NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION INLAND WETLANDS REVIEW AND SITE PLAN REVIEW

RE: **358 SPRINGSIDE AVENUE,** Inland Wetlands Review and Site Plan Review for impacting 718 SF of existing wetlands to construct 14,500 SF Classroom Building, 500 SF Compost House, and other Site Improvements including Wetlands Mitigation Activities in a Park Zone (Owner: Department of Parks, Recreation and Trees; Applicant: New Haven Ecology Project).

REPORT: 1460-05

INLAND WETLANDS FINDING: **No significant impact**

SITE PLAN ACTION: **Approval with Conditions**

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Pursuant to State Statute, this Inland Wetland and Site Plan approval is valid for a period of five (5) years after the date of decision, to March 21, 2017. Upon petition of the applicant, the Commission may, at its discretion, grant extensions totaling no more than an additional five (5) years to complete all work connected to the original approval.
2. Comments under **Site Plan Review** on pages 4-5 shall be reviewed with the City Plan Department and resolution reflected on final plans, prior to their circulation for signoff.
3. Signoff on final site plans by the City Engineer, Traffic Department and City Plan Department in that order shall be obtained prior to issuance of building permit or initiation of site work. The Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority and Fire Department shall also review and approve plans.
4. The applicant shall record on the City land records an original copy of this Inland Wetlands and Site Plan Review report (to be provided by the City Plan Department) and shall furnish written evidence that the document has been so recorded (showing volume and page number) to the City Plan Department, prior to City Plan signoff on final plans for a building permit or initiation of site work.
5. An individual who will monitor the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan on a day-to-day basis shall be named, and such name and contact information shall be provided to the City Plan Department, prior to City Plan sign off on final plans for a building permit or initiation of site work.
6. A site restoration bond in an amount of 2% of the certified estimate of total project site cost, including grading, stormwater improvements, mitigation measures, landscaping, paving, and the like, will be required as a provision of this permit. Bond, or other such financial instrument, shall be provided to the City Plan Department, with a copy to the City Engineer, prior to City Plan final sign-off on plans and initiation of site work.
7. Final determination of traffic markings, signs and traffic controls on site and on the perimeter of the site will be subject to the approval of the Department of Transportation, Traffic and Parking.
8. Any activity within the public right-of-way will require separate permits.
9. Following completion of construction, any City catch basins in the public right-of-way impacted by the project shall be cleaned.
10. As-built site plan shall be filed with City Plan Department, with a copy to the City Engineer, prior to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy. Site Plan shall be submitted in both mylar and digital format [.TIFF file based on the State Plane Coordinates (NAD1983)]. Note version of AutoCAD.

Previous CPC Actions: Reorganization of existing parking lot (1453A, 6/15/11), Lease Agreement Renewal (1445-09, 10/20/10), Inland Wetlands & Site Plan Review for Building addition (1322-11,

7/17/02), Lease Agreement (1305-06, 05/30/01), SESC Plan for Addition (1265-05, 04/19/99), SESC Plan for new construction of Classroom building (1232-32, 08/19/97).
Submission: Application for Development Permit inc. Inland Wetlands Application rec'd 12/27/11, rev. 03/09/12; application fee of $280; Stormwater Management Report 12/21/11, rev. 03/14/12; Wetlands Delineation by Soil Resource Consultants 03/30/11; Wetland Function and Values Assessment by Soil Resource Consultants 12/26/11; Wetland Creation/Mitigation Plan & Planting Details by Soil Resource Consultants revised 03/07/12; Light Fixture Cut Sheet.
Waterway and Composting Facility Plans NRCS 12/15/11, Site Plan rev. 3/9/12; Compost Building Plans NRCS 3/11.
Plans by Godfrey Hoffman Associates 12/16/11, rev. 03/01/12: Survey; Site Plan SP-1, Grading and Utility Plan GU-1, Details and Notes D1-D3, Erosion Control Plan EC-1, Siteline Demonstration Plan, SL-1, Landscape and Lighting Plan LL1 & Details LL2 by Mark Papa Landscape Architecture 12/27/11 rev. 03/08/12, Building Plans and Elevations by Gray Organschi Architecture: Lower Floor Plan A1.01, Upper Floor Plan A1.02, Roof Plan A1.03, Elevations A2.01 & 2.02. Building Location Plan- Prudent and Feasible Alternatives Plan.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Project:	14,500 SF new classroom building for Common Ground High School and related site work	
Address:	358 Springside Avenue	
Site Size:	Lease area: 20 acres	
Zone:	Park	
Financing	Private	
Project Cost:	$5.6 million	
Parking:	58 spaces (2 HC spaces in parking lot, 2 HC spaces at upland campus)	
Land Owner:	New Haven Department of Parks	**Phone:** 203-946-6027
Applicant:	Melissa Spear	**Phone:** 203-389-4333
Agent:	Kyle Bradley, Gray Organschi Architecture	**Phone**: 203-777-7794
Architect:	same	**Phone:** same
Landscape:	Mark J. Papa	**Phone:** 203-410-2460
Site Engineer:	Godfrey-Hoffman Associates, LLC	**Phone:** 203-248-1001
Soil Scientist:	David H. Lord, Soil Resource Consultants	

