



TOWN OF THOMPSON

Planning & Zoning Commission

815 Riverside Drive
P.O. Box 899
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255
PHONE: 860-923-9475
E-MAIL: planner@thompsonct.org
www.thompsonct.org

PZC Meeting Minutes

Monday February 26, 2024, at 7:00 PM

Merrill Seney Community Room, Thompson Town Hall, 815 Riverside Drive, North

Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Sa9zOmw1wVcoUI4n-wGj7oG-iKnKfxZje72q_5KcKDED4NYzFY3BoTERzkTewVAm.eE-3Rm7ri59RDX_J?startTime=1708992014000

Passcode: HLn%akq8

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7wO64RHGrS>

1. Call to Order 7:00 pm

Chairman Statement – Under Citizens comment – state your name and address, 3 minutes speaking time unless otherwise directed by chair, please address comments to Chair in a civil and respectful manner.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll call and seating of alternates.

Attending: R Blackmer, J Lenky (acting as Chair), R Williams, J Salce (exits meeting at 8:32), M Krogul, A Hill, R Cournoyer, R Robbin, B Santos, K Orr entered meeting at 7:06 seated at 8:32 for J Salce, J St Onge seated for J Parodi Brown

Absent: J Parodi Brown

4. Public Hearing – None

5. Discuss public hearing – None

6. Citizens comments – None

7. Approve minutes.

- B Santos moves to approve 2nd by R Blackmer all in favor

8. Applications received.

PZC 24-02 Applicant John and Cheryl Lowinski property owner of 90 Thompson Rd Map 87, Block 38, Lot 16 Zone Rural Residential Agricultural District (RRAD) request a 3-lot subdivision, in compliance with 2023 Amended Sub-division Regulations **Article III and Article IV**,

- N Thibeault of Killingly Engineering explains the project and the property, stating they would like to make a new 5 acre lot and a new 1 acre lot and explains the existing driveway will be utilize to access the 2 new lots. The 5 acre lot is for their son and there are no plans for the one acre lot. He also states they have approvals from inland wetlands and that there is no direct impact on wetlands even though they are within the regulated area. He explains that in the regulated area there is going to be an improvement on the existing driveway and that it is wide enough for 2 cars to pass with a 60 foot turn around, so emergency vehicles can access everything without a problem. He also explains the new drainage pipe under the driveway. He also states they filled out the declaration of easement for the shared driveway and it was reviewed by the Town's attorney, who recommended it to note the easement on the plan and to record it in the deed.
- M Krogul confirms the address
- A Hill asked about the roof drainage.
- N Thibeault explains it's for the 5-acre lot
- J Lenky confirms surface water will not be in pipe
- A Hill asks about number 18 on the plan: what material will be used in the impervious area?
- N Thibeault explains that it's the gravel driveway leading to the 5-acre lot
- A Hill asks where the snow will go.
- N Thibeault explains the there is room for the snow to go off to each side and that Mr. Lowinski has a plowing business.
- J Lenky asks how wide the driveway will be and the grade on it
- N Thibeault states it will be 12 feet wide with no more than 2% grade.
- B Santos ask if we need approval from the state on the driveway access
- N Thibeault explains its already existing so it's not necessary
- B Santos asks about if another lot is sold if its clear in the deed and asked about where the power is coming from for the properties.
- N Thibeault explains that it is recorded in the deed that each property owner is responsible for 1/3 of the driveway and he also explains nearby power poles and where the power will most likely go.
- R Williams also comments that he's been there and that there is plenty of room on the driveway
- R Blackmer asks if the power is underground for the property that's existing.
- N Thibeault states it is underground
- B Santos moves to approve 2nd by A Hill all in favor

PZC 24-03 Applicant Arthur Brunner, property Owner. Dudley Sand and Gravel, Adelina and William Healy of 0 Rachel Drive, Map 83, Block 57 Lot 5, Zone Common Residential District (CRD), .56 Acres, request a Special Permit for Multi-Family Dwellings of three of More Units in compliance **with Zoning Regulations Article 8, Section 275-8.2 #7**.

Accept for a Public hearing

- ZEO comments that we're just accepting for a public hearing.

- J Lenky asks if he can comment
- ZEO says no.
- Motion made by B Santos to accept for hearing 2nd by M Krogul.
A. Hill – yes, M. Krogul – yes, R. Robin – yes, J. Salce – yes, R. Williams – yes, B. Santos – yes, R. Blackmer – yes, R. Cournoyer – yes, J. St Onge – yes, J. Lenky – no. Motion passes 9-1.

PZC 24-04 Applicant Johnathan Kantorski owner of Lake Shore Properties and property of 11 Market Lane, Map 169, Block 93, Lot 4, Zone DMRD request to increase existing Multi-Housing from 8 apartments to 12 apartments (increase of 4 Apartments) Zoning Permit with Site Plan Review by Commission, according to the Town of Thompson Zoning Regulations Article 12, 274-12.2 #21 and Article 4. 275-4.4 A. and B.

- J West representing Lakeshore Properties explains the project and that when they first bought the property, they gutted most of it and they want to make good legal apartments on the 3rd floor and that they have been working with the Fire Marshal.
- R Williams comments he believes this is the same gentleman that came in for the house next door. It is a different applicant with a similar project.
- It is confirmed that there are a few projects next to each other that are alike.
- R Williams moves to approve 2nd by J Salce all in favor

PZC 23-05 Dorothy Whitehead owner of 30 Main Street, Map 169 Lot 94 Block 1 Zone DMRD request a third apartment on top floor of 2 family dwelling (increase of 1 apartment) Zoning Permit with site plan review by Commission according to the Town of Thompson Zoning Regulations Article 12, 274-12.2 #21 and Article 4. 275-4.4 A. and B.

