

**COVENTRY INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

By: Glenney

Place: Town Hall Annex

Time: 7:00 p.m.

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	William Glenney, Chair	X	
	Richard Pearson		X excused
	William Johnson	X	
	Lori Mathieu, Vice Chair	X	
	Stefanie Wierszchalek	X	
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	David Epstein (seated for Pearson)	X	
	Laura Heemskerk	X	
STAFF:	Lindsay Beutler, Environmental Planner/Wetlands Agent	X	
STAFF:	Todd Penney, Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent	X	
STAFF:	Heidi Leech, Zoning Enforcement Officer Substitute Recording Clerk (via Zoom)	X	

2. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: NONE

3. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:

Item 5B. – Application WP-25-23 - 131 Woodland Rd. was added under New Business and Additional Discussion Item 9A was added under Discussion by Glenney.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **WP-25-15 – CT Route 44/ Boston Turnpike – List No: R04732 – Owner: Margaret Reid; Applicant: Charles Brown; Agent: Andrew Bushnell, P.E. – Proposed 3-lot subdivision. (e) The 65-day deadline to act on this application is 8/29/2025**

***William Johnson recused himself for this application.**

Andrew Bushnell, PE, LS of Bushnell Associates and Charles Brown, Applicant, were again present to discuss the application.

Bushnell explained that they were back with a revised plan based on comments from Staff and the Agency from the last meeting. The plan was brought up on the screen. Bushnell said the changes are mostly related to the infiltrators, stormwater basin and grass swale, as well as minor adjustments to the footing drains, all to lessen the impact on the wetlands.

Beutler said that all her comments have been addressed.

Mathieu reminded them that at the last meeting she asked about the ownership agreement for the drainage structures, and she would like them to speak about that. Brown said that he uploaded the sample ownership agreement to the permitting system. He said that on the deed for each lot there will be language for the Common Driveway Agreement and the Stormwater Structure Maintenance Agreement. He said the maintenance would be shared equally by the three property owners. He added that the same agreement has been used in the past for properties with similar circumstances. Beutler said she has not yet seen the agreement that was uploaded.

Mathieu asked who would own the Conservation Easement. Brown said that the lot owners will retain ownership of the property but will give the Town an easement on the land.

Mathieu said that her concern is that the Town needs to see and approve the ownership and maintenance agreement and any other agreements. Glenney asked Mathieu if she would be satisfied making this a condition of approval, if the application were to be approved. She said yes.

MOTION: I move to approve application WP-25-15, CT Route 44/ Boston Turnpike – List No: R04732 with the standard Inland Wetlands permit conditions and the following additional conditions:

- 1. The Town must review and approve the Conservation Easement associated with the 3-lot subdivision.**
- 2. The Town must review and approve the ownership and maintenance of the erosion and sedimentation control structures, and stormwater infiltration basin for the 3-lot subdivision.**

By: Mathieu

Seconded: Epstein

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Epstein, Glenney, Mathieu, Wierszchalek

Against: None

Abstain: Johnson

Motion Approved

***William Johnson was reseated.**

B. WP-25-19 – 211 Maple Drive – Owner: Jacqueline Ruggiero; Applicant/Agent: Justin Wolf, E.A. Quinn Landscape Contracting. – Construct two stone walls parallel with edge of Coventry Lake. (e) The 65-day deadline to act on this application is 9/26/2025

Justin Wolf and Derrick Frink from E.A. Quinn Landscape Contracting were present to discuss the application. They were at last month's meeting and have come back with additional information to address Staff comments.

Beutler said she feels her comments have all been addressed. She passed out the beach sand guidance document she provided to the applicant from Dr. Kortmann so the Agency can compare that with the sand spec sheet the applicant provided.

Penney said he doesn't have any significant concerns. He said it is certainly a change in landscape but as for whether it is an improvement in permeability, it may be. He doesn't have any significant comment except that it is hardscape vs. softscape which is for the Agency to consider.

