

**SUFFIELD ZONING AND PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
July 20, 2015**

Present: Frank Bauchiero, Jr., Chairman
Chester Kuras, Secretary
Ginny Bromage, Alternate
Brendan Malone, Alternate

Absent: Charles Sheehan, Vice Chairman
Mark O’Hara
Jacek Bucior
Mark Winne
Gina Pastula, Alternate

Also Present: Bill Hawkins, AICP, Town Planner
Eleanor Binns, Administrative Secretary

The proceedings of this meeting were voice recorded.

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Bauchiero called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He then asked Mrs. Binns to take a silent roll call. In the absence of members Mr. O’Hara and Mr. Winne, Chairman Bauchiero appointed Ms. Bromage and Mr. Malone as voting members for the meeting.

Chairman Bauchiero asked for a motion to change the order of the agenda. Mr. Malone made a motion to move up the new business item on the agenda ahead of the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bromage and approved unanimously, 4-0-0.

II. NEW BUSINESS

File# 2015-5 – Request for Site Plan Modification for Field Lighting located at 119 North Main St. Map 33H, Block 30, Lot 108 & 109. Applicant – Suffield Academy

Phil Cyr, Facilities Manager at Suffield Academy presented the application. He stated that when the fields were constructed two years ago they ran conduit for the lighting at that time. The lighting plan was designed by SMRT of Portland, Maine and is designed for fifty foot candles on the playing field with minimal light spill off. The design has four seventy foot tall poles with fourteen fixtures per pole. Mr. Hawkins stated that according to the GIS maps, they would be approximately 810 feet from Main Street, 630 feet from High Street and 280 feet from the Historic District. Therefore they would be outside the Historic District and are also outside of the Town Center Village District zone. Mr. Hawkins stated that he did not believe the light poles would have a visible impact in the area due to the surrounding topography. Mr. Bauchiero stated that he had also viewed the site and felt that the poles would not be visible from Main Street. With no further comments or questions, Mr. Bauchiero called for a motion.

Mr. Malone moved to approve file 2015-05, Suffield Academy's site plan modification application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bromage and approved unanimously, 4-0-0.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

File # 2015-04: Request for a text amendment to add Section V.W Keeping of Chickens to the Zoning Regulations. Applicant- Town of Suffield

Mr. Bauchiero opened the continued hearing and town planner, Bill Hawkins read into the record correspondence that had been received since the last meeting from Andrew Krar, Mark O'Hara, Mark Winne, Jack Bucior and Ginny Bromage.

Mr. Hawkins reported that he had spoken to the commission's counsel, Carl Landolina who stated that if there were substantial changes to be made to the current draft that is being proposed, the hearing should remain open and there would have to be a new notice of the public hearing so that the public could have the opportunity to speak on the revised draft.

Mr. Bauchiero then asked the members for their opinions on the current draft.

Mr. Bauchiero, Mr. Malone, and Ms. Bromage felt that the minimum acreage for roosters should remain at five acres. Mr. Kuras felt that it should be reduced to two acres for roosters.

For the keeping of hens, Mr. Bauchiero felt the minimum lot size should be an acre and Mr. Malone agreed. Ms. Bromage felt that half an acre was sufficient. Mr. Bauchiero said that he had spoken to First Selectman McAnaney and he was in favor of the minimum being an acre and a half. Mr. Bauchiero felt that the present regulation of five acres for chickens does not need to be changed.

Chairman Bauchiero opened the hearing for comments from the public.

Kathleen Mormino, 519 South Stone Street - Commented on the reasons for having large flocks and roosters. She stated that not many people would want roosters.

Ann Lewis, 639 North Grand Street - Stated that she keeps roosters for genetic changes to her flock.

Tom Mormino, 519 South Stone Street - Was concerned about keeping the status quo and not reducing the acreage necessary for keeping chickens from five. He mentioned that many surrounding towns have regulations and that people invest in their chickens and the way the regulations are enforced now, a neighbor's complaint will mean people have to get rid of their chickens.

Shannon Watson, 333 Griffin Road - Owners of small properties should be able to have chickens with regulations that protect them from neighbors arbitrarily complaining.

Tom Frenaye, 489 Warnertown Road - Need to do something to change the status quo. Regulations need to meet the current reality of people who have chickens on lots less than five acres as currently required.

