

## **SEPTEMBER 20, 2004 SPECIAL MEETING**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on September 20, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Forrest, Fortunato (6:14 p.m.), Hemmann, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilor Czernicki.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Chairperson Morin stated that the purpose of the meeting is to have a Public Hearing on the Winding Brook Turf Farm.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

### HEARING

#### Winding Brook Turf Farm

Theodore Jachym, 147 Randy Lane, said that his property backs up to the area just below the Winding Brook Turf Farm. He said that he has had many bad experiences regarding the pumping by the Turf Farm in the twenty-five years he has lived at this property. He commented that he is opposed to any licensing agreement with Winding Brook Turf Farm due to the noise pollution created by the pump and the environmental damage it causes. Mr. Jackle said that, in his opinion, complaints to the Town have produced very little action or satisfying results. He said that the newly proposed licensing agreement includes only a few minor changes from the original agreement and it fails to address the various questions, issues, and problems. Mr. Jackle said that the agreement is open-ended, does not put restrictions on pumping operations, and does not assign responsibility for the monitoring of the pumping.

Barbara Ruhe, Attorney maintaining offices at 915 Silas Deane Highway, reread into the record a letter from Clare Agee, 117 Randy Lane, dated December 1, 2002. The letter was in opposition to the pumping of water by the Winding Brook Turf Farm due to excessive noise and the environmental impact on the brook. Ms. Ruhe also read into the record a letter dated December 1, 2002 from Audrey Aloï, online editor from Time Inc. Field & Stream. The letter spoke in opposition to the pumping due to the noise and negative environmental impact. Ms. Ruhe, speaking as a resident of 79 Main Street stated that people should pay for things that do not belong to them. She said that the water in Goff Brook belongs to the taxpayers of Wethersfield and anyone wishing to use the water should be required to pay for it.

Philip Rouquie, 14 Hewitt Street, stated that he rarely sees anyone utilizing the nature walkway at Mill Woods Park. He said that what he does see in Wethersfield is a lot of vacant commercial buildings and that the denial of pumping to Winding Brook Turf Farm could result in chasing another business person out of Town. He urged the Council to keep in mind that the Farm's owner is a neighbor, business person, and employer of residents in Town.

Glen Terk, 445 Old Reservoir Road, commented on a letter he submitted to the Town Manager on August 16, 2003. He said that the letter, among other issues, addressed the diversion of water being subject to Inland Wetlands regulations, including the 50,000 gallon-per-day limit. He suggested that the agreement be referred to the Inland Wetlands Commission before any approval is considered by the Council. Mr. Terk commented on the cost efficiency of irrigation of Mill Woods Park fields by MDC water rather than from Goff Brook, and asked why this cost efficiency shouldn't also be utilized by Mr. Morgan. Mr. Terk addressed the exploration of the use of an electric pump, which would not create any noise. Mr. Terk distributed a copy of the DEP permit application filed by Winding Brook Turf Farm which required that the rate, quantity, and frequency of diversion be reported. He spoke of his concern over the requested amount of water per day to be pumped and the DEP allowed amount. Mr. Terk commented that the MDC

cost for 50,000 gallons of water per day is \$33.42 and that this amount would not put anyone out of business.

Richard Peruta, 238 Highland Street, commented on the amount of water usage per day by the Winding Brook Turf Farm. He said that 1,200 gallons per minute is the capacity of the pump, but the nozzle size and orifice size of the discharge is what actually flows; therefore 1,200 gallons per minute is not the amount that is actually pumped.

John Miller, 375 Pine Lane, said that he was involved when the Town acquired the land from the Morgan family. He said that he does not recall there ever being discussion to take away the Morgan's rights to use the water from Goff Brook and that the agreement gives back to the Morgan's something that they never lost. Mr. Miller said that he is concerned over the language in the agreement stating that the Town "may revoke the license granted herein, in its sole discretion". He said that a reason should be stated to do such. Mr. Miller said that the Morgan's are a solid family in Wethersfield who want to continue a family use of the land and believes that it would be short-sighted to say "no" to their request.

Joan Morrison, Associate Professor of Biology at Trinity College, gave a summary of her involvement in the Winding Brook Turf Farm issue. She said that she has researched the value of small, public, protected land areas within urban environments. She said that Mill Woods Park was one of the sites chosen for her research and she spent three years counting birds there once per month with her students. She said that birds are indicators of the quality of their environment. Ms. Morrison reported a total of seventy-six different bird species at the site at various times of the year. She said that during her studies, she encountered the presence of the fire truck, pump, and pumping from Goff Brook and was horrified to find that on several occasions that there was oil spilling into the brook and that the pump was ruining the vegetation by the side of the brook. Ms. Morrison said that the pumping appears to be the private use of a public resource. She urged the Council to look objectively at the scientific facts of the pumping issue because the wetlands are a very important part of the environment.

Ron Rodd, 88 Westway, spoke on behalf of the People for the Preservation of Wethersfield Neighborhoods. He said that the group has reviewed the Town's noise ordinance and concludes that the pumping is in violation of such. He said that the Council needs to enforce the ordinance to insure that every citizen's quality of life is protected.

Pete Sposito, 100 Surrey Lane, Glastonbury, who formerly represented both the Randy Lane LLC and Mr. Paul Aloï, spoke on behalf of the wetlands in Mill Woods Park as concerns Goff Brook. Mr. Sposito addressed questions asked of the Town Manager by Mr. Terk which were not answered. One of the questions addressed the requirement to send the proposed agreement to the Planning and Zoning Commission for an 8-24 referral. Mr. Sposito said that there are rules governing wetlands areas and these rules need to be honored. Mr. Sposito suggested that Winding Brook Turf Farm drill a well on its property and use electric pumps for water. He said that the proposed agreement provides for no specific area, no definition of equipment, no sound qualification at the site, no environmental or safety protections, and no meter definitions. He asked who will be monitoring the licensing agreement and what Department in the Town is qualified to measure the amount of water extracted from the brook. Mr. Sposito said that the system is flawed in that the agreement has not gone through the proper channels.

Elizabeth Brzezicki, 239 Griswold Road, spoke in favor of the Town doing all they can to support Winding Brook Turf Farm in securing the water it needs to continue its agricultural operation in Wethersfield. She said that the Morgan's have always been good citizens of the community. She said that the firehouse on Griswold Road, the Griswoldville Chapel, and a portion of Mill Woods Park are all located on property that at one time belonged to the Morgan's. She said that the Morgan's farm was in Town for decades before houses were built in the surrounding neighborhood. Ms. Krizicki said that Winding Brook, as well as other farms in Wethersfield, represents a vital link to the agricultural heritage of the Town and is no less important than the Town's historical sites and should be protected.

Doug Morgan, 69 Cheston Circle, stated that his farm needs the water and that he feels that the property was transferred with the right of use of the water. He said that he will answer any questions that the Council may have.

Chairperson Morin said that the Council will be acting on the proposal during the regular meeting and asked Mr. Morgan to make himself available for Councilor questions. Chairperson Morin submitted for the record a letter from Richard Lasher, 100 Griswold Road, speaking in support of the agreement with Winding Brook Turf Farm.

Councilor Montinieri submitted for the record a letter from Anna Crawford, 157 Randy Lane, supporting the agreement with Winding Brook Turf Farm.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:55p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council 10/4/04*