Epstein said he lives on the lake and with it being essentially a bowl, he asked Penney what would be more permeable and would filter the runoff better during a rain event. Penney said it depends on the rain event. Penney said they are proposing quite a bit of washed gravel which will allow for permeability in a rain event but becomes long-term maintenance. The gravel has a larger void ratio than hard packed topsoil that hasn't seen rain in weeks then gets a 1" rain event. The issue becomes long-term maintenance. It is easier to mow grass long-term than it is to keep up with cleaning out the particulates in the gravel to maintain permeability. So, Penney said, the rocks could be better but maybe not in the long run. Penney said that this would be a candidate for a yearly inspection as part of the standard conditions. Beutler said that a post-construction inspection to demonstrate permeability could be a condition of approval. Penney said the specifications for the materials provided show that the materials are permeable, period. Glenney said that assumes that the system is maintained properly.

Heemskerk asked if they should be delineating the maintenance plan to the applicant as a condition of approval. Beutler said she doesn't think we should be telling them how to maintain it. She said the applicant should be providing us with their Operation & Maintenance Plan. E.A. Quinn said they will help the owner with that and with annual inspections/maintenance. Glenney said based on the annual inspection report submission, if Staff determines that something additional is necessary Staff will follow-up.

Heemskerk mentioned that their impervious lot coverage is going up to 14.26% so if they ever want to do a shed or anything in the future, they are very close to their maximum of 15%. Wolf said they would need to apply for a variance which is very common on these small lake lots.

Mathieu said that she made a comment at the last meeting about including a vegetative buffer along the lake. She asked if that was being addressed. Wolf said not at this time because their client is not interested in doing that. Mathieu said this is the water quality component that is missing from their plan. Wolf said, to an extent, the water entering the lake after filtering through all the rocks will be cleaner. Mathieu said rocks will not filter out phosphorous. Wolf said he didn't know all science, but he believed it would filter the water to some degree. Mathieu said it was discussed at the last meeting, and it really is too bad they didn't put vegetation into their plan to treat the water quality just because they don't want it. Wolf said that the owner was in the audience. Mathieu asked Mr. Ruggiero if they would consider a vegetative buffer to protect the water quality of the lake. Mr. Ruggiero said they can.

Mathieu asked if they were adding beach sand. Beutler said that they amended the application to include up to 4-yards of beach sand if it's needed. E.A. Quinn provided a spec sheet.

Mathieu said that the Agency spends a lot of time with applicants, but we need to work more on education. That's what they are doing with the Low Impact Development Working Group. While it might be more aesthetically pleasing, there are better methods than rock for water quality protection.

Epstein said he feels that if it is up to code, especially in these lakefront lots where people are already paying a premium, when we start to dictate specifics, we may be overstepping.

Penney said that if you look at the existing conditions and what is proposed, from a permeability standpoint this is an improvement from the steep lawn, water quality aside.

MOTION: I move to approve application WP-25-19 – 211 Maple Drive with the standard Inland Wetlands permit conditions and the following additional conditions:

- 1. Annual inspection and maintenance of the permeable features is required.**
- 2. The Agency strongly recommends a vegetative buffer of native plants between the hardscape and the lake to protect water quality.**

By: Wierszchalek

Seconded: Epstein

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Epstein, Glenney, Johnson, Mathieu, Wierszchalek

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion Unanimously Approved

- C. WP-25-13 – 184 Avery Shores – Owner/Applicant: Paul Guardino; Agent: Andrew Bushnell. – Foundation replacement, add deck, and demo and rebuild of garage within the 150ft upland review area. The 65-day deadline to act on this application is 8/29/2025. Extension granted by applicant for an additional 65 days. New deadline to act on this application is 11/2/2025.**

Extension granted, continued to next meeting.

5. New Business:

- A. WP-25-22 – 124 Lake St, Patriots Park – Owner: Town of Coventry; Applicant: James Drumm, Town Manager; Agent: Todd Penney, P.E. – Proposed underwater aerator to address bacteria levels in Patriots Park swimming area and playscape improvements.**

Todd Penney, PE, Town Engineer, agent for the Town, was present to discuss the application. Also present were Alex Taylor, Special Project Manager, Lesley Munshower, Director of Parks & Recreation, Dr. Robert Kortmann, and Robert Miller from Eastern Highlands Health District.

