

**Town of St. Albans
Development Review Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 9th, 2017
6:30 p.m.**

On Thursday, November 9th, 2017 at 6:30 p.m., the Town of St. Albans Development Review Board met at Town Hall for hearings.

Present: Chair, B. Brigham, Vice Chair, Arthur Omartian, Clerk, Bruce Thompson, Christina Boissoneault and Zoning Administrator, Becky Perron

Absent: Jeff Jewett and Tom Stanhope

Chair, B. Brigham called the Development Review Board hearing to order at 6:33 p.m.

New Business:

Application of the City of St. Albans requesting Conditional Use and Site Plan Amendment to renovate and add buildings to the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant in accordance with Sections 402, 407, 409, 802 and 803 of the St. Albans Town Unified Development Bylaws. The property is located at 83 Rewes Drive in the Commercial District within a Designated Growth Center and owned by the City of St. Albans.

The application was represented by Wayne Elliot, engineer of Aldrich and Elliot, and Allen Robtoy, Director of Public Works for the City of St. Albans.

Janet Seymour, abutting land owner, stated she was present to hear the application and was requesting Interested Party Status. Michelle Monroe of the St. Albans Messenger was also present.

MOTION: M. McKennerney made a motion to grant Interested Party Status to Janet Seymour as an abutting land owner. A. Omartian seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

W. Elliot gave a general description of the wastewater plant and explained what each structures use was. W. Elliot stated the plant is a 4 million gallon per day plant which is currently permitted for 4 million gallons per day.

As you come down Rewes Drive, on the left there is an existing metal maintenance building. That building will have no renovations and will remain as-is.

Coming down Rewes Drive, a brick building, known as the Headworks Building, is where the preliminary wastewater treatment occurs. Many age-related interior renovations will be done to the building including heating and ventilation and new processing equipment. A small addition will be constructed and used as unclassified electrical space.

A septic receiving facility, used by local haulers to dump into, goes into a holding tank and the facility operators have the flexibility to bleed that waste into the treatment process as space allows for it.

From the Headworks structure, the flow is received by three tanks, the first known as the primary clarifier which removes solids and scum. All three tanks will have interior work done including equipment replacement. The tanks are always full of water, unless a maintenance issues requires a tank to be taken off the system.

A. Omartian wondered what the dimensions of the tanks are. W. Elliot stated the tanks are roughly 30' x 90' with a liquid depth of 12 feet. Two of the tanks were built in the 60's; the third was added in the mid 80's.

Following the primary clarifier the flow goes into the operations building which has a wet well and three pumps in the basement. The flow is pumped from the basement to the trickling filter to the rotating biological contactors where it receives biological treatment. Ten of the rotating biological contactors are being replaced. Next the flow moves through the flocculation tank where the chemicals are added and flows through the other two tanks (secondary clarifiers). All the mixers in the flocculation tank are being replaced as well as slide gates. The two tanks will receive all new equipment.

The flow then moves to a filter building which has two sand filters. The entire filter building is proposed to be repurposed. One side is proposed to be an open flocculation tank, the second side a chemical feed. To replace the filter building a new structure is being proposed on the north of the property. W. Elliot explained the building needs to be constructed in the proposed location due to the hydraulic profile;

gravity needs to be utilized in the flow process. Following the chemical feed the flow is moved to the operations building where chemicals are added for disinfection and then heads south toward the outfall.

Two above ground tanks which are used to process solid waste will be completely gutted and renovated. The interior equipment is thirty years old. There are also 2 one million gallon tanks on site that will stay as is. The applicant is also proposing to replace one of the pumps in the pump gallery.

350 feet of the access drive is proposed to be rebuilt and the drainage culvert will be replaced to help the drainage from east to west.

Additionally, a tributary of Stevens Brook flows through the site. Beavers build dams in the tributary causing water to back up and in high rainfall storm situations the water is unable to flow out, despite existing catch basins and pipes on site.

The applicant is proposing to build a berm roughly two and a half feet around the tributary to ensure the water is held back. A stormwater pump station is also being proposed to pump water out of the low points on site and discharge them back over the berm into the stream.

B. Brigham asked for confirmation the water collected in the low points is runoff from the existing impervious surface. W. Elliot confirmed.