BACKGROUND
Site: The 20-acre site is located within West Rock Ridge State Park on the west side of Springside Avenue, across the street from the Congregation B'Nai Jacob Memorial Park. In addition to the original farmhouse on the site which was converted to school offices, there is a classroom building constructed in 1997 with an addition in 2002 totaling 14,500 SF. There are various gardens, farm outbuildings, a greenhouse, and informal parking in an unpaved gravel lot. The site is at the toe of the eastern slope of West Rock Ridge State Park. The runoff from the steep slopes upgradient of the subject property is collected in a number of natural drainage channels. A portion of the runoff is conveyed north of the existing improvements to an existing brick culvert under Springside Avenue. The remainder of the upgradient runoff passes through the improved portion of the property eventually entering an existing brick culvert located adjacent to the existing school driveway entrance. The improved portion of the site where the school and farm activities are located is the only relatively flat area. Remaining portions of the site are steep sloping up towards West Rock Ridge.

Proposed activity: In behalf of the New Haven Ecology Project, Kyle Bradley of Gray Organschi Architecture has submitted an inland wetlands application and development permit to construct a new 14,000 SF two level classroom building on the east side of the driveway into the site. Also proposed is a new compost building, a relocated utility shed and a bus shelter. The

plan also includes a reworked parking lot with 58 parking spaces, and a new curb cut to Springside Avenue. The expanded parking lot requires the removal of a large vegetated berm running south to north along the eastern edge of the property. Regrading of the berm area requires relocation of an existing water line (by the Regional Water Authority) currently within the berm.

This project expands the charter high school from 165 students to its 225 maximum capacity with staff growing from 31 to 39 (plus 6 to 10 part time staff). Most students currently use public transportation to the school and walk in to the site along Springside Avenue from a bus stop. A bus shelter will be constructed in the bus stop location, and new access is provided from the bus stop to the new building and remaining campus.

As the property is owned by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Trees and leased to the school, the application has been signed by Robert Levine, Department Director, as owner. A lease agreement for the property has been approved by the Parks Commission and renewed by the Board of Aldermen.

NCRS Project: The submission includes plans for work which will be performed under a separately funded program by the Natural Resource Conservation Service including the Composting Facility and stabilization in a waterway to the west of the site at the bottom of the slope of West Rock. (See top of page 6 for description of the Composting structure.) The work in the waterway is intended to eliminate an ongoing erosion problem which is impacting the west side of the site as water flows down the hillside and into a swale along the west side of the field. The work involves lining approximately 120' of channel with riprap and turf reinforcement matting to confine high flows to the channel. Any disturbed areas shall be covered with topsoil and seeded to stabilize the slope.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan: The application states approximately 7,476 cubic yards of soil will be removed (primarily in the area of the existing berm) and 1,322 CY will be added to the site. Construction entrances are shown at the new curb cut location and at the existing driveway into the parking lot. A silt fence will be installed along the east lease line (Springside Avenue) and silt fence and haybales will the installed to protect the wetlands to the north and prevent erosion from the areas which are being regraded. Several layers of silt fencing will be installed to the west of the new building. Once the new drainage is installed additional fencing with haybales will be installed at the drainage outlets. Haybales and silt sacks will be installed at all catchbasins. All SESC measures are required to be designed and constructed in accordance with the Standards and Specifications of the *Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.* Once grading is complete disturbed areas will be temporarily seeded until final seeding and plantings are installed. No soil stockpiles are shown on the SESC plan although are referred to in the Wetlands Mitigation/Creation Plan. Soil stockpiles if necessary shall be protected from dust gravitation and soil erosion. No off site tracking of materials shall be permitted.