Penney pulled up the 2016 aerial. He pointed out the Upland Review Area line and walked the Agency through the Patriots Park layout and the scope of the project, both inside and outside of the regulated area. He said that the project entails accessibility and playscape improvements as well as installation of an underwater aerator to address e-coli bacteria levels at the Patriots Park swimming area. The beach was closed for more than 30 days this summer due to unsafe bacteria levels. He said there would be no changes to the boathouses. Penney said that the playscape is outside of the Upland Review Area. 4-foot wooden slat fencing was installed earlier this summer and was somewhat effective in keeping the geese off the beach. This fence will be extended. Retractable fencing will also be installed along the water when the beach is closed to keep the geese off the beach.

Penney shared the Patriots Park Master Plan. He showed the future raingardens and riparian buffering plantings that are included in the plan. These are future projects and are not part of this application.

Penney said that Dr. Kortmann and Rob Miller gave their input on how best to improve the water quality from the goose activity. This summer Coventry Community Rowing and the Coventry Police used their boat motors to aerate the water in the vicinity of the swimming area. Miller explained in detail the specific bacteria levels before and after. Within a couple days of aerating the water, the levels dropped enough where the swimming area was able to reopen.

Miller said that the jetty is a barrier to the water flow. He said the closer you get to the shore or the jetty, the worse the water quality. Dr. Kortmann had the idea of using boat propellers to aerate the water. He said that after 90 minutes of aeration and circulation, the level dropped from 2,000 to 160.

Penney said the plan is to put four, caged, solar-powered propellers on a dock to circulate the water. The cages will protect the swimmers and fish from the props. The only disturbance will be the mooring, possibly a 2,000 lb. anchor tethered to the raft. Penney said the mooring should qualify as an As-of-Right activity.

Penney explained the other activities involved in this project. Motion-activated sprinklers will be installed for goose control. The current playscape needs updating due to safety concerns. The old one will be removed and a new playscape will be installed outside of the Upland Review Area. The swing set will also be relocated outside the Upland Review Area and the space where the swings currently are will be returned to grass. The old playscape area will be mulched and used as a picnic area. Two additional handicap accessible parking spaces will be installed. The gravel driveway will be removed, and a bituminous sidewalk will be added. The stone wall that is removed will be stored onsite for future use. These measures are for ADA accessibility. Penney said that silt fence and straw waddles will be utilized to protect from flash rain events.

Beutler said that since this is a Town project we have requested a peer review from the North Central Conservation District. Beutler and Penney meet with Alyssa Varroso from NCCD onsite. Varroso said she did not have any concerns, but a formal review will be available for the next meeting.

Mathieu asked why the jetty is there. What purpose does it serve? Should it be removed or the shape changed? Dr. Kortmann said stagnation is an issue there. He said one idea was to remove the jetty or breach it. He said he ran that idea past his colleagues, but they thought it would lead to littoral drift of sand.

Mathieu asked if the bacteria problem is 100% from the geese. Dr. Kortmann said no but it's the lions share. It is also from the swimmers. It builds up in the sand.

Mathieu asked if the area was fully on sewer. Penney said yes. Mathieu asked if the e-coli can be identified as human or animal. Miller said it is probably both based on the beta-loading on weekends.

Penney said there was a concept idea to remove the jetty and replace it with a walkable fishing pier with the aerators below. Mathieu said that if you move the jetty, you move the sand. Glenney questioned, if the e-coli is getting trapped in the sand, is that really a problem.

Wierszchalek said she thinks these are great ideas. She confirmed with Penney that this application is just for the aerator and playscape project. She asked who would be responsible for the maintenance of the aerators. Penney said they haven't gotten into the O&M Plan yet, but it will likely be DPW. It will only operate for three months a year. Penney said the Town will also be responsible for installing paddles on the dock to keep the geese off the solar panels.

