

Woodstock Planning & Zoning Commission

MONTHLY SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, January 18, 2024

7:30 PM

WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL, MEETING ROOM 1 & VIRTUAL via Zoom

The state statute currently allows for in person meetings unless quorum or more requests virtual meetings. Because of virtual attendance, this meeting is being recorded. This procedure has been reviewed and approved by Town Attorney Richard Roberts.

A recording of this meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/XHu1jXQxYx4>

1. Call to Order- Chairman Jeffrey Marcotte called meeting to order at 7:34 pm

a. Roll Call- Noted for record: Quorum

Members Present- Jeffrey Marcotte (Chair), Joe Polulech, Dean Gould, Joseph Adiletta, Aaron Farbo, Dwight Ryniewicz, Syd Blodgett, Timothy Young, Mark Blackmer, David Morse (arrived at 7:35 pm)

Members Present via Zoom - none

Members Absent- Doug Porter, John Day

Others Present- Delia Fey (Town Planner), Cameron James (Assistant Planner), Town Attorney Rich Roberts, First Selectmen Jay Swan, Senator Jeffrey Gordon, Jessica Weaver Boose, Dawn Adiletta, Laura & Ray Curley, Norm Thibault, Kenneth Rapoport, several other members of the public and Recording Secretary Amy Monahan. Public attendance via Zoom: Charles Cady Jr.

b. Designation of Alternates: Dwight Ryniewicz was seated (unseated at 7:35 pm)

c. Pledge of Allegiance: Jeffrey Marcotte led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. Chair's Report

a. Chairman Jeffrey Marcotte thanked the public for their participation in the town business and thanked all staff and commissioners for all the work done.

3. Citizens' Comments

a. First Selectmen Jay Swan presented Jeffrey Gordon with an appreciation plaque for his dedicated service to the Planning & Zoning Commission from 2007 to 2023 on behalf of commission and Town of Woodstock.

b. Jeffrey Gordon was thankful and honored. He stated that he has enjoyed all his time working with the people of Woodstock, CT.

4. Meeting Minutes

a. December 7, 2023

- i. Joe Adiletta made a ***Motion** to approve the December 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. ***Seconded** by Dean Gould. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

b. January 4, 2024

- i. David Morse made a ***Motion** to approve the January 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented. ***Seconded** by Timothy Young. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

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5. Public Hearing

- a. #SP660-10-23 Woodstock Sustainable Farms, Kenneth Rapoport, 211 Pulpit Rock Rd (map 7278 block 32 lot 25, 25-1 & 25-3) – event & wedding facility promoting agritourism
 - i. Jeffrey Marcotte opened the public hearing at 7:45 pm for additional discussion.
 - ii. Norm Thibault of Killingly Engineering Associates stated he has submitted additional materials and reviewed those documents. Ken Rapoport has made significant reductions to the original proposal and is now requesting no more than 10 events with a maximum of 50 people. These events would have acoustic and low-level background music only to accommodate noise concerns.
 - iii. Utilizing Trip Generation manual data, a traffic report has been created and submitted for the commission to review. Norm Thibault reviewed the traffic data with the commission.
 - iv. Norm Thibault noted that he did visit Pulpit Rock Road the day after a 4-inch rainstorm. He shared the road conditions of the road at that visit including measurements of available travel widths at several locations.
 - v. Norm Thibault reviewed for the record that the application does comply with zoning regulations in the Town of Woodstock. He noted several Plan of Conservation & Development sections that are being adequately met with this application.
 - vi. Norm Thibault noted that all required approvals from NDDH have been obtained.
 - vii. All applicable standards will be adequately met with this application.
 - viii. Ken Rapoport thanked everyone for their efforts with this application. He has listened to concerns and is excited to move forward with his educational and agricultural efforts.
 - ix. Joe Adiletta appreciates the changes made from the original proposal to the current proposal. He stated that agritourism is an important way to generate revenue for farming in Woodstock but location for agritourism ventures needs to be considered.
 - x. Aaron Farbo asked if the applicant would consider a set end time for events at this location. Ken Rapoport prefers to not limit end time of events as stargazing is a proposed activity for at least one event and that requires later hours. Ken also would like to leave the option of the occasional wedding as an event as long as it meets the proposed limitations.
 - xi. Syd Blodgett feels that allowing the proposed limited weddings at this facility would be good for the Town of Woodstock to see how weddings impact neighbors and allow for future event planning in town. Syd also noted, for comparison, that the length of the unpaved road is equivalent to a high school track lap with posted travel speed similar to a student running at maximum speed. Lastly, Syd noted that he feels Mr. Rapoport has been consistent in comments made with previous subdivision application on Pulpit Rock Rd.
 - xii. Timothy Young noted that the traffic report presented did not include the impact of current high school students using Pulpit Rock Rd as a cut through.
 - xiii. Joe Adiletta noted that the applicant suggested traffic flow is not the traffic flow suggested by navigation programs.
 - xiv. Donna Nielson distributed paperwork from Sustainable Farms showing that weddings could be booked for this location. She is concerned with the increase of traffic on Meehan Road.
 - xv. Joan Perrin noted that residents are in Woodstock for the serenity and that a business on Pulpit Rock Road would be an invasion to its neighbors.
 - xvi. Peter Cristo noted several activities that have already taken place on the Sustainable Farm Property. He wants to know if the current activities are acceptable to take place. Jeffrey Marcotte noted that the commission will look into this topic.
 - xvii. Norma Jean Loftis feels the traffic study may not be applicable due to the specifics of Pulpit Rock Road. She also feels that weddings are not agritourism. Jeffrey Marcotte noted that the reason this applicant is looking to get a special permit is to hold weddings as they are not agritourism.