According to the narrative, Chris Gagnon of Godfrey Hoffman Associates is stated to be responsible for monitoring control measures during the project and the person responsible for determining the appropriate response, should unforeseen erosion or sedimentation problems arise. The name and contact information of an on-site monitor shall be provided to the City Plan Department, prior to issuance of building permit. All measures should be inspected periodically, as well as after each rain event. The applicant is fully responsible for insuring that SESC measures are properly installed, maintained and inspected according to the SESC Plan. Should

soil erosion problems develop (either by wind or water) following issuance of permits for site work, the applicant is responsible for notifying the City Engineer within twenty four hours of any such situation with a plan for immediate corrective action. If the City must provide the corrective measure, the applicant is responsible for reimbursement of the City for expenses incurred.

New Buildings: The proposed classroom building will include 2 science classrooms, 1 dedicated art classroom, a half basketball court that will sere as a gymnasium, theater and assembly area, and 550 SF of office space.
Out buildings: A Composting Facility (37.3' x 13.3') is proposed in accordance with a design by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NCRS). This is a simple structure open to the sides and constructed on a level slab. Building materials used for the compost building must be compatible with organic farming principles.
A Utility structure (15' x 24') is proposed to be relocated to the east of the finished compost area within the wetlands setback. No details are provided although it is stated to be a hoop type structure with no foundation.

A new bus shelter is proposed adjacent to the City bus stop on Springside Avenue. No details are provided.

Site Circulation: Vehicles will enter the site through one of the two driveways and will exit through these drives turning either left or right on Springside Avenue. The parking lot for 52 parking spaces will likely have a pervious surface as the existing lot does now. The two driveways and the areas in between them which includes an additional 6 parking spaces is proposed to be bituminous concrete as will the area beneath the handicapped parking spaces. A Site Line Demonstration Plan shows that vehicles passing the site will be able to view an exiting vehicle from the new drive, and that an exiting driver could see oncoming vehicles.

Landscape Plan: Removal of the berm involves removal of a large vegetated area and animal and bird habitat between the existing parking lot and Springside Avenue. Also proposed for removal are three street trees for the new curb cut and to improve sight lines. The Commission requests that the trees not be removed until the site work for the project is nearing completion where the Traffic Department will determine in the field whether two of the three trees need to be removed.

The Landscape Plan by Mark Papa proposes that the area where the berm is located be replaced by infiltration ponds and re-vegetation to promote wildlife habitat and cover. These plant materials have been specified on the revised landscape plan. The separate *Wetlands Creation/Mitigation Plan & Planting Details* by Soil Resource Consultants provides a narrative for spacing of plantings, and specifics on permanent and temporary vegetative stabilization, fertilization, mulching, maintenance and monitoring of vegetation following completion.
Project Timetable: The project is proposed to be initiated in the summer of 2012 and to be complete by summer 2013.

Site Plan Team Review: Plans have been reviewed by the Site Plan Review team with representatives from City Plan, City Engineer, Building Department and Department of Transportation, Traffic and Parking and have been found to meet the requirements of City ordinances, Regulations and standard details with the following comments:

Engineering:

- *Clear the brook of debris west of the 'Organic Stockpile' and 'Finished Compost' piles.*

Traffic:

- *Add sign for speed bump introduced on existing driveway.*
- *Leave existing street trees until project is nearing completion when it can be determined in the field whether tree removal is necessary.*

- *Add sign schedule with traffic signs*

Planning:

- *Provide details for relocated utility structure and bus stop.*
- *Provide haul route plan for transport of excavated materials off site.*

Other Permits Required: The applicant is responsible for determining whether other State or Federal permits are required. A road opening permit will be required from the City for any activity within the public right of way including the new curb cut. A street tree removal permit will be required from the Parks Dept.

