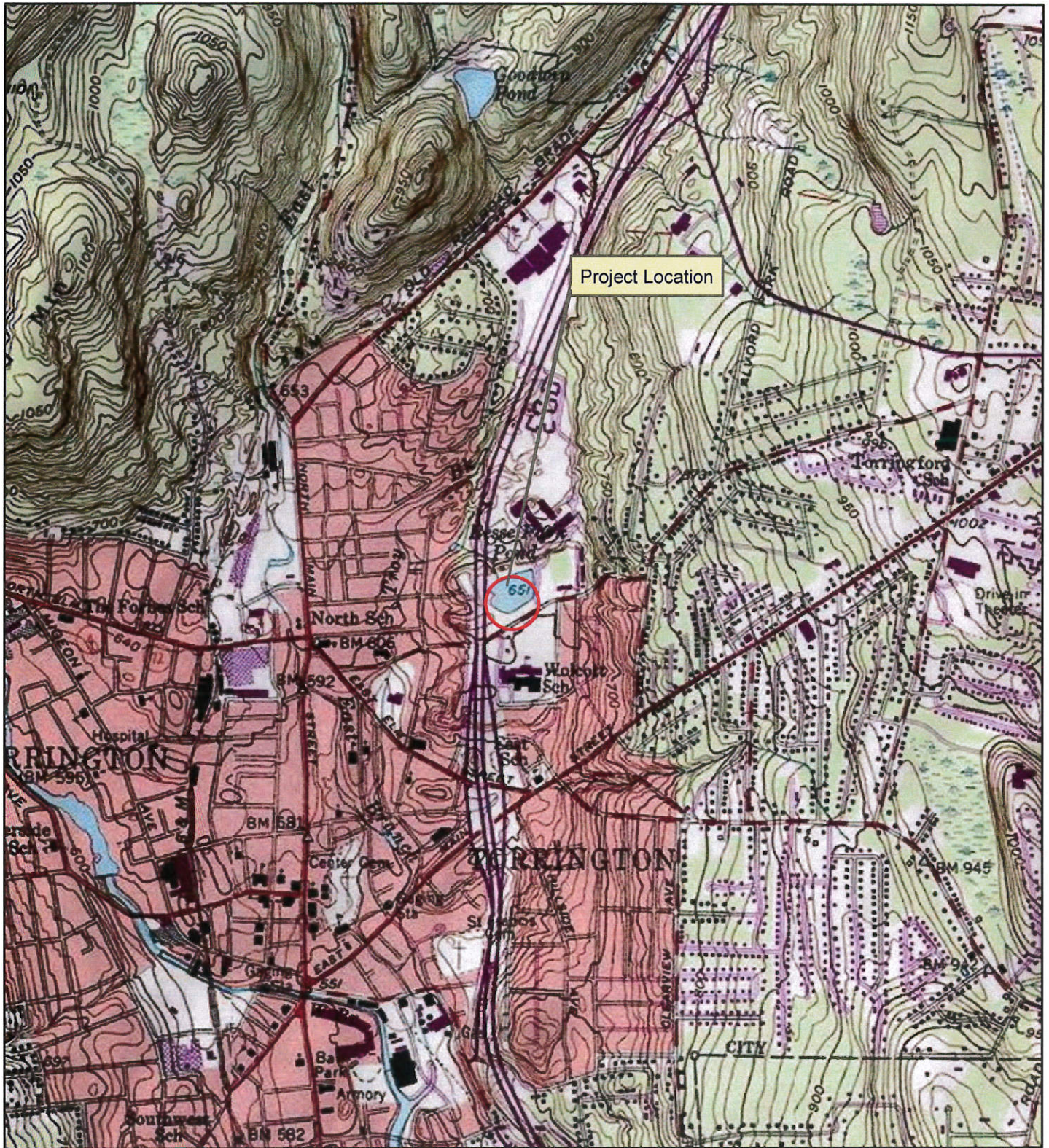
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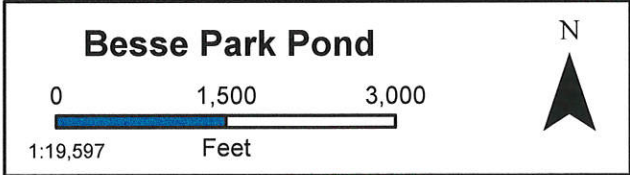

growth, provides poor wildlife habitat for fish and other wildlife. The proposed management plan is expected to help prevent further degradation of the waterbody through excessive weed growth and improve the wildlife habitat value of the pond in the long-term. Maintaining a balance of open water and vegetated areas is intended.