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- xviii. Goth Evans wanted to know if the Conservation Commission has commented on this application. He feels that any business or public events are not in alignment with the Conservation efforts. He is concerned with the lack of enforcement plans for any restrictions placed on this application and the safety and preservation of Pulpit Rock Road.
- xix. Delia Fey clarified that the Conservation Commission was notified of this application on October 24, 2023. She also reviewed several previous questions surrounding controlling event sizes and serving alcohol. Delia Fey noted that the Town of Woodstock and State of Connecticut does not have regulations around agritourism.
- xx. Delia Fey noted that the professional qualifications of new member Aaron Farbo should be documented and his resume is needed to be kept on file by the commission.
- xxi. Joe Adiletta made a ***Motion** to close public hearing #SP660-10-23 Woodstock Sustainable Farms, Kenneth Rapoport, 211 Pulpit Rock Rd (map 7278 block 32 lot 25, 25-1 & 25-3) – event & wedding facility promoting agritourism with the expectation that Aaron Farbo submit his resume to the commission to validate his professional qualifications. ***Seconded** by Timothy Young. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

6. Old Business

- a. #SP660-10-23 Woodstock Sustainable Farms, Kenneth Rapoport, 211 Pulpit Rock Rd (map 7278 block 32 lot 25, 25-1 & 25-3) – event & wedding facility promoting agritourism
 - i. Timothy Young asked if there is an updated final application with all final proposals together. It was noted that items presented tonight with the addition of 11 pm music end time.
 - ii. Jeffery Marcotte read the special permit criteria and the commission confirmed that this application meets all special permit criteria.
 - iii. Joe Adiletta made a ***Motion** to approve application #SP660-10-23 Woodstock Sustainable Farms, Kenneth Rapoport, 211 Pulpit Rock Rd (map 7278 block 32 lot 25, 25-1 & 25-3) – event & wedding facility promoting agritourism with the following conditions. ***Seconded** by David Morse. ***The motion passed** with 1 abstention (Blackmer).
 - 1. Application approval is for a 1 year trial permit period starting with date of approval of the application
 - 2. Regenerative Farm Tours and Visits will take place between April and November and be limited to no more than 24 of these events. Regenerative Farm Tours and Visits will have no more than 48 guests.
 - 3. Non-Farm Events will take place between April and November and be limited to no more than 10 of these events. Non-Farm events will have no more than 50 guests.
 - 4. There will be no music playing later than 11 pm on Friday and Saturday or later than 9 pm Sunday through Thursday.
 - 5. After the 1 year trial period, a review will be presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission by the applicant. This review will include all events, dates of events, number of people attending & number of vehicles present per event.
 - 6. All food and drinks will be provided by professional caterers and TIPS certified servers. All providers will be properly licensed and insured.
 - 7. All tents will be erected by a properly licensed company and obtain all required permits and inspections.
 - 8. There will be a constable located on the intersection of CT Route 171 and Pulpit Rock Road at Taylor's Corner for 2 hour duration at start of each event to ensure no turn off 171 onto Pulpit Rock Road is made.
 - 9. Only acoustic and low level background music is allowed at events.
 - 10. It was noted for the record that all the conditions are integral to the overall approval.

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11. The preferred traffic route will be provided to all attendees of any event by the applicant.

7. New Business

- a. None

8. Review of Home Occupation Permit Applications

- a. Karl & Hayley Kuhn, 23 Holmeslea Ct (map 5779 block 52 lot 39A) – Home Improvement / Renovation business
- b. John Garlick, 182 Rt 171 (map 5779 block 62 lot 11) – Home occupation for canine massage
- c. There are concerns with the wording of current application form that should be addressed to better obtain information from the applicant.

9. Non-Residential Zoning Permits

- a. None

10. Plan of Conservation & Development Update

- a. Delia Fey created a memo with information about NECCOG costs for updating the POCD and distributed the information to all commissioners for review. The contract for this project would have to be created by the First Selectmen and NECCOG.

11. ZEO Reports

- a. Office- No discussion
- b. Permits- No discussion
- c. Enforcement- No discussion

12. Budget Review & Bills

- a. Commissioners have received budget information for review that requests \$6000 to be added to the POCD account and for an increase of 10% across the board to accommodate for rising prices.

13. Citizens' Comments

- a. None

14. Correspondence

- a. Joe Adiletta would like the commission to receive the Planning & Zoning Quarterly Update Newsletter
- b. All commissioners should have sent current address to Tracy Giarrusso for her records.
- c. The next Planning & Zoning Meeting will be on February , 2024 at 7:30 pm

15. Adjournment

- a. Tim Young made a ***Motion** to adjourn. ***Seconded** by David Morse. ***The motion passed unanimously.** The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary. DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission. Please refer to next month's meeting for approval/amendments.