Epstein said it looks like a great plan, all positive. Heemskerk agrees with Epstein. She wonders what impact this will have on the neighbors if the water gets stirred up. Penney said they will be pulling away from the private homes heading around towards the cemetery. Dr. Kortmann said that the dilution is enormous once it leaves that swimming area.

Heemskerk said that private homeowners don't test the water in front of their homes, and she wouldn't want them to bear the brunt of the e-coli. Miller said that EHHD samples 8 other locations on the lake on a weekly basis. Only Patriots Park has issues. He agrees there will be tremendous dilution. Miller said that all the Lake Association beaches, Lisicke Beach and Patriots Park Beach are tested weekly. This year they expanded testing to the south side of the jetty which tested extremely low.

Heemskerk asked the difference between the slat fence and the rolled fence. Penney said the slat fence is permanent wood fencing. The rolled fence is temporary for use seasonally and it would only be put out at night when the beach is closed. Heemskerk asked about the geese in the playground area. Penney reviewed the existing and expanded fence locations and the hope for effectiveness.

Miller said that the goose management is going to be a community issue to handle. He lives on the lake. He has a barrier on the stairs like what the Town is putting in. It works because geese are lazy. If they can't get out of the water and walk right up, they will move on.

Heemskerk asked what the previous coverage is. Penney said he was hoping to have that information for tonight's meeting, but he will have it for the next meeting. He said the area of runoff will improve. He will have those computations for the next meeting, but his gut feeling is

that this is a reduction of impervious surface.

Beutler brought up the image of the Master Plan to bring in raingardens and riparian buffer. This will be a great demonstration project for the Town to put up signage and tell people to go see how the Town is implementing these practices. It's great education for the public.

Glenney said that he is highly skeptical that four motors is enough to make the issue go away. He thinks the maintenance is problematic. He doesn't understand why they don't take the jetty out.

Glenney challenges Penney's claim that the aerator work is as-of-right for the Town. Penney said that moorings, according to the Wetlands Regulations, Section 4, are as-of-right. Glenney said that since you're attaching something to the mooring it isn't just a mooring. Penney said that boats are attached to moorings and still as-of-right.

Glenney said the stonewall is never going to get rebuilt. He asked what is being done to manage the goose population. Penney said the two types of fencing and the sprinklers. Glenney suggested the Town contact an organization he works with down on the shore – people with dogs who chase them away a couple times a day. Munshower said that she and DPW Director Bill Watkins got a quote from a service like that, and it was quoted at \$40,000/year.

The application was accepted and continued until the next meeting.

- B. WP-25-23 – 131 Woodland Rd – Owner: Laura Prella, Applicant/Agent: David “Kyle” Stearns – Install a 30' L X 5' to 6' plunge pool with 6" to 8" Riprap with 31' of 24" solid ADS discharge - Culvert pipe continuing under existing asphalt driveway discharging into a 7' X 5' splash pad lined with 6" to 8" Riprap.**

***Laura Heemskerk recused herself for this application**

Kyle Stearns, the contractor and agent for the owner, was present to discuss the application. He explained that the owner has trouble with a lot of water on her property. The Town is going to be doing some drainage work at the road, but the Town doesn't own the drainage pipe under her driveway. Stearns said he is going to implement the plan the Town designed. The owner currently has trouble getting in and out of her driveway due to the collapsed culvert. Beutler brought up the current conditions photos. Stearns reviewed the photos with the Agency. He explained the problems with flowing and pooling water. Beutler said that the Town plan was sent for a peer review by the Northcentral Conservation District which is pending.

Epstein asked who would be responsible for maintenance of the culvert. Penney said that the culvert will belong to the property owner. She will be responsible for maintaining it.

Mathieu asked if all the beautiful vegetation she sees in the photos will be staying. Stearns said yes, except where the splash pad is going. Mathieu said that she is happy to see the good vegetative buffer.

Glennay asked what the vertical drop is. Stearns said that it is approximately 20-feet over 250-feet.

The application was accepted and continued until the next meeting.