INLAND WETLANDS REVIEW

Definition of Regulated activity - any operation within or use of a wetland or watercourse involving removal or deposition of material, or any obstruction, construction, alteration, or pollution of such wetlands or watercourses, and any earth moving, filling, construction, or clear-cutting of trees, or any such operation within fifty (50) feet of wetlands or watercourses.

Regulated Activity: The applicant proposes to fill a small 712 SF wetland which is surrounded by disturbed fill (uD) soils. The wetland is actually an intermittent watercourse which begins as a sidehill seepage spring. There is grading activity within the 50' setback area upland of the flagged wetland as well as additional grading within the 50' setback from another area of flagged wetlands at the north end of the parking lot. Total buffer area impacted is 0.21 acres (9,176 SF). All of these activities are considered regulated and trigger submission of an inland wetlands application.

As a mitigation measure for filling the existing wetland and as a programmatic enhancement for the students, a new storm water detention pond will be created. A rain garden will be established to absorb roof runoff and 6 infiltration basins will be created in the area between the parking lot and Springside Avenue (current location of the earthen berm) to allow for further infiltration of stormwater into the soil prior to discharge offsite. It is stated that a total of 1,980 SF of new wetlands will be created to mitigate the filling of the 712 SF wetland, or a net gain of 1,268 SF.

Additionally the compost structure will be constructed on slab within the 50' buffer area and the utility structure and bus stop will be located within the setback area as well. Considering these structures are all without walls they will likely not require building permits and their impact is minimal on the adjacent wetlands.

Soil Science Report: Soil Scientist David Lord of Soil Resource Consultants of Meriden, CT flagged the wetlands on March 30, 2011. Soils found in the areas classified as wetlands were as follows:

Wa (Walpole soils on 0 to 3 percent slopes): these are deep and poorly drained soils which formed glacial outwash materials. These soils have fine sandy loam topsoil and subsoil layers overlying a substratum of stratified sand and gravel.

W\C (intermittent watercourses/channels): well defined swales or ditch areas that convey excess surface water runoff from group water seepage areas and/or inland wetland soil areas. Many of these intermittent watercourse channels are manmade or have been previously man-altered.

Non wetland soils found on the site were **Mg,** composed primarily of Manchester soils of 3 to 15 percent slopes. Manchester soils are very deep and excessively drained, typically topped with fine sandy loam and subsoil layers overly sand and gravel to a dept of 60" or more. Also found were **Ud** soils, moderately well to well drained disturbed soils, filled areas and areas consisting of cut and fill.

Vegetation: The consultant's report states the intermittent watercourse area is covered in a dense layer of primarily invasive species: Russian Olive, Multiflora rose, and Asiatic Bittersweet along with red maples, catalpa, and pin oaks. No threatened or endangered plant or animal species or state listed species of special concern were observed during several site visits by the applicant's consultant.

Wetlands Functions and Values: Mr. Lord further evaluated the functions and values of the existing wetlands in a letter December 26, 2011. In his assessment he noted groundwater recharge as the primary function of the impacted 712 SF wetland due to the presence of seepage from a spring which feeds into the resource area. He concludes without the spring there would be no watercourse, but with it and the sandy soils, there is a high infiltration rate of the seepage flow from the spring to recharge the groundwater table.

Mitigation Plan: To compensate for the loss of the 712 SF wetland, the applicant's consultant proposes to create approximately 1,980 SF of new wetlands with "much higher levels of environmental functioning". Wetland creation is proposed within an adjacent area of upland non-wetland. The new wetland to be created will be fed by the same water sources as the existing wetland to be impacted. Subsoil material within the wetlands creation area will be excavated down to grades approximately 24" below the proposed final grades within the area of the proposed wetland. A 12" layer of native soil and bentonite clay will be placed over the bottom. The layer will be uniformly compacted by machine roller to provide a deterrent for quick infiltration. The area will be planted with a mixture of emergent plant species that have been selected to enhance storm water quality renovation as well as wildlife habitat functioning. The wetland area will be surrounded by a gravel pathway and boardwalks to allow public access to the wetland for the Common Ground high school's programmatic needs.

