

Killingly wetlands commission to hold public hearing on Amazon distribution center Sept. 14

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Killingly — The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission will hold a public hearing on Sept. 14 at 7 p.m. on a revised application for a nearly 1.3 million-square-foot Amazon distribution center on Westcott Road.

Evan Seeman, a lawyer representing the developer, Ryan Companies, told the commission Monday that Ryan is requesting a public hearing for the distribution center, also known as “Project Husky.”

Seeman said the developer is also “considering some design modifications” and plans to present the commission with a full presentation of the new application at the September meeting.

The wetlands commission voted Monday to accept Ryan’s resubmitted application with no site walk and a public hearing.

This action comes after commission members [voted 3-2](#) to deny the initial permit without prejudice on July 6, meaning the developer could change and resubmit the plan, which it did on July 15 before the [town approved a moratorium](#) on new warehouse applications beginning July 20.

The commission denied the initial application because the developer failed to “exhaust feasible and prudent alternatives.” These alternatives included reducing the building footprint and creating a tiered parking structure instead of some surface parking to reduce impact to wetlands.

Seaman said that the developer’s new application includes responses to the commission’s reason for the initial denial.

The application said Ryan has already reduced the building’s size by 87,000 square feet, from 1,375,247 to 1,288,220 square feet, after third-party reviewer Tighe & Bond provided comments to the plan during its review.

The application states that the “reduced building size had been thoroughly vetted by Amazon, and is currently the minimum necessary square footage to support the operations proposed within the facility.”

In response to the tiered parking alternative, Ryan said in its new application that it “considered the possibility of adding a new parking structure, but determined that adding a parking structure would not reduce impervious area significantly.”

Attorneys representing Ryan’s contract purchaser, WE Acquisitions LLC, and the owners of the more than 25 properties that make up the site, [also filed an appeal](#) in Putnam Superior Court on July 22 alleging the commission was “biased and illegally predetermined an intent to deny the application.”

The commission entered an executive session to discuss the legal matter following the public portion of Monday’s meeting. The town has until Aug. 25 to respond to the complaint.

The project would be built on 340 of the 556 acres on the site. Out of the 340 acres, 76 acres will be placed under a conservation easement. The remaining 216 acres is proposed to be deeded to the town for open space and conservation land, according to the developer’s application. Most of the acreage is undeveloped. One driveway is proposed to access the site from Westcott Road.

The developer said in its application that the proposed project is designed “to the extent possible to avoid impact to wetland resource areas.”

According to the Wetlands Assessment report, 2.7% of the site will be impacted by wetlands.

Ryan submitted its initial application to the wetlands commission on Jan. 26 and the commission then held five nights of public hearings spanning from February to June due to public interest.

Residents have actively spoken against the project, stating the warehouse would create traffic, impact road safety, and cause pollution and environmental problems.

The new application will also be reviewed at Killingly’s next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on Aug. 17.

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