

**COVENTRY INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 7 PM

Town of Coventry, Town Hall Annex Building, 1712 Main Street Coventry, CT 06238  
& Zoom Teleconference

	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
<b>REGULAR MEMBERS:</b>	William Glenney, Chair	X	
	Lori Mathieu, Vice Chair	X	
	William Johnson	X	
	Richard Pearson		X (Excused)
	Stefanie Wierszchalek	X	
<b>ALTERNATE MEMBERS:</b>	Laura Heemskerk	X	
	VACANT		
<b>STAFF:</b>	Lindsay Beutler, Environmental Planner/Wetland Agent	X	
	Todd Penney, P.E., Town Engineer	X	
	Andrea Vassallo, Recording Secretary	X	

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

William Glenney, called the meeting to order at 6:59 PM.  
Laura Heemskerk, Alternate, seated for Richard Pearson.

**2. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** None.

**3. ADDITIONS/CHANGS TO THE AGENDA:**

- **Agenda addition 8.A.** – Orchard Hill Estates Conceptual Housing Development Site Plans (Jana Roberson)
- **Agenda addition 9.B.** – CACIWC: Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (William Glenney)

**MOTION:** W. Johnson **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the additions to the November 19, 2025, Regular Meeting Agenda. W. Glenney **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; Unanimous.**

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**4. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. WP-25-30 – 124 Lake Street** – Owner/Applicant: Town of Coventry; Agent: Benjamin Rach, GZA GeoEnvironmental. – As of right application for proposed surface water circulator to reduce concentration of bacteria in the swimming area at Patriots Park.

- **Application is continued** to Wednesday, December 17, 2025, IWA Regular Meeting.
- The IWA must act prior to the permit application **prior to December 26, 2025**, from the date the application was received.

**5. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. WP-25-32 – 167 Geraldine Drive** – Owner: Todd Richardello; Applicant: James Lathrop. – Proposed 24’x24’ garage approx. 10.5ft from wetland.

- Application WP-25-32 **was received** and will be formally reviewed at the December 17, 2025, Regular Meeting.
- **ACTION:** A new Site Plan shall be submitted to include a **demarcation of existing wetlands boundaries**.
- **ACTION:** The Applicant shall make a good faith effort to be **in process of and/or obtain an Encroachment permit** with the Town of Coventry as a condition of approval of a Wetlands permit.
- **ACTION:** Submit a **sequence of construction**.

**Representing the application:**

- James Lathrop, Applicant/Contractor
- Richard Zulick, Certified Forester/Soil Scientist
- Todd Richardello, Property Owner

J. Lathrop, Applicant/Contractor, stated the **proposed project** is:

- A new construction 24’x24’ garage.
- Located on the south side of the parcel, the property frontage.
- Access to the garage will utilize the existing driveway of off Geraldine Drive.
- Sited approximately 2’ from the existing home with an askew orientation to preserve a mature old growth existing tree located in the front yard.

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- The proposed garage would have tied downed gutters and divert impervious surface water roof runoff into buried downspout gutters and conduit system draining approximately 43.8' to an existing municipal catch basin located at the southeast corner of the parcel.
- The buried downspout gutter and conduit system requires a municipal Encroachment Permit, issued by Coventry Public Works Department, to attach into the existing underground catch basin system.
- Existing site vegetation, shrubs, and trees will be preserved and remain on the property – confirmed by R. Zulick.

**The existing wetland is:**

- Located approximately 10.5' to the east of the proposed garage.
- Located on a neighboring abutting property at 15 David Drive.

**R. Zulick, Certified Forester/Soil Scientist, presented** his findings from a site visit conducted on September 22, 2025:

- A Wetlands Delineation Report dated October 20, 2025.
- No wetlands are present on the property proper, 167 Geraldine Drive.
- The property proper generally drains to the east.
- The property proper was observed as relatively flat with a slight southeast downgradient slope towards Geraldine Drive.
- A disturbed wetland area exists, located east of the property, on abutting property, located at 15 David Drive, approximately within 25' of the proposed garage.
- Surface water runoff could be diverted by a gutter or swale system however the recommended approach is a buried downspout gutter conduit system, outflowing into the existing underground catch basin system located on Geraldine Drive.