Other mitigation measures include water quality improvement measures such as the rain garden and infiltration basins. The proposed rain garden will function as an infiltration measure to collect, retain and infiltrate storm runoff reaching it for the contributing drainage areas including the roof of the new classroom building, and will not regularly have persistent standing water. The surface of the rain garden will be covered with a thick layer of wood chips or bark mulch and will be planted with tree and shrub species to promote storm water renovation as well as wildlife and aesthetic benefits. These measures have been designed to not only control site generated stormwater runoff but greatly enhance the cleansing and "pre-treatment" of stormwater runoff before it reaches naturally occurring wetland resource areas.

The infiltration basins to be constructed along the eastern side of the project area will receive and enhance the renovation of storm water runoff from the proposed gravel parking lot to the west as well as secondary treatment of runoff discharge from the wetland creation and rain garden areas. Stormwater will be piped from a catch basin below the new wetland to a CB at the low end of the rain garden to infiltration basin/planting area IB2 and then to infiltration basin/seeding area IB1. During this course the stormwater flow will be diminished from the existing situation. The consultant will inspect the infiltration basins for years 1 through 3 following completion of this project to ensure the planting program is successful, and will prepare a written report annually, with a copy to the Commission.

The infiltration basins will be seeded with New England Conservation/Wildlife mix.

Determination of Classification: The Commission has reviewed the options for classification, as stated in Sections 4 and 5 of the Regulations and has determined that the wetlands application qualifies as a Class B Application. While not required, the Commission determined it would hold a Public Hearing on the matter since the site was City parkland and the application included a proposed expansion of an educational facility.

Public Hearing: The application was formally received on January 18, 2012 at which time a hearing was initiated, then continued to February 15 and tabled. The applicant requested an extension of time in which to complete the hearing to March 21, at which time the hearing was completed. (See *Attachment A* for Public Hearing Summary).

Application Evaluation Criteria: In reviewing a Class B or C Application, the Commission must consider the following environmental impact criteria in its evaluation, as stated in Sections 7.2 and 7.3 of the City's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations:

- The ability of the regulated area to continue to absorb, store or purify water or to prevent flooding.
- Increased erosion problems resulting from changes in grades, ground cover, or drainage features.
- The extent of additional siltation or leaching and its effect on water quality and aquatic life.
- Changes in the volume, temperature, or course of a waterway and their resulting effects on plant, animal and aquatic life.
- Natural, historic, or economic features that might be destroyed, rendered inaccessible or otherwise affected by the proposed activity.
- Changes in suitability of the area for recreational and aesthetic enjoyment.
- Existing encroachment lines, flood plain and stream belt zoning and requirements for dam construction.
- Any change in the water effecting aquatic organisms or other wildlife, water supply and quality, or recreational and aesthetic enjoyment.
- The existing and desired quality and use of the water in and near the affected area.
- Reports from other City agencies and commissions not limited to the Environmental Advisory Council, Building Official, and City Engineer.
- The importance of the regulated area as a potential surface or ground water supply, a recharge area or purifier or surface or ground waters, a part of the natural drainage system for the watershed, a natural wildlife feeding or breeding area, its existing and potential use for recreational purposes, existence of rare or unusual concentrations of botanical species, availability of other open spaces in the surrounding area, or its value for flood control.

The Commission must consider the following **additional** criteria:

- Alternatives which might enhance environmental quality or have a less detrimental effect, without increasing basic project costs.
- Short versus long term impacts.
- Potential loss of irrevocable resources or property impairment.
- Suitability of action for area.
- Mitigation measures which may be imposed as conditions.

