

SUFFIELD PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
February 26, 2024

Present: Mark Winne, Chairman
 Ginny Bromage, Secretary
 Brian Dunn
 Christine Sinopoli
 Leon Litvak
 Jeff Girard, Alternate
 Jacob Byrnes, Alternate
 Geoffrey Kaplan, Alternate

Absent: Erin Golembiewski, Vice Chairman

Also Present: Bill Hawkins, AICP, Director of Planning & Development
 Dana Steele, P.E., Consultant Town Engineer
 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

Chairman Winne called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM as a hybrid meeting with seven members in attendance and one member participating remotely on the video/teleconference call. In the absence of Ms. Golembiewski, Mr. Winne appointed Mr. Byrnes as a voting member for the meeting.

Ms. Bromage moved to amend the agenda to move File 2022-7B to the top of the agenda ahead of the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

File 2022-7B: Request to waive street lights for Breezy Way Subdivision Flexible Residential Development (FRD) on Elaine Drive. Map 17H, Block 23, Lot 65B.
 Applicant – Breezy Way Farm, LLC

Frank Bauchiero the developer of the Breezy Way Farm subdivision explained that he is asking the Commission to waive the street light due to the relatively short length of the street, the cost to operate the street light every month that the Town will pay, and in his opinion, the street does not need lighting. In addition, Mr. Bauchiero spoke to the one resident currently living on the street and they are not in favor of having the street light. The members discussed the pros and cons of eliminating the one street light from the development. There was discussion that requiring one street light was a compromise from the original plan that had required two lights.

Ms. Bromage moved to approve the request to waive street lights on Elaine Drive. Mr. Litvak seconded the motion which was defeated 3-3-0 with Mr. Winne, Ms. Bromage and Mr. Dunn in favor and Mr. Litvak, Ms. Sinopoli and Mr. Byrnes opposed.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

File 2023-9 – Request for a special permit/site plan approval for a composting facility located at 654 North Grand Street. Map 21, Block 23, Lots 103 & 106
Applicant: Polly-Rob, LLC.

Attorney Charles Alfano, Jr. of Alfano and Flynn, LLC. summarized the presentation from last month's hearing on behalf of the applicant. He introduced Brennan Sheahan of Polly-Rob, LLC. and Mark Zessin from consulting firm Barton and Loguidice. Attorney Alfano noted that since the last meeting, town officials and representatives of Polly-Rob did a physical inspection of the property and as a result the Town engineering consultant, Dana Steele and the applicant's engineers have been meeting to revise the site plan. Concerns and suggestions made by Mr. Steele were addressed and the new plans and documents were submitted on February 23rd. Also submitted were copies of the storm water discharge plan and the solid waste facility permit application for the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), as well as a Supplemental Submittal to the Statement of Use describing DEEP regulatory oversight, airborne contaminate concerns, and groundwater discharge and water supply well considerations. Attorney Alfano also noted that the Conservation Commission had approved the use as of right as an agricultural operation. He also noted that there has already been a small scale composting operation at the property for the past nine months under a permit with the DEEP without any problems. Mr. Alfano pointed out that the Town would be protected by the DEEP's rigorous requirements, regulations, and inspections of these facilities and emphasized the close monitoring that occurs by the agency. He also stated that there are over 100 towns in Connecticut that have composting facilities already, adding that composting is part of the future and is environmentally friendly. He described the support of local farms and the large nursery in Suffield which would use the compost. He also noted this is a third generation farm in Town that wants to make compost out of materials that would normally have to be disposed of in other manners.

Mr. Hawkins reported that he had not written an additional report for this meeting because the changes to the site plan were related to storm water management and engineering. He also spoke to Frank Gagliardo at the DEEP about the project. Mr. Hawkins stated that the composting is a permitted use on this property subject to a special permit.

Dana Steele then summarized his report of February 26, 2024, giving details of the changes to the swales, the added culverts, and noted there will be less water going into the swale. He stated that he was in agreement with the proposed changes to the plan and presented his report which had 11 items that could be listed as conditions of approval.

Mark Zessin stated that the design of the composting facility meets best management practices and will be limited to horse manure, bedding, and leaves.

Brennan Sheahan of Polly-Rob stated that the property is used for growing tobacco, nursery stock, and that the composting would only be on a portion of the property. They do not have plans to expand the composting beyond what is shown on the plans.

There was discussion and questions from commission members about the amount and type of trucks going in and out and the volume and capacity of the operation.

Mr. Winne then opened the hearing to comments from the public.

Attorney John Parks stated that he had been asked by a number of Suffield residents to review the application submitted. He distributed a document to the commission members in which he compared the application to the Suffield Zoning Regulations and reviewed the document on the record.

Attorney Parks submitted a Verified Petition to Intervene from abutter Elizabeth Johnston to the Commission listing her concerns based on the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act of 1971. She is challenging the farm exemption ruling of the Conservation Commission and by filing this petition is entitled to present expert testimony. She has hired Steven Trinkaus, P.E. to offer his analysis of the storm water management proposed for the site and to make recommendations. Mr. Trinkaus gave his report via Zoom to the Commission and hard copies were distributed to the members.