**Additional information was presented** to the commission:

- J. Lathrop stated he had spoken to the Coventry Public Works Department regarding the proposed work and would need to obtain a municipal Encroachment Permit and schedule a visit to the property from the state required Call Before You Dig underground utilities safety department.
- T. Richardello, Property Owner, stated:
  - There is a town owned drainage right-of-way located on the north side of the property located in the backyard.

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- The property owners located easterly at 15 David Drive have been observed as filling in the wetland system with organic matter, to create a berm along the shared property line, to prevent overland flooding. The organic matter has been observed as mainly grass clippings and leaves.

**Lindsay Beutler**, Coventry Environmental Planner/Wetland Agent, presented several photos of the subject property. **She stated and confirmed:**

- Conducted a site visit with the Applicant/Contractor J. Lathrop.
- Observed and confirmed the topographic flatness, drainage flow patterns, and abutting wetland.
- Does not foresee a risk of sedimentation entering the wetland.

**Todd Penney, P.E., Coventry Engineer, stated:**

- Overall has no issues with the application, proposed project, or proposed impervious surface water runoff.
- Siting and orientation of the proposed project makes the most sense and presents the least amount of environmental impact to the existing site.

**The Commissioners asked and/or provided comments on the following:**

**W. Johnson asked:**

**Q:** If the wetland was seasonal or intermittent?

- R. Zulick replied it functions annually; however, it is a disturbed wetland.

**Q:** Could the contractor use biodegradable erosion control methods during construction such as coil straw wattles, which upon decomposing will become a natural berm along the shared property line with 15 David Drive?

- T. Richardello stated the property drains significantly towards the back of the property to the north into the existing drainage easement.
- R. Zulick stated there isn't much of a watershed. The greater concern would be during construction and need good soil/erosion control methods.

**Consensus among the commissioners:**

- **Drainage:**
  - L. Heemskerk, L. Mathieu, S. Wierszchalek – Support and recommend the impervious surface water runoff to be captured by tied downed

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gutters and diverted into buried downspout gutter and conduit system.

- **Municipal Catch Basin & Encroachment Permit:**
  - W. Glenney, L. Heemskerk, L. Mathieu, S. Wierszchalek – Confirm with the Applicant the drainage conduit system will attach to the existing municipal catch basin and confirm with T. Penney, there is legal authority to do so once obtaining an Encroachment Permit from the Coventry Department of Public Works Department.

**Commissioner Questions/Discussions:**

- **Erosion/Sediment Controls:**
  - L. Heemskerk asked the Applicant if the silt fence is permanent or a temporary erosion/sediment control product. J. Lathrop confirmed the silt fence is a temporary installed control product and will be removed upon completion of the construction project.
- **Drainage Easement/Right-Of-Way:**
  - W. Glenney discussed with T. Penney, Applicant, Owner, and Contractors the existing drainage easement, its existing drainage functions, and property watershed direction.
- **Siting/Orientation of the Proposed Garage:**
  - L. Mathieu asked J. Lathrop, Applicant/Contractor, if the proposed structure could be located closer to the main house. J. Lathrop replied that the proposed structure is located 2' away from the home and is sited and oriented to avoid the removal of existing mature growth trees.
    - Relocating the proposed structure to the left side of the main home, frontage, along the western property line would propose more environmental impacts to the site, i.e. the structure would be upgradient, require reconfiguring and installing a new driveway, require the removal of four mature growth trees, and be farther away from the existing municipal catch basin.
- **Wetland System:**
  - L. Mathieu asked R. Zulick if the wetland system located on 15 Davis Drive was an isolated wetland system or part of a larger system. R. Zulick replied that the wetland is cutoff from the other surrounding wetland system due to prior development and active filling of the wetland should cease.

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- **ACTION:** L. Beutler and T. Penney stated they can send a notification letter to the property owners of 15 Davis Drive to cease filling the wetland on their property and begin efforts to remove existing organic detritus/debris.

**B. WP-25-33 – 152 Cheney Lane – Owner: Anne C Toale Trust & Julie Anne Carion; Applicant/Agent: James DiPreta, Spectrum Environmental LLC. – Demolition of garage approx. 32 feet from wetland. Foundation to stay. No expected ground disturbance.**

- Application WP-25-33 **was received** and will be formally reviewed at the December 17, 2025, Regular Meeting.
- **ACTION:** The commission requests a **remedial action plan** from the applicant for the existing 275-gallon **Aboveground Storage Tank (AST)**.

