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By Michele Urch at 2:34 pm, Aug 04, 2026

**SUFFIELD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION**
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**
**Tuesday, July 28, 2026, 7pm**

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| **Present:** | Despina Tartsinis |
| | Susan Hastings |
| | John Schwemmer |
| | Gerard Chase |
| | Victor Roy, Alternate |
| **Absent:** | Mark Blackaby |
| | Tim Casey, Alternate |
| **Also Present:** | Eric Vincent, Zoning Enforcement Officer |
| | Bill Hawkins, Director of Planning and Development |
| | Attorney Carl Landolina |
| | Attorney Derek Donnelly |
| | Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary |

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

In the absence of Chairman Blackaby, Acting Chairman Despina Tartsinis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and conducted the roll call. All members were present except Mr. Blackaby and Mr. Casey.

Ms. Binns read the legal notice into the record and reported that no correspondence had been received regarding the application.

Ms. Tartsinis appointed herself, Ms. Hastings, Mr. Schwemmer, Mr. Chase, and Mr. Roy as voting members for the application. Attorney Donnelly noted that four affirmative votes would be required to approve the appeal.

Re: **2026-ZBA-3–** Appeal of the decision of the Zoning Enforcement Officer related to Sections IV.M, XIII.B.1, XIV, and XIV.D.1. of the Suffield Zoning Regulations regarding property at 1000 East Street North.

The applicant, John Leahy, spoke on behalf of himself and his wife, Darci Leahy, regarding their appeal of three administrative determinations made by Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) Eric Vincent concerning the property at 1000 East Street North, which is adjacent to their property at 1008 East Street North.

A packet of supporting materials had been distributed to the Commission, and Attorney Leahy provided color photographs to supplement the record. He argued that structural posts repurposed as flagpoles, a patio, and a shed should be brought into compliance or removed through zoning enforcement action. In support of his appeal, he presented an A-2 survey prepared by Alford

Associates, dated June 12, 2026, showing the property line and the locations of the patio, shed, and posts. The appeal was based on the ZEO's June 22, 2026 letter responding to the alleged zoning violations.

Commission members questioned Mr. Leahy to clarify the specific issues raised in the appeal and his interpretation of the three regulations at issue.

Attorney Landolina addressed the Commission on behalf of ZEO Vincent. He distributed Mr. Vincent's written summary responding to the three issues raised in the appeal, along with copies of three court decisions addressing the discretion of a zoning enforcement officer. Attorney Landolina argued that, under the applicable case law, the Zoning Board of Appeals lacked jurisdiction because the ZEO's exercise of discretion in enforcing the zoning regulations was not subject to review by the Board.

Attorney Donnelly advised the Commission that the jurisdictional issue should be resolved before considering the merits of Mr. Leahy's appeal.

Ms. Tartsinis opened the public hearing to anyone wishing to speak in favor of or in opposition to the appeal.

Jill Kidik, 45 Barry Place, spoke on behalf of Tiffany Johnson of 1000 East Street North, stating her belief that the matter was a dispute between neighbors rather than a zoning issue.

Cathy Doane, 159 Coho Lane, spoke on behalf of her daughter, Tiffany Johnson. She stated that Ms. Johnson had complied with the ZEO's requests by removing the fence, pool, and playscape to bring the property into compliance with the zoning regulations.

Mr. Leahy responded that he believed the ZEO's June 22 letter constituted a decision that he believed was appealable. He also stated that he had rescinded his permission for the shed to remain in its current location so that any claim of adverse possession would begin to run from the date he withdrew that permission in June 2026.

Ms. Binns confirmed that no correspondence had been received from the public regarding the appeal.

Ms. Tartsinis called for a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Hastings made the motion, seconded by Mr. Chase. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0-0.

Mr. Chase moved to enter deliberations. Ms. Hastings seconded the motion, which carried unanimously, 5-0-0.

Attorney Donnelly explained that the Commission needed to address the jurisdictional issue before considering the merits of the appeal.

The members discussed the court cases submitted by Attorney Landolina and the arguments presented by Mr. Leahy. Attorney Donnelly also referenced the case of *Reardon v. Darien*, which

states, "The failure of a zoning official to bring a zoning enforcement action is not an order, requirement or decision appealable to the board."

Mr. Chase moved to dismiss File #2026-ZBA3 on the grounds that the Zoning Board of Appeals lacked jurisdiction. Ms. Hastings seconded the motion, which carried unanimously, 5-0-0.

The applicant was advised that an appeal of the Board's decision to the court must be filed within 15 days after publication of the decision in the *Hartford Courant*.

Ms. Tartsinis called for a vote on the minutes of the May 26, 2026 meeting. Mr. Chase moved approval, seconded by Mr. Roy. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0-0.

With no further business before the Commission, Mr. Chase moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hastings seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The ZBA meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns