

**SUFFIELD PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
May 16, 2022**

Present: Erin Golembiewski, Vice Chairman
Ginny Bromage, Secretary
Tracy Hespelt
Leon Litvak
Christine Sinopoli
Jeff Girard, Alternate
Ross Wilcox, Alternate
Jacob Byrnes, Alternate

Absent: Mark Winne, Chairman

Also Present: Bill Hawkins, AICP, Director of Planning & Development
Colin Moll, First Selectman
Ellie Binns, Administrative Assistant

The proceedings of this meeting were recorded and are available on the Town website, along with all of the application materials.

I. ROLL CALL

In the absence of Chairman Winne, Vice Chairman Erin Golembiewski called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM as a hybrid meeting with five members in-person and three members on the video/teleconference call. In the absence of Mr. Winne, she appointed Mr. Byrnes as a voting member for the meeting.

Ms. Bromage read the legal notice for the public hearing

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

III. PUBLIC HEARING

File # 2022-2: Request for a special permit for a package store located at 809 Thompsonville Road. Map 86H, Block 53, Lot 130. Applicant- Mai Liquor Store, LLC.

Christian Alford of Alford Associates, Inc. presented the application on behalf of the Binal Patel the owner of Mai Liquors Store, LLC. Ms. Patel would be renting an existing retail space in the building from the owners of the property, Getty Properties, Corporation. Mr. Alford described the property and location and explained that there is adequate parking that the use is permitted under the regulations and that the package store would not change the nature or intensity of the traffic.

Mr. Hawkins then read his report dated May 10, 2022 into the record. He explained that the building is in a Neighborhood Commercial Zone (NC) and the applicant has met the regulations as listed in Section V.D. of the Zoning Regulations.

These minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Hawkins explained that the town is allowed six package stores per State Statute. This permit would be the sixth and final permit for Suffield and the location meets or exceeds all requirements necessary for approval in the Zoning Regulations.

Ms. Golembiewski opened the hearing for public comment.

Kathy Bielonko - 981 East Street North, expressed concerns about additional traffic, parking problems and the continued problems of trash along the road from people discarding liquor bottles.

Chris Smith - 619 Mapleton Avenue, expressed concern that this would be the fourth liquor store within a one-mile radius and is concerned about the traffic.

George Stanley - 414 Russell Avenue, expressed traffic and parking concerns.

Krupa Patel - Owner of the Suffield Cordial Shoppe located at 606 Mapleton Avenue, expressed concern about having more competition for package stores and restaurants already in Town.

Commission member Litvak commented that the application fits the criteria and it is better than having vacant space.

There were no other comments from the public and Ms. Bromage moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

File # 2022-3: Request for a Zoning Regulation text amendment to modify Sections IV.B. - Use Table, IV.D. - Residential Zones and V.Y. Cannabis Establishments. Applicant: LASA Extract, LLC.

Attorney Daniel Finnegan of Bulkley, Richardson, and Gelinas, LLP of Springfield, MA representing the applicant, Rick Sotil of LASA Extract, LLC., explained the requested text amendments to the regulations pertaining to cannabis establishments. He explained that LASA Extract operates a CBD extraction business in their facility at 426 South Grand Street Which is in a residential zone, and that they are proposing the text amendment so that businesses in Suffield that have already been processing the cannabis plants have the opportunity to apply for a special permit for cannabis retail and micro-cultivation. The regulation that was recently adopted by the Commission limits retail and micro-cultivation to the industrial zones and would preclude them from applying for a special permit. Attorney Finnegan went through the details of the amendments proposed in their application.

Mr. Sotil described the building that he is operating in and noted that the buildings were originally built for tobacco processing.

Commission members expressed their interest in supporting an existing business but were concerned that this might be considered zoning with one property in mind or some form of spot zoning.

Mr. Hawkins then summarized his report, which detailed the proposed changes and his comments. In the report, he recommended conditions to include if the text amendment was approved as well as an explanation of considerations if the Commission is not inclined to approve the application.

Ms. Golembiewski opened the hearing to comments from the public.

Tom Frenaye -489 Warnertown Road, spoke in favor and felt it was a good opportunity for farmers in Town.

Commissioners Litvak and Sinopoli expressed concerns about the text amendment not being adequate for odor control.

Ronald Petronella of Local 371 United Food and Commercial Workers International Union read and submitted a letter for the record in support of Mr. Sotil and the creation of jobs.

Tom Fielding - 42 Quail Run Road, read and submitted a letter for the record in support of improving the tax base.

Ernie Begin - 50 Cross Street, spoke in support of the application and mentioned that this had been an area for tobacco processing and that Mr. Sotil's current operation is in compliance with all regulations.

Michael Lefebvre who owns 9 acres of farmland on South Grand Street spoke in favor citing increased tax revenue and stating that this is a State highway not a typical neighborhood.

Beth D'Agata - 1448 North Grand Street, spoke in support of Mr. Sotil and noted that all activities would be indoors and therefore unlikely to cause problems.

Kody Sotil - 43 Shad Row, spoke in support of the operation of LASA Extract.

Jason Kellogg - 938 East Street South, spoke as a mechanical engineer who is in support of the application.

Susan and Richard Simmons - 1321 Sheldon Street, spoke in support of Mr. Sotil preserving the historic structure by maintaining and expanding a business there and supporting farming.

Mr. Litvak stated that having the cannabis businesses in the industrial zone would attract the businesses to that area and the regulation should be limited to those zones.

Commission members discussed continuing the hearing to the June meeting so that they can consult with their attorney with regard to the proposed text.

Ms. Bromage moved to continue the public hearing on File 2022-3 to the June 20th regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

File # 2022-2:

Discussion by Commission members reviewed the concerns raised but noted that the application met the requirements in the Zoning Regulations. Ms. Bromage moved to approve File 2022-2 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and passed 4-2-0 with Ms. Sinopoli and Ms. Hespelt voting against the motion.

V. NEW BUSINESS

File # 2022-4: Request for a two (2)-lot resubdivision located at 8 Halladay Avenue East. Map 50H, Block 40, Lot 54. Applicant- Joan Anderson

Ms. Bromage moved to accept the application and set the public hearing for June 20, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved unanimously 6-0-0.

File # 2022-5: Request for a two (2)-lot resubdivision located at 1095 South Grand Street. Map 17, Block 21, Lot 4. Applicant- Darlene Proulx

Ms. Bromage moved to accept the application and set the public hearing for June 20, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved unanimously 6-0-0.

File # 2022-6: Request for one (1)-lot resubdivision located on Copperhill Road between 1016 and 1080 Copperhill Road. Map 6, Block 10, Lot 44. Applicant- Victor Nigro, Jr.

Mr. Hawkins noted that this is a (1) lot resubdivision request, not a two lot resubdivision as listed on the agenda.

Ms. Bromage moved to accept the application for the (1) lot resubdivision, and set the public hearing for June 20, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved unanimously 6-0-0.

VI. REPORTS

Chairman - None

Director of Planning & Development

Mr. Hawkins reported that the Affordable Housing Plan was adopted by the Board of Selectman at their May 4, 2022 meeting and the final document is located on the Town website. He also noted that the budget for fiscal 2022-2023 has passed and it included funding for a part time Economic Development Coordinator position.

VII. MINUTES

Mr. Byrnes moved to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2022 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved 5-0-1, with Ms. Golembiewski abstaining as she was not present at the meeting.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE – None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to come before the commission, Ms. Bromage made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved unanimously 6-0-0.

Submitted,

Ginny Bromage, Secretary

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