**Representing the application:**

- James DiPreta, Spectrum Environmental LLC, Applicant/Agent
- Mike Bannon, Bantec Environmental

J. DiPreta, Applicant, stated the **proposed project** is:

- The demolition and removal of an existing dilapidated garage located along the southwest property line, backyard, where footings and foundation are to remain.
- No concrete slab flooring. Existing dirt floor. No excavation required.
- Minimal soil disturbance is anticipated.
- An existing well pump runs through the garage to the main house.
  - The existing well pump is to be removed and reinstalled later.
- Removal methods include using a grapple truck.
- Debris is to be placed inside 30-yard container trucks and removed offsite, and the site will be raked clean.
- Anticipated project timeframe is 3 days.

**Wetland Proximity:**

- The existing garage is located approximately 32' west of an existing wetland system.
- The main access to project site will utilize an existing driveway between two (2) wetlands systems on the property.

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**Concerns:**

- **Oil Tank:** A 275-gallon aboveground storage tank (AST) remains inside garage;
  - It is unknown if the AST is completely empty.
- **Site Protection:** Temporary fencing or substantial barriers (not just cones/flags) required along driveway to protect wetlands during demolition.
- **L. Beutler stated she was being cautious** and brought the application before the Commission due to a previous demolition project requiring a wetlands permit, intended to have minimal ground disturbance, and activities were remanded to L.Beutler to be processed as a Minimal Impact Permit.

**6. ENFORCEMENT:**

**A. 77 Tall Oak Drive** – Owner: David Frechette - Material Deposition in Regulated Area. Letter requesting site visit sent 6/21/24. Site visit to be conducted 7/22/2024. Cease and Desist verbally issued by IWA 7/29/24, mailed Certified Mail 8/1/2024. Referred to Town Attorney 7/23/2025.

- **Stipulation agreement for temporary injunction** signed by Judge 10/30/2025.
- **Phase 1 restoration to be complete by 12/17/2025.**

**Present for the high-level discussion:**

- Ken Slater – Town Attorney
- Hank Gruner – Consulting Herpetologist, Town of Coventry

**L. Beutler presented to the Commission:**

- A Stipulation Agreement issued by the court for the immediate restoration of the vernal pool in its historic location.
- Construction is to begin Thursday, November 20, 2025, and anticipated to be completed by Friday, November 21, 2025.

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L. Beutler stated a **pre-construction meeting was held November 12, 2025**, at the subject site with the property owner, and the following parties:

- The Owner, David Frechette.
- The Owner’s Soil Scientist, George Logan.
- Coventry’s Town Engineer, T. Penney, and Environmental Planner/Wetland Agent, L. Beutler.
- Coventry’s consulting Herpetologist, Hank Gruner.
- The Owner’s Contractor, Paul Genovesi.
- Various other parties on behalf of the property owner.

**Discussed at the pre-construction meeting:**

- Construction **sequencing** and **timeline**.
- **Location** of the vernal pool.
- **Reviewed onsite** rough-cut excavation and boundary mark-outs - consistent with the vernal pool’s historic location.
- Confirmed the **excavation contractor** for the Owner is Paul Genovesi.
- Excavation activities to include the **rough-cut** of the vernal pool.
  - With anticipation to accept water over the winter/spring of 2025-2026 to support the returning obligate vernal pool species.
- State required **Call Before You Dig** underground utilities safety department was called and anticipated to come out to the subject property.
- Excavated fill material is allowed to be **temporarily stockpiled** in an agreed upon location on site however the fill will be **permanently removed offsite**.
- The vernal pool shall hold a **minimum of 18-20” of water** but that is not the final excavated depth.
- L. Beutler stated that **one representative from the Town shall** be onsite while there is a “shovel in the ground”, indicating that T. Penney, H. Gruner, L. Beutler will **be onsite during active excavation**.

**L. Beutler further stated:**

- GZA, the Town’s consulting engineering firm, will have a **hydrogeologist** onsite, November 20, 2025, to monitor potential groundwater infiltration.

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**K. Slater, Town Attorney stated:**

- If the property owner fails to accomplish the court ordered restoration activities by **December 17, 2025**, the town will be able to go onsite and finish any incomplete work.

**Thanks, and Appreciation:**

- Commission members thanked L. Beutler and K. Slater for their ongoing work to remediate the site.