B. Thompson asked what happens to the tanks during a heavy rain fall or flood situation. W. Elliot explained the water does not get into the primary clarifiers. Roughly five years ago, steel gates were added at each of the man doors into the operations building to prevent collected water from entering the building. W. Elliot stated the finished floor is above the base flood elevation.

A. Omartian noted the berm is proposed to reduce flooding due to water backup caused by beaver dams. He asked how confident W. Elliot is that the berms will reduce the flooding. W. Elliot stated the berm will hold the overflow in until the water can be pumped from the low spots. A. Omartian asked what the elevation difference is from the low-lying elevation to the top of the proposed berm. W. Elliot predicted a difference of six to seven feet and explained the pump station will be tied in to the existing catch basins and should only come on if the water is sitting in the catch basins. It is not predicted to be a regular occurrence.

A. Omartian asked for confirmation the plant handles 4 million gallons per day. W. Elliot stated the plant is permitted for 4 million gallons, but handles more than that. He explained the City has a combined system which means about 20% of incoming water is rainwater. In a heavy rainfall situation the flow does get above 4 million gallons per day; on a normal dry day the plant is well below 4 million gallons per day.

A. Omartian inquired if the solids ever had to be hauled away. W. Elliot confirmed and explained solids are being pulled from the primary clarifier and secondary clarifiers and go on to be treated, heated and reduced. Once the product is around 25% solids (as opposed to the 1-2% it starts as), it is removed and hauled away to a landfill.

B. Brigham wondered if any electricity is produced from the digester on site. W. Elliot stated the digester is not used due to the incoming wastewater not producing enough gas. A. Robtoy stated some of the methane produced is used to heat the building.

W. Elliot stated that generally, when working on projects around Steven's Brook, the base flood elevation is known. Because the base flood elevation was unknown, B. Perron requested an analysis be done to determine the flood elevation. W. Elliot worked with Watershed Consulting and Rebecca Pfeiffer from the State of Vermont to determine a base flood elevation. The base flood elevation was decided to be 360.6 feet, however after Watershed had done the analysis it started around 360.4, but upon some adjustments it was determined to be 360.60.

B. Perron asked W. Elliot to provide the documentation that shows the base flood elevation to be the determined 360.60. W. Elliot agreed to provide the email between Andres Torrizzo and Rebecca Pfeiffer. B. Perron wondered what Rob Evans had determined the base flood elevation to be. W. Elliot stated R. Evans had determined the base flood elevation to be 360.5, which is around an inch and a quarter difference. W. Elliot reiterated all the finished floor elevations are above the base flood elevation. W. Elliot showed a map that outlines the FEMA flood zone and compared it to the worksite for the wastewater plant. W. Elliot pointed out the access drive improvements will not impact the FEMA flood zone; the new berm will slightly impact the zone as well as a slight corner of the utility room addition and the edge of the new filter building.

W. Elliot stated again the base flood elevation is 360.6. He identified the maintenance building as being at 363.4. The headworks structure is at 361.75, the addition is at a similar finished floor elevation. The finished floor level in the operations building are 361.25, the top walls of the primary clarifier are 361.75.

The finished floor elevation of the new filter building are 361.5 and the ground elevation around it is 6 inches lower, 361, which is roughly .4 feet above the base flood elevation. W. Elliot also identified the generator pad and the top of the septage receiving chamber as being above the flood elevation.

B. Thompson asked for clarification where the wetlands are on the site. W. Elliot pointed the areas out and stated the wetlands permit had been submitted between 6 and 8 weeks ago and is being processed by the State. B. Thompson asked if the proposed building would impact the wetlands. W. Elliot confirmed, adding the building would be within the existing fence line. B. Brigham asked if there are required setbacks. W. Elliot confirmed and reiterated the wetlands permit was for the impacted areas.

B. Brigham asked if the building has a below grade basement. W. Elliot confirmed and stated the basement is full of water. B. Brigham inquired if the water was due to processes in the plant. W. Elliot confirmed. B. Brigham wondered if a sealant was used to keep inside water from leaking out and outside water from coming in. W. Elliot explained the building is designed for buoyance and to have a lot of weight inside of it. W. Elliot detailed how the process works and added the plant is designed to remain operable during a 25 year flood incident.