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Figure 1: Site Locus

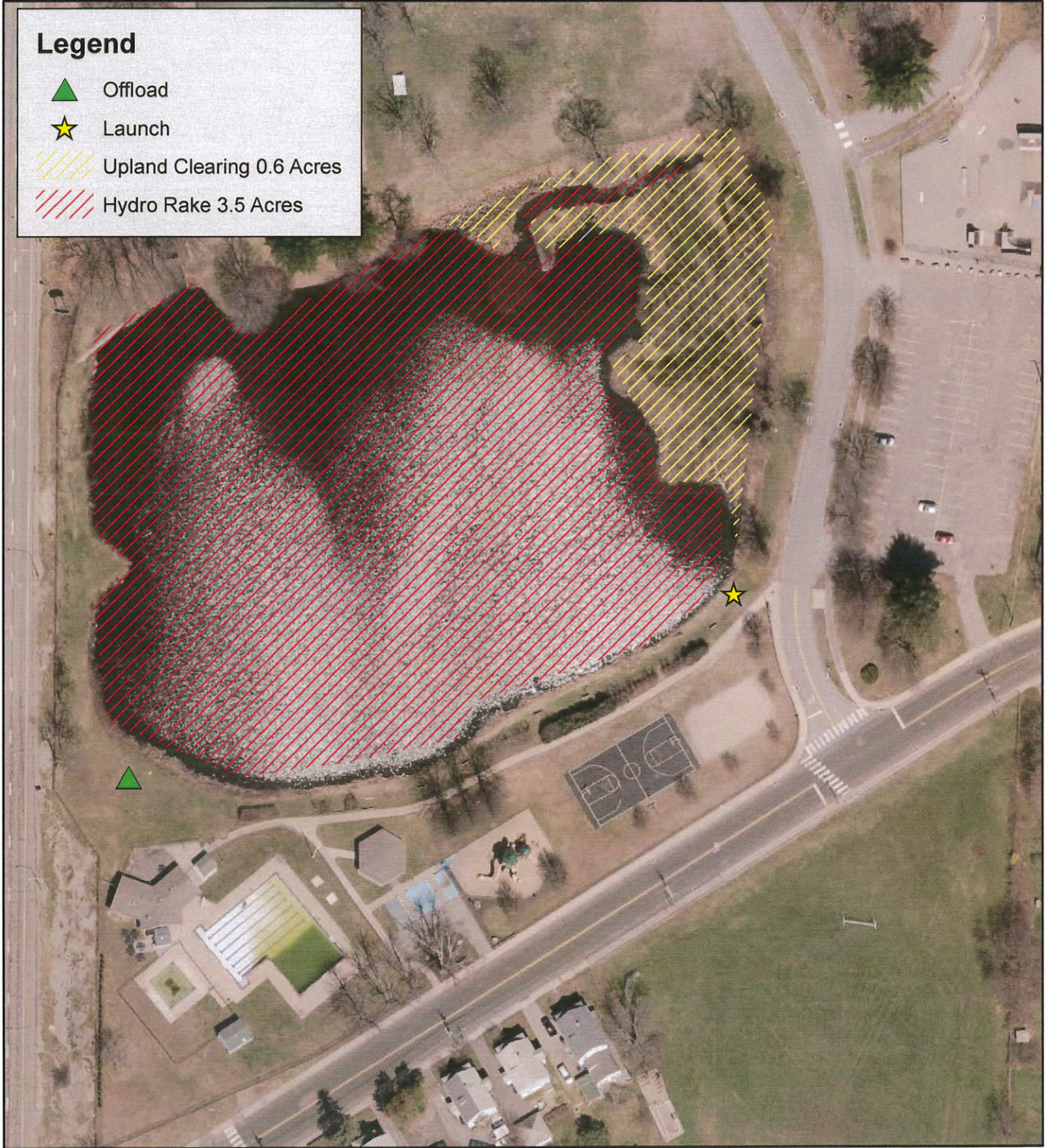


Besse Park Pond
Torrington, CT



Map Created by: LS
4/07/20
For: Inland Wetlands

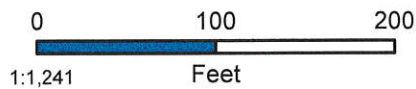
Figure 2: Proposed Hydro Raking Locations



Besse Park Pond
Torrington, CT



Besse Park Pond



Map Created by: LS
4/07/20
For: Inland Wetlands

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R. Bruce Hunter, MAI
Russell Hunter, MAI

June 16, 2008

Kim Barbieri, CZ & WEO
City of Torrington
140 Main Street, Room 304
Torrington, Connecticut, 06790

Re: Assessor's Parcels 244/002/002, 006 & 004
(rear) E/S Winsted Road
Torrington, Connecticut

Dear Ms. Barbieri:

At your request, we have examined the referenced property for the purpose of estimating the market value of the fee simple estate as of June 12, 2008. It is our understanding this report is being prepared for recreational land and open space acquisition and grant application purposes. A copy of the signed engagement letter is included in Section A of the Addenda. This self-contained appraisal report satisfies appropriate federal (Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition UASFLA), state, and industry (USPAP) standards.

