

TOWN OF SOMERS - ZONING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, September 20, 2021
6:00 PM Somers Town Hall Auditorium



I. CALL TO ORDER at 6:00pm Members present: Jill Conklin, Karl Walton, Dan Fraro and Paige Rasid. Absent: Lucas Cherry and Bill Shapiro
Also present Jennifer Roy, Staff Liaison and Carl Landolina, Town Attorney

II. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. #21-002: Mark and Karen Murdoch, 359 Mountain Road, Somers; seeking a Special Use Permit for a Farm Vineyard and Winery pursuant to Section 6.12 of the Somers Zoning Regulations to allow the operation of a tasting room and sale of wine for consumption on and off premises.

Jill Conklin read the legal notice and opened the public hearing at 6:20pm.

III. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE DECISION:

1. #21-002: Mark and Karen Murdoch, 359 Mountain Road, Somers; seeking a Special Use Permit for a Farm Vineyard and Winery pursuant to Section 6.12 of the Somers Zoning Regulations to allow the operation of a tasting room and sale of wine for consumption on and off premises.

Mark Murdoch gave a presentation to the commission. Explained current site plan and application, as well as future vision for the Farm Winery. The initial plan will be to use existing structures; the warming house for tastings and the sugar shack for manufacturing the wine. There is a proposed tent near the covered bridge, for use as weather permits.

Discussion was held. Attorney Landolina asked Mr. Murdoch several questions regarding the metering of sound as well as status of current Special Use permit for the property. Mr. Murdoch is responded; not testifying as an expert on the sound; and that they are not currently intending on abandoning their current Special Use permit.

The floor was opened to for public comment:

Kelle Giachello, 118 Stafford Road, Somers – spoke in favor.

Kevin Foye, 40 White Oak Road, Somers – spoke in favor.

Dean Giachello, 118 Stafford Road, Somers – spoke in favor.

Tim Welch, 168 Mount Road, Somers – expressed concerns, in favor with caution.

Ken McCarthy, 40 Florida Road, Somers – spoke in favor.

Sarah Maskill, 335 Mountain Road, Somers – spoke in favor.

Caroline Skowronek, 36 Grist Mill Terrace, Somers – spoke in favor.

Eleanor Lebine, 9 Mountain Road, Somers – spoke in opposition; presented photos Exhibit A.

Bob Chester, 19 Manse Hill Road, Somers – spoke in favor.

Bob Garlick, 52 Juniper Hill Road, Somers – spoke in favor.

Michael Hevey, 7 Mason Lane, Somers – spoke in favor.

Ken Prior, 364 Mountain Road, Somers – spoke in opposition; presented documents Exhibit B; transcript of meeting Exhibit C; social media photos Exhibit D; map with contours Exhibit E; and photos Exhibit F.

Michelle Prior, 364 Mountain Road, Somers – spoke in opposition.

Tom Clark, Skyridge Drive, Somers – spoke in favor.

Lisa Salimbas, 15 Olmstead Manor Drive – spoke in favor.

Commission recessed from 7:28pm – 7:37pm.

Attorney George Schober presented the commission with a petition to intervene on behalf of his clients Ken and Michelle Prior. Discussion was held. Attorney Schober provided a copy to the applicant's attorney, Sean Clark.

Attorney Landolina addressed the commission; explained the procedures for handling a petition to intervene. Suggested that the commission may want to continue the public hearing to allow time for the commission, staff and Town Attorney to review petition. The commission may then, when they reconvene, consider and decide to accept the petition or not. At that point the public hearing would continue.

Karl Walton made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next regular meeting, October 4th, 2021 at 6:30pm. Dan Fraro seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

IV. MINUTES: Karl Walton made a motion to approve as written the June 7, 2021; July 12, 2021 and July 26, 2021 minutes. Paige Rasid seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

V. ADJOURNMENT: Paige Rasid made a motion to adjourn, Dan Fraro seconded, all in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Roy, CZEO

*****MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED A SUBSEQUENT MEETING*****