W. Elliot stated that he interpreted a comment from R. Evans to mean the majority of the facility is above the base flood elevation and therefore, the Town did not have the jurisdiction to review the application under our Flood Hazard Overlay bylaws. He also stated the access road enhancements will improve drainage which complies with the Town's Flood Hazard Overlay standards. W. Elliot also stated the letter from R. Evans stated new berms are typically not recommended since they increase flood hazards, however the proposal to build up an existing berm is to protect the treatment facility from immediate risk of flooding from Stevens Brook. W. Elliot also mentioned R. Evans correspondence specified it is unclear if the new filter building is jurisdictional under the Town's Flood Hazard Overlay standards.

B. Brigham wondered if the impervious area of the entire treatment plant is under the square footage that would trigger a stormwater permit. W. Elliot explained the impervious surface was hardly increasing since some of the impervious parking area would be removed. W. Elliot stated the plant is 30 years old and most of the improvements are interior and addressing age related issues; the City is trying to repurpose and reuse structures as much as possible.

B. Brigham wondered if the current site would be deemed appropriate if this facility was being built today. W. Elliot was unsure, he stated the site had to be at a low point in the community and facilities are often built near rivers or lakes for discharge.

B. Thompson mentioned seeing sewage overflow in the news, and wondered where on the site the overflow came from. W. Elliot explained the overflow does not come from the wastewater facility; the overflow occurs from a manhole at South Elm and Lower Weldon, and is driven by heavy rainfall.

B. Brigham wondered how much of the system has been separated. A. Robtoy estimated 80% of the system is separated. The recent construction on Fairfield Street and Catherine Street also included separating systems. W. Elliot stated the systems will never be fully separated due to costs and logistics.

B. Thompson wondered why construction would be in three phases and inquired how long the process would take. W. Elliot said it depends on the contractor; some work may be done over the winter, but the facility needs to remain operable and still comply with its discharge permits. A. Robtoy added the pipes are 4-5 months from the date of ordering to the date of receiving.

B. Thompson asked for confirmation the City had voted on approving the proposed work. A. Robtoy confirmed.

B. Thompson inquired if any additional lighting would be added. W. Elliot predicted very minimal lighting to be added. He stated years ago many pole lights were on the facility, but now most of the lighting is on the building, down shielded and energy efficient.

B. Brigham asked if J. Seymour, Interested Party, had any questions or comments. J. Seymour explained she owns 56.7 acres below Route 7. She was concerned building the berm may impact the Class II wetlands on her property. She also asked for clarification on the filter building elevation. J. Seymour stated one elevation was given, but not the elevation of the basement level. W. Elliot stated the bottom of the top floor is 361.50 and the bottom of the pump gallery is 349.54. J. Seymour was also interested in the elevation of the land around the filter building. W. Elliot stated the proposed grade around the building and the existing grade of the land are very similar. J. Seymour wondered why the plans given on the Board were different than the plans used for B. Perron staff report. W. Elliot stated there are two sets of drawings; the second set provided additional details over the first set. J. Seymour wondered which expert studied the flood hazard as well as the wetlands. B. Perron stated the flood hazard study was done by Andres Torizzo of Watershed Consulting. W. Elliot stated Gilman and Briggs, an environmental firm of Montpelier, had done all the wetlands work with the State. B. Brigham asked who Gilman and Briggs had

worked with from the State of Vermont. W. Elliot was unsure of the name, but stated he would look into it. B. Perron asked if the applicant was amending the existing wetlands permit or receiving a new one. W. Elliot confirmed a new wetlands permit had been applied for. B. Perron wondered if abutters needed to be notified of the wetlands permit. W. Elliot confirmed. There was some confusion over when in the permitting process the abutters would be notified.

A. Omartian asked for clarification the new filter building location is currently bare land. The applicant confirmed. A. Omartian inquired if any grading would be done prior to construction of the building. W. Elliot stated a sizeable hole would be dug and the foundation would be poured. W. Elliot identified the construction area as the zone that will impact wetlands.

B. Brigham questioned if perimeter drains around the outside of the foundation was a possibility. W. Elliot stated they couldn't do perimeter drains as there is no place to delineate the drainage to as the site is so flat; that is why the foundation is designed for buoyance. Everything is designed to be water tight.

A. Omartian wondered where the water table is. W. Elliot estimated 6 to 12 inches.

B. Brigham asked if the wetland permit was the only permit needed from the State. W. Elliot stated an Act 250 permit would be required but could not be issued until copies of the other permits had been obtained. Additionally, permits would be needed from the division of fire safety for each of the buildings.