Required Findings for a Class B Application:

The Commission must make the following findings for a Class B Application:

1. There is no preferable location on the subject parcel or no other available location could reasonably be required;
2. No further technical improvements in the plan or safeguards for its implementation are possible, or taking into account the resources of the applicant, could reasonably be required; and
3. The activity and its conduct will result in little if any reduction of the natural capacity of the wetlands or watercourses to support desirable biological life, prevent flooding, supply water, facilitate drainage, and provide recreation and open space.

INLAND WETLAND FINDING

The Commission has reviewed the application, plans and materials in context with the evaluation criteria and Class B required findings and believes that there is no preferable location of the proposed activity on the site, nor are there further technical improvements required in the plans. The applicant has made numerous technical changes to the site plan which have diminished impact on the inland wetlands, improved drainage, and facilitated water infiltration on site. The proposed mitigation measures should actually enhance the ability of the site and the capacity of the wetland and buffer areas to support desirable biological life, prevent flooding, supply water, facilitate drainage, and provide recreation and open space.

The Commission believes that all of the required findings for a Class B application have been satisfied. The Inland Wetland application is hereby approved, in accord with the submitted plans and the Conditions as stated on page 1.

SITE PLAN ACTION

The City Plan Commission approves the submitted Site Plans subject to the standard conditions on Page 1.

ADOPTED: March 21, 2012
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: _____
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director

ATTACHMENT A

Minutes of Public Hearing (January 18, March 21): Joy Ford, Planner, described the purview of the Commission as the Wetlands Commission and introduced the project, showing the extent of the work on the submitted site plans. Kyle Bradley, the applicant's agent, introduced Melissa Spear of the New Haven Ecology Project who described the different components of their program. The Ecology Project consisted of the charter high school had 165 students, an environmental education center which served approximately 3,000 New Haven public school children, 700 kids in an after-school program, and an urban farm with 5,000 pounds of food raised annually. 32 full time staff and 69 part time staff were employed. The school was bursting at the seams with hopes of building a new classroom building and expanding to 225 students.
Mr. Miller, City Engineer, said he had concerns about the hydraulics, and numerous questions about the design for the project which lacked detail in certain areas. For example a 100 year storm would overtop Springside Avenue as shown. There were some steep banks which would be subject to extreme erosion conditions. He was not convinced that the proposed stormwater management design would work.
Chris Gagnon, Engineer from Godfrey Hoffman, gave a brief overview of the hydrology of the site and reviewed his stormwater management plan. There were currently 2 culverts under the roadway collecting water off the hillside. The plan showed a diversion of water from the location of the new building and no increase of runoff from the site. A pond would be created to collect runoff with an outlet structure positioned at an elevation to allow for water to be stored, a rain garden collecting building runoff would be also a teaching measure, and the parking lot would runoff into a stormwater infiltration area. The well drained soils on the site would allow water to drain before any overtopping of the roadway could occur. He submitted photos of the existing south culvert structure showing what would be done to repair its functionality. The north culvert collected runoff from the hill through a vegetated swale to a wetland.
He explained that the NCRS project which included some stormwater management to assist directing water to the north away from running through the site, and the construction of a composting structure had been designed separately and the wetlands impact had not been included in the application calculations. It was the applicant's intent to have the NCRS project as part of the review. Runoff from the hillside would be contained by a 4' wide 95' long armored rip rap channel and then turf reinforcement matting after that to decrease the water speed as it was directed to the north and away from the building site.
Mr. Gagnon concluded that the 2 culverts would not have increased runoff due to infiltration of water prior to reaching the culverts. Mr. Miller had made some legitimate comments which would be addressed.
Mr. Mattison asked whether the culverts would be fixed. Mr. Gagnon said the existing south culvert would be rebuilt and a double catch basin structure would be added to better direct water to the culvert. It could be maintained by assuring the sumps of the catch basins were clean.
Mr. Talbot asked about the stormwater management plan. Mr. Miller said he disagreed with the plan and wished to sit down with the applicant's engineer to review and discuss it further.
Mr. Mattison said he would suggest tabling the matter until Mr. Miller had thoroughly reviewed the plan.
Mrs. Ford suggested the Commission hear the remainder of the testimony from the applicant's team tonight.

