ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF COASTAL AND LAND USE PLANNING

Proposed Amendment to the Upper Raritan Water Quality Management Plan

Public Notice:

Fiddlers Elbow County Club

Take notice that on, AUG 11 2014 pursuant to the provisions of the New Jersey Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A-1 et seq., and the Water Quality Management Planning rules, N.J.A.C. 7:15, an amendment to the Upper Raritan Water Quality Management Plan was adopted by the Department of Environmental Protection (Department). This amendment modifies the Somerset County/Upper Raritan Watershed Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) and the Somerset County-wide Map, Future Wastewater Service Area, to provide for the expansion the existing Fiddlers Elbow County Club (FECC), located on Block 37.01, Lots 1 and 1.01, Bedminster Township, Somerset County. The proposed expansion of the existing golf club is to include the construction of 2 cottages, an expanded member's clubhouse and restaurant seating, a pool complex, Golf and Tennis Pro Shops, a Golf Academy, and Cart Barn. As part of this proposed amendment, the current Somerset County/Upper Raritan WMP Facility Table 6 for the FECC on-site Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) (NJPDES #NJ0021865) is proposed to be modified to indicate that the combined existing flow, and new projected wastewater flow from the proposed expansion, of the FECC to be discharged to surface water is within the current permitted maximum flow value of 0.030 million gallons per day (mgd).

This proposed amendment has been reviewed in accordance with the Water Quality Management Planning rules at N.J.A.C. 7:15 and P.L. 2011, c.203, amended and supplemented by P.L. 2013, c. 188. This preliminary notice represents the Department's determination that the proposed amendment is in compliance with the regulatory criteria.

To accommodate the expanded and new facilities, this proposed amendment would provide for an adjustment of the existing approved sewer service area of the FECC STP to contain only the existing and proposed new wastewater generating structures, including the proposed two guest cottages, the pool house, and exercise area, Golf and Tennis Pro Shops, Golf Academy and Cart Barn.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(b), environmentally sensitive areas have been assessed to determine what areas are appropriately included in the proposed sewer service area. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24, environmentally sensitive areas are defined as contiguous areas of 25 acres or larger, alone or in combination, consisting of habitat for threatened and endangered species as identified on the Landscape Project Maps of Habitat for Endangered, Threatened or Other Priority Species (Landscape Project), Natural Heritage Priority Sites, Category One (C1) special water resource protection areas, and wetlands. These environmentally sensitive areas are not included in the proposed sewer service area except as noted below.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(b)1, to determine areas designated as threatened or endangered species habitat, the Department utilized the Landscape Project, version 3.1. A review of the Landscape Project indicated that the project location is identified as threatened and endangered species habitat for the Bobolink. However, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.26, a habitat suitability determination was performed by the Department which found that the current conditions at this project location are not suitable for this grassland bird species.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(b)2 through 4, (c), and (d), no portion of the proposed SSA for the development on site is identified as within a Natural Heritage Priority Site, a special water resource protection area along a Category One water, wetlands or associated buffer, coastal planning area, coastal resource, or an environmentally sensitive area limited by Federal 201 grant restrictions.

The FECC is currently served by an on-site Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) (NJPDES #NJ0021865). That NJPDES permit, reissued by the Department in October 1, 2004, indicates a three-day maximum wastewater flow value of 0.030 mgd. At the time, this figure was based upon a design flow criteria pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:14A-23.3 that applies 35 gallons per day (gpd) per capita use of facilities at non-residential clubs. Employing this standard, the design wastewater flow for the FECC STP was projected to account for 225 patrons for the clubhouse dining seating, 28 employees attributed to a maintenance building, plus a maximum of 600 golfers per day, yielding a total of 853 persons utilizing the club facilities on an average peak weekend. The design flow of for a three day peak, therefore, was calculated to be (35 gpd x 853) 29,855 gpd. This volume was rounded to 30,000 gpd and applied to develop the effluent limitations in the issued NJPDES permit.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.25(h)1, a build-out analysis was conducted to identify future projected flow for all new proposed wastewater generating structures and/or activities that would result due to the expansion at the FECC. The proposed new development at the FECC will consist of an expanded existing club house to increase the dining by 125 seats to accommodate up to 350 members and guests, two guest cottages, a swimming pool area and exercise room, a 5,100 square foot (sq. ft.) Golf and Tennis Pro Shop, a 1,122 sq. ft. Golf Academy, and an expanded maintenance staff from 28 to 40. Application of the appropriate criteria at N.J.A.C. 7:14A-23.3 for these various new wastewater generating activities results in a projected wastewater flow of 9,397 gpd.

In addition, due to the anticipated increase in member use resulting from the expanded recreational and eating facilities, the future rounds of golf at the course was projected to increase by 450 rounds. As part of the proposed project, FECC has indicated that at the current membership golf outings yielded an average maximum peak of approximately 150 golf rounds.

As more recent data regarding wastewater generated by golf course activity has become available, the Department now applies more appropriate projected flow of 15 gpd per golf round based on activities at recreational parks and picnic areas, as provided under N.J.A.C.

