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**SUFFIELD PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
November 18, 2024**

**Present:** Mark Winne, Chairman  
Erin Golembiewski, Vice Chair  
Ginny Bromage, Secretary  
Brian Dunn  
Christine Sinopoli  
Scott Guilmartin  
Jeff Girard, Alternate  
Jacob Byrnes, Alternate  
Geoffrey Kaplan, Alternate

**Also Present:** Bill Hawkins, AICP, Director of Planning & Development  
Dana Steele, P.E., Consultant Town Engineer  
Carl Landolina, Commission Attorney  
Ellie Binns, Administrative Assistant

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

**I. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Winne called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM as a hybrid meeting with eight members in attendance and one member remote.

Ms. Bromage read the legal notice for the public hearing.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**III. PUBLIC HEARING**

**File # 2024-5:** Request for a special permit/site plan approval for a place of worship in the former bank building located at 1380 Mountain Road. Map 15H, Block 28, Lot 75.

Applicant: Lucy McMahan

Ms. McMahan described the property that had previously been a bank which she and her husband purchased as an investment. They have had two electric vehicle charging stations installed and were looking at other uses for the property. She described how the building would be used as a Buddhist place of worship with a library and tourist information. She detailed the proposed hours of operation and stated that she feels that the proposed use will be a benefit to the community and would like to see interaction with the surrounding communities as well.

Mr. Hawkins read from his report dated November 13, 2024 for the application. He noted that the property is in the West Suffield Center Village District zone and the proposed place of worship is a permitted use with special permit approval. He stated that the proposal is to have a maximum number of 10 attendees for regular hours and possibly over 20 for special events. The parking is adequate and there is no additional outdoor lighting requested at this time.

Mr. Winne then opened the hearing up to the public.

Priscilla Sutula, 1360 Mountain Road, stated her concerns with lighting, existing drainage, and privacy as an abutter.

With no further comments, Mr. Winne asked for a motion.

Mr. Guilmartin made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Golembiewski and passed unanimously. 6-0-0.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **File 2024-5:**

Mr. Guilmartin made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions:

- The hours of operation shall be Sundays from 8AM-12PM, Monday–Tuesday from 6AM-2PM, Wednesday from 4-7PM and for special events Thursday- Saturday.
- New permanent signage is subject to approval by the Design Review Board.
- If new outdoor lights are proposed they are subject to staff review and approval prior to installation.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Bromage and passed unanimously. 6-0-0.

**File # 2022-7:** Request from Breezy Way Farm, LLC to release the remaining maintenance bond for the Elaine Drive subdivision. Map 17H, Block 23, Lots 65B-B6.

Applicant: Breezy Way Farm, LLC.

Mr. Guilmartin recused himself for this application and Mr. Winne appointed Mr. Byrnes to act as a voting member for this request.

Mr. Hawkins read his memo recommending that the \$16,658 maintenance bond for the subdivision be released. The only item remaining on the bond was the installation of a street light which has been done. All of the public improvements including drainage and paving were inspected by the Public Works Director and the consultant Town Engineer and found to be satisfactory.

Ms. Golembiewski moved that the Commission approve the release of the \$16,658 maintenance bond for the Breezy Way Farm subdivision. Mr. Dunn seconded the motion which passed unanimously 6-0-0.

Mr. Guilmartin came back into the meeting to resume his status as a full voting member.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

**File # 2024-6:** Request for site plan approval for the 32-unit Phase II of the Eastwoods age restricted condominium development located off Juniper Lane. Map 78H, Block 47, Lot 91. Applicant: MJL Realty Investments, LLC.

Attorney David Sherwood of Moriarty, Paetzold & Sherwood representing the applicant described the history of this development and provided an overview of the site plan application which was originally approved by the Commission as Phase II of the Eastwoods condominium development on Juniper Lane in 2003 as Files 5-03 and 6-03. He explained that 15 units of Phase I and 18 units of Phase II have already been built. The applicant is requesting approval for the remaining 32 units. The application is currently before the Conservation Commission and they are aware that this application needs to be approved by them before the Planning and Zoning Commission can act on it. The purpose of this presentation was to familiarize the Commission with their updated plan.

Engineer for the project, Guy Hekseth, P.E. of F.A. Hekseth and Associates, gave a detailed review of the site plan showing the original and revised plan. He explained the plans have been updated to comply with the current Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) regulations. He has also been working with consultant Town Engineer Dana Steele to make modifications to the plan based on his comments during the Conservation Commission review.

Mr. Guilmartin moved to table File 2024-6 to the December 16<sup>th</sup> regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Golembiewski and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

## **VI. TRAINING SESSION FOR COMMISSION**

Attorney Carl Landolina gave a presentation to the Commission reviewing the history and current aspects of affordable housing and CT General Statutes Section 8-30g. He gave specific examples of court cases and explained the role of the Commission members in ruling on affordable housing applications in a manner that will be upheld if the rulings are appealed. He explained the State of Connecticut's goal for Town's to reach their mandate of ten percent of their housing stock to be considered affordable. He described the details of how the formulas for calculating what is considered affordable work, noting that until a town reaches that goal, the burden of proof as to why an application was denied lies with the towns if a decision is appealed. He cautioned the Commission that in 70% of the cases, the court has ruled in favor of the applicant, thereby overriding the towns' denials. Attorney Landolina's presentation was recorded as part of the meeting and can be accessed on the Town website.

## **VII. REPORTS**

Chairman – None

Director of Planning & Development – Mr. Hawkins distributed a draft of a proposed revision to the sidewalk section of the Subdivision Regulations. The Commission will review it at a subsequent meeting.

**VIII. MINUTES**

Ms. Sinopoli moved to approve the October 21, 2024 regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dunn and approved 6-0-0.

**IX. CORRESPONDENCE – None****X. ADJOURNMENT**

With nothing further to come before the commission, Ms. Bromage made a motion to adjourn at 9:18 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dunn and passed 6-0-0.

Submitted,

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Ginny Bromage, Secretary

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