Kathy Hoffman, 1632 Spruce Street had questions about where the material will be coming from, how it is regulated, and was concerned about toxic gases.

Jessica Iacolino, 590 North Grand Street stated that there is a problem from existing trucking, dust, and air quality effecting the pool that they have recently installed.

Karl Christian, 450 North Grand Street stated that the odor could be coming from his farm on the street.

Yolanda Posilonko, North Main Street was concerned about the walking trails in the area and water pollution.

Barbara O'Connor, 789 North Grand Street was concerned about traffic and speeding on the street.

Clinton Gilcris, 888 North Grand Street is also concerned about the impact on traffic.

Jim Quinn, 844 North Grand Street is concerned about manure odor and flies.

Justin Baldini, 512 North Grand Street is concerned that they will limit the facility to just leaves, horse manure, and bedding. Also concerned about fungus, air quality, and fire.

Mr. Winne clarified that the application was just for those specific materials in the application.

Karl Christian noted that the fungus should not be a concern.

Madonna Quinn, 844 North Grand Street noted that the other composting facilities in West Haven and West Hartford are not in residential areas and she is concerned about the toxic impact.

Saleh Fazza 524 North Grand Street has respiratory problems and is concerned about the impact on the air quality for him and his family.

Art Christian, Jr., 1097 River Blvd. spoke in support and felt that DEEP will have adequate regulations and traffic is the jurisdiction of the DOT on this State road.

Adam Seegars, 489 N. Grand Street was concerned about the noise from trucks and equipment.

Elizabeth Johnston, 502 N. Grand Street read her statement into the record and submitted it for the file noting that the location and size is not appropriate for the area. She noted problems with noise, water runoff, pollution, odor, and bio aerosols.

Art Christian, Jr. noted that this property could be developed with houses so this use is preferable.

Jessica Iacolino stated that she would prefer a housing development to this project.

Karl Christian stated that the history of the property was a large nursery on a much bigger scale than this plan.

Jim Quinn stated that it was important that this project is done correctly.

Mark Zessin then addressed some of the concerns raised. He gave examples of similar facilities in Southington and South Windsor and explained the spillways and swales to control runoff.

He also spoke of the monitoring and oversight by the DEEP which would be ongoing.

Brennan Sheahan spoke of the owner Kurt Lindeland's family history on the property with his grandparents running Baker Nursery and that he purchased the property to keep it in the family and is growing some nursery stock, tobacco, and doing some composting. He also gave details of how they currently are operating the compost and their ability to expand to the acreage they are applying for in the future. They also anticipate expanding the nursery part of the operation in the future.

Justin Baldini stated he works near the West Harford facility and there are problems with odor.

Jim Quinn was concerned about fine particles when the piles are turned and air borne manure.

Jerry Bland, 84 Poole Road was concerned about respiratory problems as a result of the horse manure.

Madonna Quinn pointed out differences from this site and the facilities in Southington and South Windsor.

Barbara O'Connor stressed that she felt this was a very bad idea.

Justin Baldini, people in West Hartford probably do not complain about the smell.

Karl Christian spoke of other farms in town and the odor – people making a living.

Mr. Hawkins noted and described the letters and email received which are in the file and will be sent to the Commission members:

Prides Corner in support, Anna-Kristin Daub-Murphy 107 East Street South in support, Chris Olson, 400 N. Grand Street concerned, Barbara O'Connor 789 N. Grand Street opposed.

With no further comments from the public or the Commission, Mr. Winne asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Bromage moved to close the public hearing on **File #2023-9**. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

Mr. Winne called a brief recess at 10 PM and reconvened at 10:04 PM.

Mr. Winne proposed to move the deliberations to the next meeting.

Ms. Sinopoli questioned waiting to deliberate. Mr. Winne wants to clarify the Petition to Intervene and suggested waiting.

Ms. Bromage moved to table the deliberations and possible decision on File # 2023-9 to the March 18th meeting. Mr. Litvak seconded the motion which was approved on a 5-1-0 vote with Ms. Sinopoli opposed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

File 2023-9 – Deliberation and possible decision continued to the regular March meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hawkins described the Capitol Region Council of Governments Regional Planning Commission. Suffield is in need of a representative and an alternate. Anyone interested in serving should contact staff.

VI. REPORTS

Chairman – None

Director of Planning & Development – Mr. Hawkins noted that the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee will be meeting on March 14th to discuss their possible recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Educational requirements have been met by all Commission members except the two new members who will be sent information about completing their 4 hour initial training within the year.

VII. MINUTES

Ms. Bromage moved to approve the January 22, 2024 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved 6-0-0.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE – Mr. Winne advised the members of the annual conference of the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Commissions on March 28th in Plantsville. If anyone is interested in attending contact staff to register.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to come before the commission, Ms. Bromage made a motion to adjourn at 10:27 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved 6-0-0.

Submitted,

Ginny Bromage, Secretary

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