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## PUBLIC WORKS – ENGINEERING DIVISION

### PRELIMINARY REVIEW MEMORANDUM

TO: Bloomfield Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

FROM: David Peter Castaldi, Civil Engineer and Wetlands Agent 

DATE: January 8, 2026

RE: **Wetlands Permit Application, 1151 Blue Hills Avenue, First Cathedral Site  
Unique ID# 7895, formerly Map 179-2, Lot 2074**

**Applicant and Property Owner:**

First Baptist Church  
c/o LeRoy Bailey, III  
1151 Blue Hills Avenue  
Bloomfield, CT 06002

**Wetlands File #75-2025-30**

This application was officially received at the November 17, 2025 regular meeting and is scheduled for a Public Hearing at the January 20, 2026 regular meeting.

This memorandum is a preliminary review of the application and does not include any recommended conditions of approval. It is recommended that the Commission hear the applicant's presentation, and hear comments and questions from the Public and Commission, and then table the application, and continue the Public Hearing, to the Tuesday, February 17, 2026 regular meeting. This will allow the applicant to provide requested additional information and respond to concerns and comments from the Commission and Public for the February meeting.

The First Cathedral site is bounded on the east side by Blue Hills Avenue (CT Rte. 187) and on the west side by Wintonbury Avenue (CT Rte. 178). There are extensive wetlands in the southerly and central parts of the property, several intermittent watercourses, swamp areas and a pond. Please refer to the appendix and GIS plot for additional background information.

The proposal includes the subdivision of property containing wetlands and/or watercourses; removal of exiting pavement and utilities; and the construction of three apartment buildings, underground utilities, paved parking and driveway areas and a walking trail.

Site plans prepared by BSC Group, titled “First Cathedral Affordable Housing Development, 1151 Blue Hills Avenue,” dated November 14, 2025, at various scales, were submitted with the application along with a Stormwater Report, dated November 2025, also by BSC Group. The plans will require some fairly significant technical revisions and a meeting with BSC Group to review these revisions has been requested.

The plans indicate Soil Scientist’s flagged wetlands that are the subject of a separate application for a Wetlands Map Amendment. The Map Amendment application must be approved before the Commission can act on this Permit application.

The project is proposed to be constructed in the area presently occupied by a paved parking lot in the southerly part of the property. This parking lot was built in the early 2000’s and has one driveway out to Blue Hills Avenue, opposite Lyman Lane, a private street. The southerly parking lot connects to the parking lot around the church building with a timber bridge. The parking lot is raised 4-8 feet above the wetlands. The on-site wetlands and watercourses are included within existing Conservation Easements.

The development is proposed with no direct impacts to wetlands or watercourses, or the Conservation Easements, and within the footprint of the existing parking lot. The proposal includes two five-story apartment buildings in Phase One and a third residential building with a connected daycare facility in Phase Two. The combined project includes a total of 146 dwelling units, 250 parking spaces, and all new underground utilities.

The application indicates no direct impacts to wetlands or watercourses. All of the proposed regulated activities are located within the Upland Review Areas 100 feet from wetlands and/or 200 feet from the watercourses and within the Vegetated Buffer Zones 50 feet from wetlands and 75 feet from watercourses. A total of 4.94 acres are proposed to be disturbed for the overall project. No impacts are proposed within the FEMA Flood Hazard Zones.

The project will include excavation to remove the existing pavement, storm drainage systems, light poles and underground electric lines, and some clearing and grubbing. The construction of the new buildings and utilities will require the removal and deposition of material, grading, paving, and discharging of stormwater within the Upland Review Areas. These are defined as regulated activities in the Wetlands Regulations.

The proposed regulated activities within the Upland Review Area and Vegetated Buffer Zones are likely to have an effect on the wetlands and watercourses and are therefore regulated by the Wetlands Commission. A permit from the Wetlands Commission is required for these regulated activities. There are no non-regulated activities, or activities allowed by right, associated with this application.

Storm drainage calculations submitted in support of the application indicate that the proposed development will result in a reduction in the impervious coverage and a reduction in the peak flows compared to the existing condition. One small underground detention structure is proposed at the rear of Building A. These calculations are under review by the Town Engineer's Office.

There are several storm drainage systems within this southerly parking lot and along with additional flows in from the abutting roadways, they drain to the on-site wetlands/watercourses and then west under Wintonbury Avenue into the Blue Hills Flood Control Reservoir. The 30" concrete culvert under Wintonbury Avenue has a flared end on the inlet side and does not appear to provide any outlet control.

The existing on-site stormwater system consists of catch basins, pipes, and sedimentation structures with outfalls to the wetlands. The proposal includes the retention of the existing outfalls and conversion of some of the storm drainage system structures to accommodate the new development. New stormwater quality structures (hydro-dynamic separators) are proposed for each system before the discharge.

It is recommended that the existing sediment structures be removed rather than retained. These are obsolete two-chamber structures with a catch basin on one side and a manhole on the other side. Removal of these structures will require some reconfiguring of the proposed storm drainage improvements but the resulting system would be easier to construct and maintain. It is also recommended that the existing plunge pools at the outfalls be reconstructed. This will slightly increase the impacts to the Upland Review Areas but should not have any direct impact to the wetlands.

Stormwater quality measures are proposed with the hydro-dynamic separators and with three stormwater quality basins. Two of these basins are within the parking lot islands and the other is adjacent to the parking area east of Building A.