7:14A-23.3. Therefore, the flow projected from the increased 450 golf rounds is 6,750 gpd. Consequently the total projected wastewater flow as result from all expanded and new facilities and golf rounds is projected to be 16,147 gpd.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.25(h)2, an analysis was performed to assess the existing and future wastewater treatment needs for the FECC STP. The existing wastewater flow for this wastewater treatment plant was calculated based on the average of the monthly metered flow from August 2012 through July 2013 as reported to the Department in the Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) received from this STP. The existing flow from the FECC calculated for this period is 5,158 gpd. The total projected wastewater flow that would result from all expanded and new facilities and golf rounds is projected to be 16,147 gpd. The total projected wastewater flow for the existing, expanded, and new facilities and golf rounds is 21,305 gpd. Therefore, the proposed project is within the current permitted wastewater flow of 30,000 gpd to the on-site STP. As such no expansion to this STP is necessary at this time.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.25(h)3, the Department evaluated the water supply availability for the proposed project. Water for sanitary and potable purposes at the FECC is supplied by three wells located on site. Well 2 provides water for the maintenance building; Well 3 is the main well for the clubhouse; and Well 1 is a backup well for the clubhouse. Each of the three wells is permitted to withdraw approximately 50,000 gpd. To provide potable and sanitary water to the new proposed development, the project will utilize these privately owned permitted wells associated with activity conducted at the FECC parcels. As the proposed wastewater treatment system is permitted to discharge up to 30,000 gpd discharge effluent, the water supply analysis determined that the onsite water supply for the onsite wells would be sufficient to supply the future needs.

The proposed project is located within the Highlands Planning Area. In accordance N.J.A.C 7:15-3.10 the Department shall not approve a WQM Plan amendment for a project proposed in the Highlands Planning Area without first seeking comments from the

Highlands Council (Council). To this end, the applicant was directed by the Department to provide the Council a copy of the proposed amendment application and all supporting documentation with a cover letter formally requesting a review of the amendment proposal and to provide the Department with recommendations, if any.

In response to the request for recommendations, the Department received correspondence from the Council dated April 14, 2014 indicating that the proposed project is located in a HUC-14 subwatershed identified in the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) as having a water supply deficit. The Council calculated that the increased water demand, supplied by on-site wells, would exacerbate the deficit of net water availability as an additional consumptive use. Therefore, the Council deemed the proposed project inconsistent with policies of the RMP. To address the water supply deficit, as required by the RMP, the proposed project would need to develop a plan to mitigate the projected consumptive loss by a factor of 125%. Based on the proposed wastewater flow projections for the new facilities at the FECC, the Council calculated a mitigation target of 2,018 gpd. However, it was recommended the applicant be allowed to coordinate with the Council to determine if a more appropriate targeted mitigation value was warranted and to develop a plan to mitigate the agreed upon target. The Council suggested that the mitigation plan entail a combination of an increase in groundwater recharge and permanent water conservation techniques.

On May 6th, 2014 the Council notified the Department that to resolve the RMP inconsistency, the site design engineer for the proposed project submitted additional information, including actual discharged flow data for the previous 5 years, supporting a revised projected consumptive water demand. Consequently, the Council agreed to a new revised mitigation target of 666 gpd and to work with the engineer to prepare a mitigation plan to off-set this value.

It is noted here that the notice published on June 18th 2014, in the DEP Bulletin (Volume 38, Issue 12) incorrectly listed the mitigation target as 533 gpd, which failed to include the 125 % mitigation factor. As stated above this actual target of mitigation volume is 666 gpd,

The mitigation plan proposed by the applicant's design engineer included enhanced groundwater recharge methods beyond those required pursuant to the stormwater management regulations combined with an architectural design plan for the installation of low flow plumbing fixtures for all new proposed building structures and to retrofit 5 fixtures (toilets, urinals, and/or showers) within existing buildings with new higher-efficiency components to offset the consumptive use.

Subsequently, the applicant proposed a revised architectural design plan for municipal approval for the replacement of the five existing 5 toilets with high efficiency water use fixtures, and documented that additional increased groundwater recharge was previously approved as part of the on-site stormwater management design plans. On May 8, 2014, the applicant submitted to the Council a copy of the Toilet Replacement Plan, prepared by JGA Architectural Design. As a result, in a letter dated May 19, 2014 the Council advised the Department that these actions satisfied the mitigation requirement and deemed the proposed project in compliance and consistent with the RMP.

To demonstrate compliance with non-point source pollution control pursuant to N.J.A.C 7:15-5.25(h)4, the Department confirmed that the Township of Bedminster Somerset County, New Jersey has adopted a stormwater control ordinance (Ord. #05-40, §2) in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:8. Therefore, a review for compliance with the Stormwater Management rules is required to be conducted under the township's authority. Consequently, the requirements of N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.25(g)1 for stormwater control have been satisfied.

To demonstrate compliance with non-point source pollution control pursuant to N.J.A.C 7:15-5.25(h)5, the Department has confirmed that no new development is proposed within a riparian zone.

To demonstrate compliance with non-point source pollution control pursuant to N.J.A.C 7:15-5.25(h)6, the Department has confirmed that no portion of the proposed development is located within a steep slope.

Approval of this amendment does not eliminate the need for any permits, approvals or certifications required by any Federal, State, County or municipal review agency with jurisdiction over this project/activity.

Elizabeth Semple, Manager
Division of Coastal & Land Use Planning
Department of Environmental Protection

8/11/14

Date