J. Seymour asked if written permission had been obtained from all of the owners on Rewes Drive. J. Seymour then asked if Tom Hungerford's permission had been obtained. A. Robtoy explained a ROW easement had been obtained and the City maintains the road as per their agreement. B. Perron stated T. Hungerford had not signed the actual application. B. Perron stated it appears, as per the agreement provided, Tom Hungerford shares the cost of the maintenance on the road, and therefore should sign off on the application.

B. Perron wanted to address W. Elliot's interpretation of R. Evans correspondence. B. Perron stated she interpreted R. Evans to be saying a better plan needed to be provided, whereas W. Elliot had interpreted the comment as R. Evans being unsure if the building was within the Flood District. W. Elliot confirmed a piece of the proposed structure is within the Flood District and stated he believed R. Evans concern was to make sure the land around the building wasn't under the Base Flood Level of 360.6. He reiterated the finished floor area on the building is 361.50. B. Perron disagreed with W. Elliot's interpretation and wondered if moving the proposed building out of the Flood Hazard Overlay was a possibility. W. Elliot stated the building could not be moved as it needed to fit within the hydraulic profile. W. Elliot stated he was unsure why the basement elevation was under the jurisdiction of the Town. B. Perron stated the Board needed to review the floatation of the building, which as W. Elliot had mentioned would be filled with water which would help equalize pressure on the walls. Generally, a basement is not full of water, so when the Board reviews it through the Flood District, certification will be required stating the building has been designed to prevent floatation and collapse. W. Elliot again stated he disagreed with B. Perron's interpretation of the correspondence from R. Evans.

J. Seymour was uncomfortable with the term interpret and wondered if there was a way to get clarification of R. Evans correspondence. W. Elliot stated one of R. Evans recommendations is to provide better plans to the Town clearly showing spot elevations confirming the lowest adjacent grade to the new filter building is above the Base Flood Elevation. W. Elliot stated he had done so by providing the new sheets, and wondered if the elevations had been clearly shown in the plans he provided to R. Evans. W. Elliot stated he would be glad to add additional spot elevations to plan to confirm everything above the building is above the Base Flood Elevation. B. Perron agreed if confirming elevation shows the elevation to be above the Base Flood Elevation it would not be within the Town's jurisdiction.

The Board had no further questions. A. Robtoy confirmed B. Perron would receive confirming elevations. W. Elliot also confirmed B. Perron would receive an update on the State wetlands permit and the correspondence between Rebecca Pfeiffer and Andres Torizzo on the Base Flood Elevation.

A. Robtoy encouraged all Board members to visit the facility to see the process. He thought the Board would be very impressed.

Deliberative Session

MOTION: A. Omartian made a motion to enter deliberative session at 7:45 p.m. C. Boissoneault seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: C. Boissoneault made a motion to continue to the meeting of December 14th, 2017 the Application of the City of St. Albans requesting Conditional Use and Site Plan Amendment to renovate and add buildings to the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant in accordance with Sections 402, 407, 409, 802 and 803 of the St. Albans Town Unified Development Bylaws. The property is located at 83

Rewes Drive in the Commercial District within a Designated Growth Center and owned by the City of St. Albans with the request the following be provided to the ZA by December 1st: 1) documentation showing the elevation at Station 3, 2) written permission from Hungerford properties granting approval for construction on the access road, and 3) the record of email correspondence between Rebecca Pfeiffer and Andres Torrizo detailing what they think the base flood elevation is . M. McKennerney seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: M. McKennerney made a motion to come out of deliberative session at 9:25 p.m. A. Omartian seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: M. McKennerney made a motion to accept the conflict of interest policy. C. Boissoneault seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Minutes

MOTION: M. McKennerney made a motion to accept the minutes from the DRB meeting dated October 26th, 2017. A. Omartian seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Adjournment

MOTION: M. McKennerney made a motion to come out of deliberative session and adjourn the DRB meeting at 9:45 p.m. B. Thompson seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

AJ Johnson, Administrative Assistant

Brent Brigham, Chair

Arthur Omartian, Vice Chair

Bruce Thompson, Clerk

Mike McKennerney

Christina Boissoneault