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TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD, CT

INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES COMMISSION

March 16, 2026

The Town of Bloomfield Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, March 16, 2026, scheduled for 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held remotely on the ZOOM meeting platform.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call:

Commissioners Present: Alan Budkofsky, Chairman; Paul Shipman, Vice Chairman; Byron Lester; Stephen Millette; Adam Ryczek; and Kevin Wilcox.

Commissioners Absent: Glen Breland; David Laiuppa.

Also present were: Peter Castaldi, Civil Engineer and Wetlands Agent; and Rebecca Jones, Recording Secretary.

A quorum was established with six members present.

III. Old Business

1. Wetlands Permit application
206 Terry Plains Road – Unique ID # 7687
Golf Course Tree Removal at
Cart bridges for 11th and 17th holes
Property owner: Town of Bloomfield
PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to open the public hearing made by Commissioner Wilcox; seconded by Commissioner Ryczek and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

Mr. David Melesko, Director of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services, was present on behalf of the Town of Bloomfield. Also present was Dennis Petruzzelli, Superintendent of the Wintonbury Hills Golf Course. This application was officially received at the January 20, 2026 Wetlands Commission meeting and a Public Hearing was scheduled in the public interest for the February 17, 2026 meeting. The Town of Bloomfield is the property owner and applicant for this application. Public Hearing notice letters did not go out with proof of mailing, and the Public Hearing was rescheduled to the March 16, 2026 meeting.

The Wintonbury Hills Golf Course is located on the northeast side of Terry Plains Road and east of Duncaster Road. The course was built on a former A.C. Petersen's farm in the early 2000's. The total area of the property is 189 acres, about half of which is wetlands and watercourses. The golf course was built around the wetlands and watercourses, and timber golf cart bridges were constructed through the wetlands between some of the holes. These bridges cross forested wetland and watercourse areas and were constructed with driven piles.

This proposal includes clearing the existing forest vegetation 50 feet on both sides of the cart bridges at the 11th and 17th holes to prevent further damage to the bridges from tree falls and for the safety of the golfing public. The treetops and trunks are proposed to be left where they are dropped, and the stumps will not be pulled. Work is expected to begin late 2026 after the end of golfing season.

Mr. Castaldi shared his screen and reviewed the GIS site plan with the Commission. Photos of fallen trees at the 11th and 17th hole bridges from recent site visits were also shared. Prior to any trees being cut it was agreed that the 50-foot area would be staked, and trees to be retained and to be removed, would be identified in the field. Mr. Castaldi read excerpts from his memorandum and reviewed the proposed Conditions of Approval.

Mr. Castaldi read a letter into the record, from Ms. Paula Jones, Chairperson of the Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee. The Committee members had concerns about balancing public safety with wildlife habitat preservation, particularly regarding the removal of hollow trees that could serve as wildlife habitat, also referred to as morticulture.

The Commission discussed morticulture in further detail. Morticulture is the practice of retaining some standing dead trees, or a portion of the trunk, specifically for wildlife habitat they provide.

Commissioner Wilcox stated that completely dead trees can pose a risk to the clearing crew and integrity of the bridge should the tree fall over.

Questions from the Public
There were no questions from the public.

Questions from the Commission
Chairman Budkofsky asked clarifying questions related to the tree removal process. The trees will be climbed and dropped away from the watercourse. He confirmed that the applicant accepts the Conditions of Approval.

Vice-Chair Shipman asked if it was possible to cut the tree at a lower height, reducing danger while still providing the morticulture habitat within the base of the tree. Mr. Melesko stated that he will contact Connwood Foresters to offer recommendations as to the best course of action. This would provide the applicant with a report to base their work on.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Commission
There were no comments from the Commission.

Motion to close the public hearing made by Commissioner Wilcox; seconded by Vice-Chair Shipman. The motion was approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

It was moved by Commissioner Shipman to approve the Wetlands Permit application of The Town of Bloomfield for tree clearing at the Golf Cart Bridges at the 11th and 17th holes at Wintonbury Hills Golf Course at 206 Terry Plains Road – Unique ID #7687, Wetlands File No. 75-2026-05, with reference to the map dated January 28, 2026, and subject to the following conditions:

1. In accordance with Section 11.22 of the Wetlands Regulations, the permittee shall file a copy of the Wetlands Permit, including these conditions of approval, on Bloomfield Land Records.
2. The permittee shall stake the limits of the proposed clearing area in the field and in coordination with the Tree Warden shall identify specific trees to be removed and retained.
3. Provisions to protect trees to be retained shall be employed during the clearing operations. Trees to be cut down shall be felled away from trees to be retained.
4. No tree trunks or tops shall be dropped into or across any watercourse. Any tree tops or trunks accidentally dropped into or across watercourses shall be removed without the use of construction equipment.
5. All disturbed ground areas shall be planted with wetlands seed mix and mulched to establish permanent ground cover.
6. The permittee shall plant native wetland shrubs along the limits of clearing to discourage the spread of invasive species. Locations, numbers and species shall be coordinated with the Wetlands Agent.
7. The permittee shall schedule a preconstruction meeting with the Wetlands Agent prior to the start of any clearing activities.
8. This permit authorizes certain regulated activities within wetlands and watercourses. The impacts to wetlands shall be no greater than 1.6 acres and the impacts to watercourses shall be no greater than 200 linear feet.
9. This permit authorizes impacts to the Vegetated Buffer Zone, 75 feet from watercourses. These impacts shall be no greater than 0.34 acres.
10. In accordance with the Wetlands Regulations Section 11.6 the permit cannot be transferred from the permittee to another party without the approval of the Commission. This permit is to be assigned to the applicant: The Town of Bloomfield.
11. The permittee shall prepare and submit, within six months, an overall Comprehensive Long-Term Vegetation Management Plan to address future tree removal projects and to manage the existing forest vegetation at the Golf Course. The plan shall include measures to protect existing forest vegetation, control or eliminate invasive plant

species, address the removal of standing trees that may be a hazard and the replacement of trees that are removed.

The motion to approve the application was seconded by Commissioner Millette and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

IV. New Business

2. Wetlands Map Amendment application
141 Wintonbury Avenue – Unique ID# 1227
Applicant: CTEC Solar
Property Owner: Church Home of Hartford (Seabury)
PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to open the public hearing made by Commissioner Millette; seconded by Vice-Chair Shipman and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

Kevin Costello and Jin Tao were present on behalf of the applicant, CTEC Solar. This application was officially received at the January 20, 2026 meeting. The subject property is located on the south side of Wintonbury Avenue east of Skinner Drive. The Official Map indicates that more than 75% of the 19.25 acre property is wetlands and watercourses.

The Soil Scientist identified about two more acres of wetlands in the central and southerly parts of the site than are shown on the Official Map. The Soil Scientist flagged 16.51 acres of wetlands on the site. The Official Map indicated 14.55 acres of wetlands on the site. The upland soils on the site are restricted to three "islands" in the southerly part of the property and along the west property line. The 16.51 acres of flagged wetlands cover about 86% of the total property.

The Official Map also indicates about 1400 linear feet of watercourse along the westerly side of the property; a stormwater basin and swamp are close to the easterly property line on the adjacent parcel. No watercourses were delineated by the Soil Scientist.

The applicant has submitted the required information for a Wetlands Map Amendment. However, a field verification of the wetlands flagged by the Soil Scientist could not be done due to the recent heavy snowfalls. Mr. Castaldi recommended that the Commission table this application to the April 20, 2026 meeting in order for sufficient snow melt to occur so that a field verification of the flagged wetlands can be done.

The field verification of the flagged wetlands requires that the ground be visible and thawed enough to take test cores with a hand auger. The verification will also confirm that the wetland flags are still in place and that there is walking access to the site. Site walks with the Commission may be held in early April, weather permitting.

Questions from the Public

Diane Perry, 16 Skinner Drive, asked if the applicant would be willing to provide an updated delineation report. She noted that this delineation was based on digital soil survey data collected in 2025. Ms. Perry also asked clarifying questions related to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil data.

Mr. Costello stated that there have been site visits made by their Wetlands Scientist and she will be present at the next meeting to answer specific questions.

Marie Oliver, 10 Candlewood Drive, lives in the area and has had considerable water issues over the years. Her yard is currently flooded due to melting snow.

Chairman Budkofsky stated that wetlands are determined by soil type, not by moisture levels.

Beverly Brown, 137 Wintonbury Avenue, asked if solar farms are harmful for abutting residents.

Sonya Osbourne, 4 Hyde Road, asked how much vegetation will be removed and how this will affect water flow to the abutting homes and streets.

Chairman Budkofsky stated that these questions should be asked during the Wetlands Permit application as this application solely focuses on the Wetlands Map Amendment.