***Laura Heemskerk reseated herself**

Johnson asked if the Agency could have just approved this application tonight since it was complete and straightforward. Will there be anything new in September? Beutler said that the regulations say that it has to be accepted at one meeting and decided on at the next. The only other option would be to remand it to her for Agent approval. The NCCD review is pending.

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

Beutler gave a status update. She said that since the violation is now in the hands of the Town Attorney and the Court, updates may be brief and less frequent, but she will update when she can. She said that a Verified Complaint was drafted by Attorney Slater to submit to the court. Staff gave comments. She believed it was signed today by the Town Manager. She wasn't sure if it was filed yet with the court. It contained some new content. Beutler said that she was on a site inspection on an abutting property that was recently sold and while there she was able to take photos of 77 Tall Oak. The photos show that Frechette has done additional work in violation of the Cease and Desist Order including a wall and patio near the pickleball court. He also continues to drive vehicles in the disturbed area.

Penney asked if they could get a copy of the Verified Complaint for the next meeting. Beutler said yes, it is public record.

Wierszchalek asked if Beutler could see if the silt fence was in place. Beutler said no but the Temporary Emergency Injunction includes immediate restoration of the vernal pool to protect the obligate species, and immediate site access for inspections.

7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

- A. **July 23, 2025 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: I move to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2025

By: Mathieu

Seconded: Johnson

Discussion: One correction, Page 1, in the Roll Call table, remove “Vice Chair” from Richard Pearson and add it to Lori Mathieu.

Voting:

For: Epstein, Glenney, Johnson, Mathieu, Wierszchalek

Against: None

Abstain: None

Minutes Approved as Amended

B. July 28, 2025 – Special Meeting Minutes

MOTION: I move to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2025

By: Johnson

Seconded: Wierszchalek

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Epstein, Glenney, Johnson, Mathieu, Wierszchalek

Against: None

Abstain: None

Minutes Unanimously Approved

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

A. Wetlands Quarterly Report

Beutler provided the Agency with a report of all applications from the 4/1/25 – 6/30/25. The report also included Beutler’s professional development and staff updates from the quarter.

Mathieu asked about the Town policy drafted on the use of native plants on municipal properties. Beutler said she worked with Bill Watkins on this to come up with a policy that says a certain percentage of plantings on all Town properties must be native. This led to the resolution adopted by Town Council declaring Coventry a pollinator-friendly community. This was part of the Sustainable CT recertification process.

9. DISCUSSION:

A. Low Impact Development Group Working

Mathieu gave an update on the Low Impact Development Working Group. She shared the upcoming agenda and a document from UConn about Public Demonstration Projects. She said she shared the document and had a good conversation with Lisa

Thomas about Public Demonstration Project opportunities for Coventry. Mathieu said they are looking carefully at what other towns are doing for LID regulations, so they don't have to reinvent the wheel. She said we should be showing off projects on Town property, like the raingarden right here at the Annex Building. Mathieu said that Penney attended their last meeting and talked about STEAP grants. Mathieu sent an email to Glenney that she would like sent to all members. Glenney didn't forward it. He would like Beutler to do that. Glenney said they need to be careful communicating as a group through email. He said in the future Mathieu should send the messages to Beutler as staff for her to forward to members to avoid violating FOIA rules when communicating outside of public meetings.

Mathieu said that Penney and Jana Roberson serve the LID group in an advisory role. She said they also recently added Darby Pollansky, the PZC chair, to the group. Dr. Ben Burpee has been a great asset. He is/has replaced Dr. Kortmann who is now mostly retired.

Mathieu mentioned that the Town of Long Meadow, MA has a great LID tool. She also said they will be sending out another email in September after the meeting and after the Lake Forum.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: I move to adjourn.

By: Johnson

Seconded: Epstein

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Epstein, Glenney, Johnson, Mathieu, Wierszchalek

Against: None

Abstain: None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m. by Glenney.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi A. Leech

Heidi A. Leech, Substitute Recording Clerk

PLEASE NOTE: These motions are not official until approved by the Inland Wetlands Agency at the next meeting. Please see the next meeting minutes for approval or changes.