Andrew Krar, 9 Somerwynd Lane - Draft that currently requires a neighbor's permission is not feasible. Concerned that a quarter acre lot following the required setbacks would generate many applications to the Zoning Board of Appeals for variances. He stated the Commission should consider changing the setbacks to allow for chickens on smaller parcels.

In concurrence with Mr. Krar's comment, Mr. Hawkins stated that Attorney Landolina had also advised that the neighbors consent should not be a basis to allow roosters or not.

Kathleen Mormino, 519 South Stone Street - Should be treating this the same as dog ownership. Felt the Town should have the least restrictive regulation possible and forget about acreage. Chickens do not need a lot of space. Give zoning enforcement officer power to deal with nuisance issues.

Shannon Watson, 333 Griffin Road - Most people do not want a lot of chickens so not a lot of room is needed. Setbacks are too much for small lots.

Ruth Greenberger, 1069 North Grand Street - Wanted to know when the five acre requirement went into effect. Felt there were too many zoning regulations in Suffield.

Ms. Bromage stated she was not concerned with acreage and amount of chickens – asked public for suggestions about how to deal with enforcement issues when people were creating a problem. Discussion ensued as to how measure the standard to judge this regulation against. It might be up to an animal control officer to handle complaints. The following people made comments;

Linda Sheridan, 1515 North Grand Street - Stated that her free range chickens stay on the property near the coop.

Diane Christian, 1715 Mapleton Avenue - Animal control should regulate if chickens go on to other properties and create a nuisance. Need to change regulations so that people are allowed to have chickens.

Tom Mormino, 519 South Stone Street - Enforcement officer should be able to deal with nuisance complaints.

Molly Drakely, 2075 Mountain Road - Emphasized how little property is needed for chickens. They do not need to graze and only need very small enclosure.

With no further comments from the public, Chairman Bauchiero asked Mr. Hawkins for his recommendation about continuing the hearing. Since the changes discussed at this hearing would be substantial to the original draft, Mr. Hawkins recommended coming up with a new draft regulation, re-notice the hearing based on this new draft and continue the hearing to the August meeting. The commission members then went through the current draft to come to a consensus on what changes they would like to propose. Although they were in agreement on eliminating the minimum acreage, number of hens and requiring a permit for the new draft, there was not agreement on the issue of how many acres should be required to have roosters. Mr. Hawkins stated that Attorney Landolina had cautioned about the exemption in the current draft pertaining to students and FFA projects. He felt that it would not hold up on appeal because it was allowing special treatment for certain individuals. Commissioners agreed on eliminating this from the draft.

Commissioners also agreed on eliminating the specifics on animal waste and feed storage in the current draft.

Mr. Hawkins will make these changes for the revised draft and upload it to the Zoning and Planning Department's webpage under pending applications.

Chairman Bauchiero asked for a motion to continue the public hearing. Mr. Malone moved to continue the public hearing to the August 17th meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bromage and approved unanimously, 4-0-0.

IV. REPORTS

Chairman – no report

Town Planner – Mr. Hawkins asked the commission to clarify the expiration date for the Greendale Village approval given last month. The original approval for the development was dated October 19, 2005 and Mr. Falkowski has indicated that the new approval should be in line with that date and not the June date.

The Commission unanimously agreed the site plan expiration date should be October 19, 2019 as opposed to June 15, 2019.

Mr. Hawkins noted that he is working on a Solar Array Text Amendment and has sent a draft to be reviewed by Attorney Landolina.

Mr. Hawkins noted that we have a revised brochure for local farms, products, and agritourism as well as “A Town of Farms” tee shirts, banners, bumper stickers and magnets all partially funding with a grant from the Department of Agriculture.

V. MINUTES

Ms. Bromage made a motion to approve the June 15, 2015 regular meeting minutes as submitted; Motion seconded by Mr. Kuras and approved unanimously, 4-0-0.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was read into the record during the public hearing.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to come before the commission, Mr. Kuras made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 pm; seconded by Ms. Bromage. Motion carried unanimously 4-0-0.

Submitted,

Chester Kuras, Secretary

cc: Assessor, Building Official, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Director, Selectmen, Town Clerk, Town Engineer, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Commission Counsel, File