The appraised property consists of 13.11 acres of industrially zoned land located along the east side (rear) of Winsted Road in the Burrville section of the city of Torrington, Connecticut. The property is bordered on the east by Route 8, a limited access highway, which is hidden from view by trees, but interjects a noise factor into an otherwise private and peaceful setting.

The subject 13.11-acre property consists of three adjacent parcels, with parcel 002 consisting of a rectangular-shaped 10.46 acres, which extends from a point near Winsted Road, to the old trolley line, that comprises subject parcel 004. Parcel 004 contains about 1.65 acres and is a 33' wide former trolley line, that is about 2,630 feet long, extending northerly from Harris Drive to the south to a point just south of Machuga Road. Subject parcel 004 is situated between (and connects) parcel 002 with the 1-acre subject Parcel 006, a 1-acre, rectangular-shaped parcel.

Because the overall subject property includes a long former trolley line, about 2,630 feet in length, an appropriate method of valuation is "across the fence", where this long, narrow, parcel is valued according to the contribution to the typical abutter, depending on the zoning and soils characteristics.

According to available mapping, about 8.8 acres, or 67% of the overall property, are substantially impacted by wetlands associated with a floodplain around the Still River and several streams that flow in a westerly direction through the property. The remaining easterly 4.31 acres of uplands (33%) are concentrated in the northeasterly section of the property and along the old trolley line extending south to Harris Drive.

The property has access constraints imposed as Machuga Road is a narrow (one-lane) roadway that crosses an area of wetlands (swamp) on State lands and has been constructed over peat, constraining heavy truck traffic, limiting the potential industrial development on the uplands portion on the subject property to lighter use. From Machuga Road in the north, a dirt road runs north-south through the center of the property, along the former trolley track bed, providing good interior access. Access from Harris Drive in the south is problematic as several sections of the old trolley line have been washed out and need to be restored.

The highest and best use for the subject uplands is for light industrial use and the highest and best use of the wetlands is to remain as open/recreational space. The Sales Comparison Approach has been used in estimating the contributory values of the 4.31 acres of uplands and the 8.8± acres of wetlands. The Income Capitalization and Cost Approaches were not applicable to this assignment.

This appraisal is predicated on the assumption that hazardous substances are not present at the subject property. No apparent evidence of contamination or potentially hazardous materials was observed on the date of inspection. Members of our office are not qualified to determine the presence of hazardous substances. We make no certification as to the presence or absence of hazardous materials at the subject property.

Based upon our investigation and analysis, we have formed the opinion that as of June 12, 2008, the fee simple interest in the subject property has a market value of:

ONE HUNDRED FORTY NINE THOUSAND DOLLARS
(\$149,000)

The following narrative appraisal report includes the pertinent data and analyses that produced our opinion of value. A review of the report should be made to understand the criteria and basis for our estimate of value.

Respectfully submitted,



R. Bruce Hunter, MAI

Why preserve the Leoni Property?

The Leoni property sits amid the vast wetland complex surrounding the Still River. This Class A water-course hosts a myriad of habitats that supports many diverse plants and animals. The preservation of this land will:

- Protect the headwaters to the Farmington River from development
- Protect important fish and wildlife habitat
- Fill in the space between current protected land creating a 60+ acre contiguous area of protected watershed area
- Provide much needed access out of Machuga Park currently limited by a one lane driveway allowing full use of the park.



The abandoned trolley line creates a beautiful trail and provides access from Machuga Park and to the Leoni Preserve.



City of Torrington
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

140 Main Street Torrington, CT 06790



City of Torrington
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Working to preserve the best of Torrington



THE PURCHASE OF THE LEONI PROPERTY



Help Us Preserve this Important Watershed Property

The Conservation Commission has received an Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition grant from the State of Connecticut for the purchase of the Leoni property. The grant supplies the City with \$42,900 to put towards the purchase of the land. The overall purchase price from the estate of Joseph Leoni is \$140,000.



The Conservation Commission's Open Space fund, funded by fees collected from development, can add an additional \$40,000. This leaves us short \$57,100. **That's where we need your help!**

We need concerned businesses and citizens to take a stand and help preserve this beautiful piece of property. Any amount helps! We know in these tough economic times it's hard to find 'extra' dollars, but don't let the amount of your donation stop you from joining us—we can make a difference here in our own community!

Your gift would be applied directly to the purchase of the property and would go a long way in ensuring that this area of Winsted Road will stay pristine and open to residents for recreation and enjoyment.



LEONI PROPERTY Pledge Form

We want to help preserve the Leoni Property and help preserve a vital piece of the Still River watershed and protect this land in perpetuity from development.

Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____

Pledge Amount: _____

My donation is:

ENCLOSED IS A CHECK FOR \$ _____
 PLEASE BILL ME FOR A PLEDGE OF \$ _____
 PAYMENT IS DUE WITHIN 30 DAYS OF ISSUANCE OF BILL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Comments:

Mail to: Leoni Property Acquisition Fund

c/o City of Torrington
 CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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 Torrington, CT 06790 Fax: 860-496-5928

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