Some utilities and grading are shown for Phase Two. Additional information for Phase Two is required at the same level of detail as provided for Phase One. The two phases are interconnected and sufficient information about how they will be coordinated is necessary for a full understanding of the project.

All of proposed utilities are coming in from Blue Hills Avenue and include fire and domestic water services, gas services, sanitary sewer laterals and electric/cable/comms services to the rear of both proposed buildings in Phase One. The buildings are 25-30 feet from the wetlands and the utilities are proposed between the wetlands and the buildings. The lengths of the services, and the required excavations, could be significantly reduced if these utilities were relocated to the front of the buildings.

The proposed development appears to have a net surplus of material. Estimated earthwork calculations (cut and fill) are needed to better understand the scope of the project. Excess materials will need to be removed from the site.

Due to the lack of direct impacts a Wetlands and Watercourse Assessment Report was not submitted with the application. The Commission may want request an Assessment Report

The proposed development will impact the Upland Review Areas and Vegetated Buffer Zones. The majority of these areas are presently paved parking lot. Some areas will be converted to lawn/landscaping areas and some will be converted to new buildings, paved parking and driveways and sidewalks/paths.

The Landscaping Plans show the specified plantings. Some alternate species may be more suitable for the site and pollinator plants are recommended for the stormwater quality basins. In addition, it is recommended that trees and shrubs be planted along the limits of clearing.

The Regulated Activities and Alternative Plan (Sheet C-3.1) identifies the limits of the proposed disturbances within the Upland Review Areas and Vegetated Buffer Zones. Only the center part of the project area is outside of the Upland Review Areas.

Sheet C-3.1 also includes a brief discussion about alternatives. These alternatives should be discussed at the Public Hearing. Staff is in general agreement that the proposed development is the most prudent and feasible alternative.

A post-development Operations and Maintenance Plan is included in the Stormwater Report as Section 4. This Section should be added to the plans. This plan was submitted to comply with the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan requirements of the 2024 CT Stormwater Quality Manual. Revisions to this plan may be necessary to fully comply. The Operations and Maintenance Plan does not address the use or restriction of landscaping chemicals or pest management and these should be incorporated into a revised Plan.

The existing conditions plans submitted require some additional information for the on-site and adjacent storm drainage systems, topography in the southerly part of the property and the existing wetland/watercourse area in the southwest corner. Revised existing conditions plans have been requested.

Additional soil erosion and sediment control measures, in accordance with the 2024 DEEP Erosion Control Manual, are needed for this project that include provisions for all phases of construction including Phase Two.

Boring locations are shown on the plans. A Geotechnical Report was submitted with the storm drainage calculations and should be clearly referenced to on the plans.

Low impact development measures (LID) including stormwater quality basins and hydro-dynamic separators are proposed. Additional LID's including pervious pavement and additional stormwater quality basins are recommended in accordance with 2024 CT Stormwater Quality Manual.

The proposed subdivision will create three lots. Lots 2 and 3 are in the southeast corner and are for the two Phases of the Housing Development. The third lot will be the remaining portion of the 40.5 acre overall parcel. The subdivision plan included in the plan set also shows some schematic future development in the westerly part of the property and at the Cathedral building. The proposed subdivision will not create an unbuildable lot or require any future regulated activities.

## Appendix

A. This site is located on the west side of Blue Hills Avenue and southeast side of Wintonbury Avenue. Its total area is 40.5 acres and according to the 2023 Official Map of Inland Wetlands and Watercourses there are 12.74 acres of wetlands, 1800 feet of watercourses and 3.6 acre pond on the site. See GIS plot of the Official Map data attached.

B. The on-site wetland and watercourse resources are located in the central and southerly parts of the property. The pond is located on the west side near Wintonbury Avenue. The flow through the wetlands and the watercourses is from east to west and they drain under Wintonbury Avenue to the northwest. All of the wetlands, except the pond, are forested. There is also an existing created wetlands in the southwesterly corner of the property.

C. The topography of the site is varied and includes two large, paved parking areas. The north parking lot is around the church building and the south parking lot is connected to the north lot with a timber bridge. The parking lots are 3-8 feet above the surrounding wetlands, and there is also a baseball/basketball/tennis court area in the southwest portion of the site with access from Wintonbury Avenue.

D. The church building and north parking lot were constructed in the late 1990's. The south parking lot and timber bridge were built in the early 2000's.

E. There are several storm drainage systems within the site and some additional storm systems drain into the on-site wetlands from Wintonbury Avenue and Blue Hills Avenue.

F. The on-site wetlands and watercourses were identified as Wetlands 34 in the 1985 Inwoods Environmental Consultants Evaluation (see copy of report attached).

G. The on-site wetland soil identified by a recent Soil Scientists Delineation Report is:

Glaciolacustrine – Soils formed in old glacial lakebed deposits of silts and clays:

H            ***Maybid*** VPD loam [Bf]

H. The on-site wetlands and watercourses are a part of a larger wetland system that extends onto the abutting properties to the south and northwest. The on-site wetlands and watercourses drain from east to west and flow under Wintonbury Avenue to the large wetland/watercourse system in the Blue Hills Flood Water Retention Reservoir on the northwest side of Wintonbury Avenue.

I. This property is located within the local watershed of Beaman Brook and is tributary to the North Branch of the Park River. A FEMA Flood Hazard Zone exists around the pond in the westerly part of the property.

J. There are existing Conservation Easements surrounding the wetlands on the property.