

**TOWN OF SOMERS
ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020 - 6:30 PM - Somers Town Hall Auditorium**

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 6:38pm. Members present: Jill Conklin, Chairperson, Karl Walton, Dan Fraro, Paige Rasid and Lucas Cherry
Also present, Jennifer Roy, Staff Liaison.

PUBLIC HEARING: Jill Conklin opened public hearing for the following applications continued from January 6, 2020:

1. #20-001: Gingras Development, Eleanor Road, Somers, CT. Proposed text amendment to add Article XXVI – Detached Housing Development Zone (DHD).
2. #20-002: Dan Eastman, 40 Hallie Lane, Somers, CT. Pursuant to Somers Zoning Regulations, Article XII Earth Removal and Filling, seeking a Special Use permit to allow blasting and excavation of material, to be relocated on same property.
3. #20-003: Dan Eastman, 42 Hallie Lane, Somers, CT. Pursuant to Somers Zoning Regulations, Article XII Earth Removal and Filling, seeking a Special Use permit to allow blasting and excavation of material, to be relocated on same property.

Donald Poland presented for Gingras Development. Mr. Poland explained the proposed text amendment/Detached Housing Development is essentially the same as the current Age Restricted Housing regulation, only no age restriction.

Mr. Poland pointed out that since his initial presentation in the fall, enrollment in the Somers school system is actually down. Additionally, the demand for Age Restricted Housing has significantly declined.

Jill Conklin opened the floor to the public.

George Schober, 98 Rocky Dundee, Somers – states that he has represented Mr. Careno in the past, but is speaking as a resident of Somers, in favor.

Susanne Basterache, 58 Harness Drive, Somers – in favor

Jeff Lipton, 452 South Road, Somers – in favor

Dan Hinkley, 178 Highland View Drive, Somers – in favor

Jody Cox, 28 White Birch Circle – in favor

Jill Conklin asked Mr. Poland if this is affordable housing, as he mentioned this a few times. Mr. Poland explained that it is not an “8-30g affordable housing application”; he was referring to smaller size, and lower priced houses than the median price in Somers.

A discussion was held regarding the wording of the regulation being proposed. Karl Walton questions page 5 section D – only 2 parking spaces? Current regulations would call for 2.25 spaces per unit. Tom Careno mentioned they would have 2 car garage plus driveway for parking, but he’s willing to have the 2.25 as currently required.

Additional public comments:

Susanne Basterache, 58 Harness Drive, Somers – commented she doesn't feel there will be any impact on the school system.

Chris Smith, 38 Bailey Lane, Somers – in favor

Dan Fraro was concerned that the public isn't aware this development would actually be "condominiums". Discussion was held. Jennifer Roy read the definition of condominiums; a building or complex of buildings containing a number of individually owned apartments or houses. This proposal is for individual houses; on one common parcel of land.

Tom Careno explained that he's been before the commission last fall to discuss this, so there has been opportunity for the public to be aware of what he's proposing.

Dan Fraro made a motion to close the public hearing, Lucas Cherry seconded motion, carried 3-2. Dan Fraro, Lucas Cherry and Paige Rasid in favor; Karl Walton and Jill Conklin opposed.

Public hearing for application #20-001 Gingras Development closed at 7:47pm.

Public hearing for applications #20-002 Dan Eastman, 40 Hallie Lane and #20-003 Dan Eastman, 42 Hallie Lane; opened at 7:47pm.

Attorney John Parks, present for the applicant, address the commission and provided written request/consent dated March 2, 2020, to continue the public hearing to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Attorney Parks explained that he received a copy of the Town Attorney's legal opinion at the February 13, 2020 Planning Commission meeting; related to Article XII Earth Removal and Filling. Attorney Parks requests time to respond, therefore continuing to the April 6, 2020 meeting.

Old Business: Discussion/Decision has been tabled to the April 6, 2020 meeting.

New Business:

Application #20-004 Mark and Karen Murdoch, 24 Gulf Road, Somers. Proposed text amendment to Somers Zoning Regulations Section 214-4 Definitions, 214-44 Prohibited uses, 214-87 Alcoholic Beverages and 214-98 Schedule of permitted uses; to allow Farm Winery/Brewery as a permitted use in all zones.

Application #20-005: Mark and Karen Murdoch, 24 Gulf Road, Somers, CT. Special Use Permit application for a Farm Winery pursuant to section 214-98(B) of the Somers Zoning Regulations, at 359 Mountain Road, Somers, in the A-1 Zone.

Mark and Karen Murdoch present to speak on both applications. Karen Murdoch presented the commission members with a copy of the narrative presentation. Mrs. Murdoch walked the commission through what they are proposing.

Discussion was held. Several commission members were concerned about accepting the second application for the Special Use permit as this is not a permitted use currently. Karl Walton stated he would prefer accepting just the text amendment, and hold off on the special use permit application so as to not start the statutory "time clock".

Dan Fraro made a motion to accept application #20-004 Mark and Karen Murdoch, refer to the Planning Commission, and schedule a public hearing for April 6, 2020 at 6:30pm. Karl Walton seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Discussion was held regarding accepting the next application for a Special Use permit.

Karl Walton made a motion to reject application #20-005 Mark and Karen Murdoch, for a Special Use permit to operate a Farm Winery, as this is not currently a permitted use. Dan Fraro seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Annual Meeting

Election of Officers:

Karl Walton nominates Jill Conklin to remain Chair, Lucas Cherry seconded, all in favor.

Paige Rasid nominates Karl Walton to remain Vice-Chair, Dan Fraro seconded, all in favor.

Karl Walton nominates Lucas Cherry to remain Secretary, Dan Fraro seconded, all in favor.

Review of by-laws: Discussion was held.

Karl Walton made a motion to amend the by-laws, article VIII: Order of Business, moving Approval of minutes to the second to last item on agenda. Dan Fraro seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

Karl Walton made a motion to approve the January 6, 2020 minutes, Paige Rasid seconded, all in favor motion carried.

Karl Walton made a motion to approve the minutes for January 13, 2020 and January 21, 2020 and February 3, 2020. Dan Fraro seconded, Karl Walton, Dan Fraro, Jill Conklin and Paige Rasid in favor, Lucas Cherry abstained, motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: Lucas Cherry made a motion to adjourn. Karl Walton seconded, all in favor, meeting adjourned at 8:39pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Roy

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING Video of this meeting can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCitLJvpaGg5rGsVVbsUYK8A/featured>