

**SUFFIELD ZONING AND PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
August 17, 2015**

Present: Frank Bauchiero, Jr., Chairman
Charles Sheehan, Vice Chairman
Chester Kuras, Secretary
Mark O’Hara
Jacek Bucior
Mark Winne
Ginny Bromage, Alternate
Brendan Malone, Alternate
Gina Pastula, Alternate

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

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 Ms. Binns to take a silent roll call. All full members were in attendance, therefore, no alternates were appointed.

II. 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 asked Mr. Hawkins to review the changes to the draft since last month’s meeting. The need for a permit and the minimum ¼ acre lot size requirements were removed from the draft. No decision had been made on the keeping of roosters so the five acre minimum was left in this draft. In the new draft, there is no limit on the number of chickens and the requirements for feed and waste management have been taken out of this draft. The student exemption section was removed on the advice of the Commission counsel as it violated the uniformity principal under which zoning regulations should be written. Section 5 was added which states that the chickens shall be kept in a manner that conforms to all regulations of state agencies and health codes.

Mr. O’Hara asked what the reasoning was for removing the formula for the number of chickens.

Mr. Hawkins stated that with the removal of the property size from the draft, the number of chickens was also removed.

Mr. Sheehan asked about the posting of the new draft. Mr. Hawkins stated that because there were significant changes to the original draft there was a new notice of the public hearing posted as legally required and the new draft was posted on the town web site and distributed.

Mr. Bauchiero then opened the hearing to public comment.

Kathy Dunai, 1510 North Stone St. Commended the commission on working with the public to come up with an equitable regulation.

Kathleen Mormino, 519 South Stone St. Addressed Mr. O’Hara’s question about how the current draft was pared down. She stated that there was in depth discussion at the last hearing

that commission members who were not present should be aware of. The new draft is in keeping with the feeling that the town does not need to hyper regulate backyard chicken keeping. She stated her support for the new draft commending the members that worked on it at the last hearing.

Robert Parks, 30 Barry Place, Stated that there is a state regulation indicating that a homeowner has the right to expect a property to have the same characteristics as when it was purchased unless there is an overriding need to change it. He does not see an overriding need. The regulation should have lot size limits and limits to the number of hens. Commission should consider a special use permit for chicken keeping.

Joe Plourde, 25 Barry Place. Recommended a 2 acre minimum for keeping chickens and allowing those already keeping chickens to be grandfathered with the neighbors consent.

Opal Gilmore, 15 Barry Place, Farm animals should not be in residential neighborhoods. Concerned about them attracting predators.

Janet Davis, 8 Wisteria Lane. Stated she is adamantly opposed to chickens on parcels less than 5 acres. They had experience with neighbors not containing or taking care of their chickens. She considers the new draft bad zoning policy.

Christine Anderson, 939 Bridge St. Stated that she hopes that the hearing will be closed tonight with this draft being passed.

Scott Guilmartin, 759 Hale St. Stated there needs to be a 5 acre minimum for roosters. Suggests that there should a minimum for keeping of chickens and the amount allowed possibly 1 acre with 5 chickens per acre.

Robert Anderson, 939 Bridge St. Wants to be able to have backyard chickens for their own use. Predator animals are already around and as long as chickens are contained in enclosure this should not be an issue.

Andrew Krar, 9 Somerwynd Lane, Stated that the existing setbacks for accessory buildings should be adhered to. Commissioners should consider if odors would be a problem.

Jeff Davis, 8 Wisteria Lane. Commission should consider special permit similar to dogs. Start with more restrictions as a pilot program.

Tom Mormino, 519 South Stone St. Most people are looking to have backyard chickens on a small scale.

Linda Sheridan, 1515 North Grand St. Would like people to be able to have chickens. If properly maintained there is no odor.

Julie Harrison, 1321 Sheldon St. There is overwhelming support for deregulation in town. Concerns of chicken hoarding are unfounded.

Sue Simmons, 1321 Sheldon St. The situations should be addressed on an individual basis if people are not caring for their animals properly.

Megan Hastings, 472 Hill St. Suffield is a Town of Farms and small numbers of chickens in someones backyard should not be an issue.

Bob Parks, 30 Barry Place, Suffield has changed over the years to a suburban town with small lots and we should not have a regulation that allows unlimited amounts of chickens.

Kathleen Mormino, 519 South Stone St. Urged the commission not to make their decision based on unfounded fears. Documentation has been submitted in previous hearings to dispel these. Commission should pass regulations that are the least restrictive.

With no further comments from the public, Mr. Baucherio asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. O'Hara moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Bucior and approved unanimously, 6-0-0.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hawkins reviewed the Connecticut State Statute 8-24 which deals with municipal improvements and applies to the three applications currently before the commission.

File # 2015-6: Request for 8-24 Report to bond for the paving of approximately 18 miles of Town roads. Applicant – Board of Selectmen

Town Engineer, Gerry Turbet described the scope of the road projects that are proposed. The previous bond that covered road improvement is coming to an end. Some of the proposed road improvements will be reconstruction and drainage improvements and some will be repaving. This will cover engineering fees as well as the construction work. The proposed bond is for 9 million dollars.

Mr. Bauchiero asked for a motion on the application. Mr. Sheehan moved to send a positive 8-24 report on the application to the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Mr. Kuras and approved unanimously, 6-0-0.

File # 2015-7: Request for 8-24 Report to bond for Town Hall upgrades including the HVAC system, relocation of the IT server, and an addition to house a new vault for the Town Clerk's office. Applicant – Board of Selectmen

Mr. Hawkins reviewed the list of planned renovations. A site plan application would come before the commission for review and approval before the work would begin. It would also need to go before the Design Review Board since the Town Hall is within the Town Center Village District. A positive report would approve of the concept from a planning perspective so that bonding can be requested. The bond proposal is for 4.385 million dollars

Mr. Bauchiero asked for a motion on the application. Mr. Kuras moved to send a positive 8-24 report on the application to the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Mr. Winne and approved unanimously, 6-0-0.

File # 2015-8: Request for 8-24 Report to bond for renovations and an addition to the Bridge Street School to repurpose the building as a community center. Applicant – Board of Selectmen

Mr. Hawkins reminded the commission that Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon had presented the conceptual drawings to the members at a previous meeting. A positive report would approve of the concept from a planning perspective so that bonding can be requested. A site plan application would come back before the commission for review and approval before the work would begin. The bonding proposal is for 8.4 million dollars.

Mr. Bauchiero asked for a motion on the application. Mr. Kuras moved to send a positive 8-24 report on the application to the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Mr. Winne and approved unanimously, 6-0-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

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Mr. Bauchiero asked commission members if they had missed any of the hearings. He also asked the members if they felt they were thoroughly informed on what had transpired at the hearings by reading the minutes or listening to the recordings. Mr. O'Hara stated that he was fully prepared. Mr. Sheehan stated that because he had been unable to attend the July hearing and although he reviewed the minutes he would like to listen to the recording or would abstain from a vote this evening. He felt that the recording will give more insight than just reviewing the minutes. Ms. Pastula felt she needed to listen to the recordings of the meetings that she had not attended. Mr. Bucior felt that he would also like to listen to the recording of the July meeting although he had already reviewed the minutes.

Mr. Sheehan moved to table the vote on the application to the September 21st meeting.

Seconded by Mr. Bucior and approved unanimously, 6-0-0.

Mr. Winne stated that he would not be at the September meeting so an alternate would need to be appointed in his place. Mr. Bauchiero said he is resigning and will not be on the commission for the September meeting so he alerted the alternates to be prepared to vote at that meeting.

V. REPORTS

Chairman - no report

Town Planner – Mr. Hawkins brought the commission up to date on the progress at Greendale Village. The plantings are near completion, there is a new permanent sign and the gazebo has been installed. Mr. Hawkins reported that the land that had been approved as a PDA on Mapleton Avenue has been sold to Briarwood Homes and they will most likely be coming to the commission for a zone change to build single family homes. Mr. Hawkins also reported on the progress on the Redstone Farms and Suffield Chase subdivisions.

VI. MINUTES

Mr. Sheehan made a motion to approve the July 20, 2015 regular meeting minutes as submitted; Motion seconded by Mr. O'Hara and approved unanimously, 6-0-0.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was read into the record during the public hearing.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to come before the commission, Mr. Sheehan made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 pm; seconded by Mr. O'Hara. Motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

Submitted,

Chester Kuras, Secretary

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