Motion to table this application and continue the public hearing to the April 20, 2026 regular meeting made by Commissioner Wilcox; seconded by Vice-Chair Shipman and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

3. Wetlands Permit application
141 Wintonbury Avenue – Unique ID# 1227
Applicant: CTEC Solar
Property Owner: Church Home of Hartford (Seabury)
PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to open the public hearing made by Commissioner Millette; seconded by Commissioner Shipman and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

Kevin Costello and Jin Tao were present on behalf of the applicant, CTEC Solar. Chairman Budkofsky stated that this proposal is 1.3 MW, which is under the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Siting Council. Mr. Tao explained that when converting DC power to AC power, the conversion rate will drop the energy usage to 1.0, which is under local jurisdiction. He explained that the applicant prefers working with local municipalities. After considerable discussion, the Commission agreed to hear preliminary information and entertain questions from the public before tabling this application.

The subject property is 19.25 acres in area and is located on the south side of Wintonbury Avenue, east of Candlewood Drive. More than three quarters of the parcel is wooded. A recent Wetlands Map Amendment application identified 16.5 acres of wetlands on the property or about 86% of the total area. Uplands were delineated in three 'islands' in the southerly part of the property and along the westerly property line. Except for these uplands, the entire property is wetlands.

This proposal is to construct a 1.36 MW photovoltaic (solar) array in the central and southerly parts of the property, that will cover about 7 acres, two stormwater management basins, an 18-foot wide gravel driveway in from Wintonbury Avenue, concrete pads for equipment, trenching for conduits and clearing of about 15 acres of existing forest vegetation.

Questions from the Public

Diane Perry, 16 Skinner Drive, asked Mr. Tao, to explain the legend displayed on the site map. The legend shows proposed areas of seeding. Mr. Tao stated that the applicant is planning to leave all tree stumps in place to minimize ground disturbance. He confirmed that a site map showing proposed tree removal will be sent to Mr. Castaldi before the next meeting. Ms. Perry requested that this information be available to the public. Chairman Budkofsky confirmed that all application materials are available on the Town website and Mr. Castaldi will upload any new information received before the next meeting.

Ms. Perry also asked if the applicant had plans to improve the stormwater detention area on the west side of the property as it is not effective based on previous public comments. Mr. Tao stated that the applicant will target invasive species and is amenable to clearing the Town-owned easement area as well.

Questions from the Commission

Chairman Budkofsky confirmed with Mr. Castaldi that there is a drainage pipe on the west side of the property. He asked the applicant to investigate potential improvements to the existing stormwater detention area on the west side and to consider planting additional vegetation to help manage run off.

Mr. Castaldi read a letter into the record from Ms. Paula Jones, Chairperson of the Conservation, Energy and Environmental Committee, expressing concerns about the site's suitability for large-scale solar development due to wetland impacts.

Motion to table this application and continue the public hearing to the April 20, 2026 regular meeting made by Commissioner Wilcox; seconded by Vice-Chair Shipman and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

V. New Applications Officially Received and determination of need for a Public Hearing

Mr. Castaldi informed the Commission that a Wetlands Map Amendment application was received for 46 Rockwell Avenue on behalf of the Town of Bloomfield. An associated Wetlands Permit application was also received for 46 and 91 Rockwell Avenue for recreational improvements at the former Bill Lee baseball field. A public hearing is required for the Wetlands Map Amendment application and thus, Mr. Castaldi is recommending a public hearing for the Wetlands Permit application in the public interest. The Commission agreed to the scheduling of these public hearings.

VI. Wetland Agent Permits received and/or approved:

Mr. Castaldi stated that a Wetlands Agent Permit for a new single-family house and septic system at 92 Hoskins Road was approved with conditions.

VII. Enforcement Actions

None.

VIII. Status of Ongoing Projects

Mr. Castaldi shared that he will be attending a meeting to review clearing limits at 529 Cottage Grove Road. Chairman Budkofsky asked for an update related to 225 Terry Plains Road. Mr. Castaldi sent a letter to the property owners reminding them to contact the Town of Bloomfield before doing any work in the wetlands/watercourse or the culvert.

IX. Approval of Minutes

1. February 17, 2026 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve the February 17, 2026 Regular Meeting minutes, as presented, was made by Vice-Chair Shipman; seconded by Commissioner Breland and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote.

X. Other Business

The Commission discussed the need to review and potentially revise the Vernal Pool regulations, with a plan to address this at the next regular meeting. The last revision of these regulations was in 2023, and while there haven't been any changes to the Wetlands Act requiring updates, the Commission agreed to examine the regulations more broadly.

The Commissioners also discussed a potential site visit for the proposed solar project at 141 Wintonbury Avenue.

XI. Public Comment Period

None.

XII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Wilcox; seconded by Vice-Chair Shipman and approved unanimously by a 6-0-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Wetlands Commission is scheduled for April 20, 2026.