

STAFF REPORT
Application #WPL-10957-20
20 Owenoke Park
Prepared May 4, 2020
Public Hearing: May 20, 2020

Application Request: The Applicant is requesting to modify the existing driveway entrance, construct a pervious parking area, and relocate an existing stone wall. This site lies within the Waterway Protection Line (WPL) of the Saugatuck River.

Plans reviewed:

1. “**Existing Conditions** Plot Plan Prepared for Centaurus Capital, LP, 20 Owenoke Park Westport, CT” Scale: 1”=10’-0”, dated **November 12, 2015** and last revised **February 4, 2020**, prepared by Leonard Surveyors, LLC
2. “**Site Plan, Details & Notes Proposed Parking Area And Site Landscaping Improvements** Plan 1720 Owenoke Park LLC 20 Owenoke Park, Westport, CT,” dated **February 2, 2020** and last revised **February 25, 2020**, prepared by Chappa Site Consulting, LLC
3. “**Drainage Computations for the Proposed Site Improvements at 20 Owenoke Park; Westport, CT,**” dated February 10, 2020, prepared by Chappa Site Consulting, LLC

Property Description:

Location of 25-year flood boundary: 9 ft. contour interval. The south easterly portion of this parcel is above elevation 9.0’. The WPLO is established 15’ landward from the 25-year flood boundary of the Gray’s Creek (tidal tributary to the Saugatuck River). Therefore, only a small portion of this site is outside of the WPLO area.

Property is situated in Flood Zones AE (el. 13’) as shown on F.I.R.M. Panel 09001C0551G Map revised to July 8, 2013.

Proposed permeable parking area elevation: 7.6’-7.4’

Total lot area is 13,768 sq. ft.

Proposed Site Coverage: 1.96% (270 sq. ft.)

Tidal wetlands identified onsite per site inspection report from Otto Theall, soil scientist, November 3 and 5, 2011.

Aquifer: Property underlain by Sherwood Island Aquifer, which is a coarse-grained stratified drift aquifer. The property is **NOT** within the Town’s wellfield protection zone

Coastal Area Management: The project is within the Coastal Area Management Zone.

Proposed Storm Water Treatment: Storm water runoff from the pervious parking area will be managed with a “21’ wide, 57’ long, 1’ deep trap rock bed. This was sized to manage the peak in runoff volume from the property during a 25-year storm event, as well as store the first flush of 1” stormwater for water quality values. The bottom of the drainage system is proposed to be elevation 5.50’. This will be above the high tide

elevation and the elevation of groundwater based on test pit data. The USDA classifies the soils as Agawam Urban land complex (229B) which is a well drained soil.

Previous Permits issued:

WPL/E-10984-20: For seawall maintenance and repair; issued April 3, 2020

CT DEEP Permit #201910438-COP: Reset and Chink existing stone; issued December 2, 2019.

The Flood and Erosion Control Board **approved** the application with conditions on **May 6, 2020**. The drainage proposal is acceptable to the Engineering Department.

Waterway Protection Line Ordinance:

Section 30-93 of the Waterway Protection Line Ordinance states that the applicant shall submit information to the Conservation Commission showing that such activity will not cause water pollution, erosion and/or environmentally related hazards to life and property and will not have an adverse impact on the preservation of the natural resources and ecosystem of the waterway, including but not limited to impact on ground and surface water, aquifers, plant and aquatic life, nutrient exchange and supply, thermal energy flow, natural pollution filtration and decomposition, habitat diversity, viability and productivity and the natural rates and processes of erosion and sedimentation.

Discussion:

The potential for the proposed project to have an adverse impact on the WPLO is focused on site disturbance activities during construction and polluted runoff from parking areas. The subject property is located almost wholly within the WPLO boundary.

Staff notes the parking area is proposed to be permeable with granite pavers with 3"-5" grass planted joints placed over an 8" thick layer of a sand based structural soil. This is placed on filter fabric covered bed of ¾" trap rock that is proposed to be 12" thick. The Engineering Department has reviewed and approved the drainage design. The subsurface stone base is sized to capture and infiltrate one inch of runoff. The one-inch sizing criteria is appropriate and in accordance with the Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual (2004). Staff feels this parking area should be effective in reducing polluted runoff from the site as long as it is properly maintained.

The existing retaining walls bordering Owenoke Park are proposed to be removed. New walls are proposed ~3 feet to the north. The proposed walls will be a mortar filled fieldstone wall with a concrete footing. Access to the parking area will be in the same area as before with a stone paved apron. The new walls will be ~2'-3' tall. The location of the proposed wall will be on the owner's property and remove the encroachment of the existing wall from the Owenoke Park right-of-way. Additionally, staff notes the new area along the roadside will be planted as lawn and the new location will grant more room for car access along the wall, as this is currently a narrow roadway.

The proposed plan includes significant plantings surrounding much of the site's perimeter. These include grasses, groundcover, shrubs and trees. Staff notes that the Conservation Commission promotes a policy of approving native, non-invasive plant species on projects within its jurisdiction. Staff notes that native plants, when properly selected, will require less maintenance, are well adapted to local soil conditions/climate, and attract beneficial wildlife to support the local ecosystem. There are non-native species included in the design plan. Staff feels this should be addressed for appropriateness with this project. Specifically the proposed plant list included two trees (*Salix babylonica* and *Prunus persica*) and five species in the perennial and ground covers (*Berberis vulgaris*, *Pennisetum alopecuroides*, *Ammophila arenaria*, *Perovskia atrilicifolia*, and *Hylotelephium spectabile*) that are non-native species.

Staff feels the sediment and erosion controls proposed for site construction should provide adequate protection if they are properly maintained. The plan notes that stockpiles should be surrounded by silt fencing as needed.

This property floods from both the Grey's Creek side to the north and the Saugatuck River side from the south. Openings in the proposed wall from the "water" gate, the pedestrian pathway and the main parking entrance will still allow floodwaters to pass freely during storms.

Staff feels that the project will not adversely impact the natural resources and ecosystem of the Waterway Protection Line Ordinance.

Alternatives for reduction of impacts:

1. No construction alternative.
2. Approve application with the following conditions:
 - a) Inclusion of conditions from the Flood and Erosion Control Board approval of May 6, 2020.
 - b) Update the planting plan to include only native, non-invasive species prior to the issuance of a Zoning Permit.