**Additional Comments:**

- T. Penney, Town Engineer, indicated that the work to commence tomorrow, November 20, 2025, is just **Phase 1 of a multi-phased remediation project** which will further include but not limited to additional fine grading, re-planting, and monitoring of the site for a duration of time, at least 5-years.
- Commissioners inquired if **a wetlands permit is required** to complete the rest of the phased remediation work. K. Slater indicated that future **remediation activities are issued under court order – no**, the Coventry IWA will not need to be further engaged in any future applications pertaining to this remediation work.
- **Other outstanding issues persist** i.e. zoning violations, wetland violations, and permanent relief to be negotiated in a final agreement in the next several months.

**7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**

**A. October 22, 2025 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** L. Heemskerk **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the October 22, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes with the following corrections:

- **Page 11**, 3<sup>rd</sup> main bullet, 4<sup>th</sup> sub bullet, missing information should have stated:
  - “What are the preventative measures to: **monitor potential sewage leakage?**”

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- **Page 14:** Correction of the spelling of the name: Dr. Kortmann.

S. Wierszchalek **SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED; 4:0:1**

<b>Yea</b>	Glenny, Mathieu, Heemskerk, Wierszchalek
<b>Nay</b>	0
<b>Abstain</b>	Johnson

**8. CORRESPONDENCE:**

**A. Orchard Hill Estates Conceptual Housing Development Site Plans**

J. Roberson presented to the Commission a conceptual site plan of Orchard Hills Estates, owned by the Coventry Housing Authority.

- Where the Senior Housing & Affordable Housing Alternatives Study Committee – explores/reviews concepts, estimates costs, potential locations, funding sources, development partners, and other needs.
- The Affordable Housing Committee is looking at feasible property for future housing development.
- The Town has a contract with a consultant to develop preliminary concept plans for future housing development.
- J. Roberson showed the commissioners two (2) preliminary concept plans due to an existing watercourse and wetland system on this particular parcel.

**Additional Due Diligence Required:**

Due to the preliminary and conceptual nature of the drawings the Town **has not yet conducted:**

- A Sewer Capacity study.
- Percolation Tests.
  - J. Roberson stated that the percolation tests will be conducted (in-house) by Town staff.
- Stormwater Analysis plan.
- Identified funding mechanisms.

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- If the Town pursues types of funding mechanisms, e.g. grants, there will need to be a feasibility study and show concept plans.

**Preliminary Concept Plans:**

- J. Roberson showed the commissioners two (2) preliminary concept plans due to an existing watercourse, an intermittent seasonal watercourse and associated wetland system on this particular parcel down gradient and draining from Coventry High School.
- J. Roberson stated it is not too early to ask for more input and would love preliminary comments and/or to receive markups in order to generate a more detailed concept plan.
- The concept plans propose clustered housing building structures with a varying number of units in each building. The average approximation of building units is around 80 units.
- An existing pine grove was observed as preserved in both preliminary concept plans.
- The two (2) concept plans were shown with different parking lot configurations.

**Existing Watercourse & Wetland System:**

- J. Roberson stated that the Town is not seeking a wetlands permit at this time due to the conceptual nature of the drawings and remaining due diligence that needs to be performed.
- The watercourse and intermittent stream have both been observed with very high and low water discharge flows depending on seasonal durations and varying weather scenarios.

**Commissioner Initial Reactions/Comments:**

The commission thanked J. Roberson for bringing the preliminary concept plans to their attention early in the process. The commissioners' initial reactions/comments were the following:

- Inquires as to what the existing drainage patterns are of the potential site.

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- Stormwater runoff is a concern for the Commission and consideration should be given to a variety of discharge scenarios,
  - E.g., The concept plans do not indicate the existing storm sewer system was incorporated into the overall site drainage however a future concept plan iteration may want to consider where utilizing the existing storm sewer system.
- Future conceptual plan iterations could include adding detention/retention basins, and other stormwater mitigation features.