In response to additional questions, Ms. Spear said NCRS had a funding source for a covered composting facility which was what had been presented here. She noted they would be amenable to suggestions as to where to place the utility shed rather than in the wetlands setback. Mark Papa, the Landscape Architect said the shed was an existing structure which needed to be

relocated, and it had been placed in the location near the wetlands to prevent other degrading activity from occurring in that location.
David Lord, Soil Scientist and Environmental Consultant, noted 3 documents submitted, Wetlands and Watercourses Delineation Report: Wetlands soils were located to the north of the site, there were intermittent watercourses along the western side, and an extremely intermittent spring source with a spring house in the central portion of the site. The spring source became almost immediately absorbed into the ground. The flow continued on as a drainage channel. While he had not looked specifically at the soils in the NCRS channel area, he was his opinion that the area was a drainage feature, no wetland vegetation was present. He would give a more complete description of the area at the next session.
A Function of Values Assessment was included in the application, and the primary operating function of the regulated feature was groundwater infiltration.
He had made a request of DEEP regarding the Natural Diversity Date Base species in the general area. No unusual habitat or species had been observed. He would submit DEEP's response once it was received.
As a wetlands compensation feature, there was a low flow outlet from a created shallow marsh. Plant materials would remove hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and other nutrients from the water. A rain garden maximized infiltration rates of stormwater runoff.
Mr. Miller asked how water would be held in the upper pond with such good infiltrating sandy soils. Mr. Lord noted the pond area would be over-excavated by about a foot and then backfilled with topsoil which would slow down infiltration.
Mr. Miller asked about the grading of the embankment above the pond to a steep condition. Mr. Papa said this was more of a reshaping of the bank from an earlier condition. Mr. Lord suggested using an erosion control blanket to protect the slope before vegetation took hold. Mr. Miller said they might want to reconsider the regrading.
Mr. Miller asked about the six new infiltration basins. Mr. Lord said they would be planted out with a conservation wildlife seed mix as a habitat, rather than a stormwater quality measure, with minimal maintenance necessary.
Mr. Mattison asked if there were members of the public wishing to speak. As there were none, he proposed that the record be held open and that the hearing be continued until February 15. He suggested the applicants meet with Mr. Miller to work out the details. Upon motion by Mr. Marchand, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the hearing to February 15 when further information would be presented. The matter would be tabled until then. Voting in favor: DiAdamo, Marchand Mattison, Ramos, Tyson. Participating: Miller.
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On February 15, 2012 the Commission dealt with a request from the applicant to grant a 35-day extension of the time period in which the Commission had to complete the public hearing, and extended the continuation of the hearing to March 21. Upon motion by Mr. Smith, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to remove the item from the table and to grant a 35 day extension to the next meeting on March 21. Upon motion by Mr. Smith, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to return the item to the table. Voting: DiAdamo, Marchand, Mattison, Smith. Participating: Miller.
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On March 21 Mr. Mattison reopened the hearing on the matter. Chris Gagnon described the differences between the previously submitted and revised site plans, primarily in the area of the site where the wetlands mitigation pond was proposed. The pond has changed shape, a number of trees preserved, and there was much less impact on the sloped bank adjacent to the pond. The pond has a clay liner to slow infiltration and is also now a focal point of the education program. The rain garden adjacent to the new building had been reduced by half. Headwalls had been added throughout the project per the advice of the City Engineer. The drainage portion of the

NCRS project had been reduced in scale, and wetlands calculations had been added to the application.
When questioned about the plan to remove large amounts of material from the site, Mr. Gagnon reported they were interested in marketing the soil and would not stockpile it on site or remove it without an approved haul route.
He explained the composting building was a three bay covered structure to provide the best compost which Ms. Spear said was 75% used on site and the rest donated.
David Lord, wetlands scientist, noted he had submitted a March 7, 2012 revision to his wetlands mitigation plan. 1980 square feet of wetland were created as a result of the project with a compensation ratio of 2.75:1. He described the landscape plan for the wetland areas
Mark Papa, Landscape Architect, presented his new landscape plan for the vegetated area (current berm location).
Mr. Miller commented that the plan had addressed all his issues and was better for the changes which had been made.
The hearing was concluded at 7:45 PM.