**9. DISCUSSION:**

**A. IWA - Low Impact Development Working Group Update.**

**B.** L. Mathieu gave a Low Impact Development (LID) Working Group update to the commission:

- The regular standing **November meeting is canceled** and will meet in December.
- The LID Working Group is **accomplishing a lot.**
- In contact with the New Hampshire **501(c)(3) NH Lakes**, [link](#), whose **mission** is to:

“Restore and preserve the health of New Hampshire’s lakes. Our vision is a New Hampshire where all our lakes are clean and healthy, and caring for them is a way of living, doing business, and governing.”
- **SURVEY RESULTS: Lake Protection Survey:**
  - Six (6) respondents with quality information received.
    - The intent of the survey is to crowdsource information from other CT lake communities on best management practices.
- **DEVELOPED: LID Educational Workshop Flyer**
  - Saturday, May 16, 2026
  - Time: 9 am -12 pm.
  - Location: Patriots Park, Lodge.
  - Target audience: Coventry residents, Towns of Columbia & Bolton
  - Educational presentation topics to include:
    - Wetland planting guides
    - Potential demonstration project.
    - Q&A and vendors
- **HELD: Joint Working Group Meeting**

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- Held between the LID Working Group and the Coventry Lake Advisory & Monitoring Committee.
  - Wednesday, October 29, 2025
  - Time: 7 pm.
  - Location: Coventry Town Hall Annex Building.
- **UPCOMING: Joint Meeting with Columbia & Coventry**
  - Columbia's Lake Management Advisory Committee ([LMAC](#)), Mary Roickle, President, Thursday, November 20, 2025.
  - Columbia has an established set of regulations and policy documents Coventry may be interested in reviewing.
- **ACCOMPLISHED:** Article drafted for the Town quarterly newsletter.
  - Currently under review for the December 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.
- **ACCOMPLISHED:** Resolution and policy documents working drafts developed.

**A) Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands**

**Commission, Inc (CACIWC) Annual Conference – November 15, 2025**

L. Beutler and W. Glenney attended. W. Glenney provided the following update:

- **Overall theme** was **climate change**.
- Approximately 300+ people attended.
- CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), **potentially, may not have** wetland agency employees on staff.
- **Referenced** the CT Governor's Council on Climate Change ([GC3](#)), November 28, 2021, ***Connecticut Community Level Climate Change Resilience Assessment & Prioritization Plan***, [document link](#).
  - Other resources:
    - CIRCA ([CT Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaption](#))
    - CT GC3 Phase 1 Report: Near-Term Actions, January 2021, *Taking Action on Climate change and Building a More Resilient Connecticut for All*, [document link](#).
- Goal of **reducing statewide impervious coverage by 2%/year**.
- Want to **change the farming "as of right" agricultural activity permit exemption**.

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- Under CT's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act [agricultural activities](#) are generally permitted in wetlands and watercourses without a permit.
- **CT Comprehensive Training Program for Inland Wetland Agency Members:**
  - Connecticut has enacted new training requirements for all inland wetlands agents, requiring them to complete the state's [comprehensive training program](#). This is an expansion of the previous law, which only required one agency member to be trained annually. Those already serving on January 1, 2026, must complete the training within one year, while new members must complete it within one year of their appointment, election, or hiring.
  - All Coventry commission members and town wetland agents have received training and are in good standing.
- **Conference Breakout Sessions:**
  - Many breakout sessions
  - Referenced many types of court cases and precedence.
  - **Overall emphasis that:**
    - Agents and commissioning bodies **regulate “activities not areas.”**
    - Permits need to be in **writing not verbal.**
    - Town Attorney's **stress involving them** sooner rather than later, and **mediation services** are available.
- **CT Forest Practices Act:**
  - Overseen by the [CT DEEP Forestry Division](#).
  - No state mandated coordination required between timber harvesting activities in an inland wetland and/or upland review area and local wetlands agencies.

The commission discussed how a **wetlands agency becomes aware** of any potential activity that may impact a wetland. In CT:

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- Zoning/planning commissions, and zoning boards of appeals (ZBA) are **generally required to wait, but not mandated**, for a decision from IWA.
- An application involves **coordination of timing** and **due consideration** of an IWA decision by Zoning/Planning or ZBA.
- **Q:** What would be the threshold requirements?
- **A:** Example - Timber Harvest applications submitted to the town go before the IWA.
- **A:** Town staff prioritize application work flow processes among departments by application type.

**10. ADJOURNMENT:**

W. Johnson **MOVED** to **ADJOURN** at 8:52 PM. S. Wierszchalek **SECONDED;**  
**MOTION CARRIED; Unanimous.**

The next regular scheduled meeting is: **Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 7 PM.**  
Respectfully submitted by Andrea Vassallo, Acting Secretary

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for approval of these minutes and any corrections hereunto.