- The applicant's son (man never states his name) explains that they are there because they want a sign off on their deck and they were told that they need to get the 3rd floor signed off on first and is confused why.
- J Salce asks why
- D Whitehead suggests that maybe there is a misunderstanding
- ZEO explains that the deck is on the 3rd floor and that an apartment is currently not allowed on the third floor so she will not sign off until they get an approval for a 3rd floor apartment.
- R Williams ask if the deck will serve as a 2nd means of egress
- The applicant's son states that it will be.
- B Santos moves to approve 2nd by J Salce all in favor

PZC 23-06 Toudis, LLC, Dimitros Moutoudis, owner of 693 Riverside Drive Map 63 Block 58. Lot 15 A Zone DMRD request use for a restaurant, Zoning Permit with site plan review by Commission according to the Town of Thompson Zoning Regulations Article 12, 274-12.2 #13 and Article 4. 275-4.4 A. and B.

- D Moutoudis states he owns an empty building next to the Dunkin Donuts and he wants to put a restaurant there mainly for take out
- ZEO comments she got the parking plan today and that she is very satisfied with it.
- M Krogul asks if it's for an approval and asks if he can make an entrance on a different road for traffic reasons

- D Moutoudis, states he owns the Dunkin as well and that they only get 1 delivery truck a week, but he suggests that making the curb cut different might help.
- ZEO confirms that what they want is to be able to fit two and a half cars into the entrance and the size to be 22 to 24 feet wide.
- R Robin comments on how to make the entrance easier to access
- M Krogul asks about a telephone pole and is confirmed there is not one there and asks if they can add an entrance on Mason Terrace
- D Moutoudis, comments there will be more problems
- Planner also comments there are kids that play in that street.
- J Salce moves to approve with the condition of making the entrance and parking correct, as articulated by Commissioner Robin 2nd by R Williams all in favor.

9. Reports of officers and staff

a. Budget

- R Cournoyer comments that there is a slight increase
- ZEO asks what he means that it was a slight increase and asks if he was at the same budget zoom meeting.
- R Cournoyer explains that it was a significant increase year over year but a slight increase from the number he originally proposed
- ZEO comments she sat in on the budget meeting and what they want from her is a letter explaining her responsibilities, to be submitted to the Finance Director.
- J Lenky states that he would like to see so the Commission knows what's going on as well
- Planner comments that she and the ZEO discussed the letter together and that the ZEO should break out what she is actually doing for zoning enforcement vs clerical/admin tasks. The purpose of the letter is to support the addition of the shared Land Use admin position.
- J Lenky comments that they brought that up at the last meeting so that she can do her job and get more done
- Planner comments that hiring the proposed new Admin will be more important sooner than later with new Wetlands & Conservation Agent coming on.

b. Planner

1. 2024 CLCC Conference - 23 March @ Wesleyan First draft of suggested.

- Planner states that R Cournoyer did not get a budget report yet so she cannot say exactly how much money is in the meeting line and will find out tomorrow and is asking tonight who is going so she can verify the money is there to cover them and if they are still interested even if it's at their own cost.
- A. Hill, J. Lenky, R. Robbin, R. Williams, R. Cournoyer indicate they would like to attend. B. Santos has already registered and paid for his attendance.
- J Lenky asks if there is a recommended workshop to attend
- Planner says there are dozens of workshops from which to choose at registration.

2. Revision options for commercial signs in the BDD/DMRD/TCDD

3. Lights Out Connecticut Template from Connecticut Planning Professionals

- Planner states that everyone should have received an email with the sample ordinance template for towns who are interested in either town wide ordinances or zoning regulations related to the preservation of dark skies. The topic was

partially addressed in the new Subdivision Regulations on street lighting, and it is consistent with the values some residents and Commissioners have expressed.

- Planner continues to talk about sample topics for the annual update. As discussed at the last meeting, she has compiled a first draft of regulations for “Joint Tenant Signs,” as well as a first draft of dark skies regulations, based on the sample ordinance.
- J Lenky comments that a subcommittee would be good for these.
- Planner agrees and thinks they can do it in one or two subcommittee meetings.
- R Blackmer comments that he doesn’t think we need to get too deep into the Dark Skies regulations in the town of Thompson
- Planner comments that she tried to reduce it to what was relevant to Zoning, and limit its scope to make it palatable to the community.
- R Williams comments that the state has regulations already.
- Planner comments that she was not under that impression because of the template.

c. ZEO Memo

1.Regulation Clarification of ZEO approval for non-conforming use in Districts

- ZEO comments

Since the Amended Regulations went into effect in September 2020, she has permitted new businesses to open in nonconforming structures with previous business use, provided the new business is the same or less intensive than previous use. She has approved this use without any Zoning Permit or Zoning Permit with Site Plan Review By Commission. Two examples are:

1. 1097 Thompson Rd previously was Monte Bianco Restaurant. When that restaurant closed she allowed a new restaurant to go in following non-conforming (1) and (4) of the amended regulations. She did not require a new application to be filed and approved.
2. 459 Thompson Rd was previously a propane tank business with a garage and office building. Property was purchased by 459 Thompson Rd LLC to reopen the propane business. Property owner followed the procedure of no more than 25% increase in propane tanks to run a propane business. She was approached by a business owner for approval to open a thrift store in the office building. She gave approval following non-conforming (1) and (4) of the amended regulations. She did not require a new application to be filed and approved.
3. On July 10, 2023 she was asked if a Massachusetts recycling business could rent th garage for storage of his recycling equipment. She approved the use after talking to the property owner, who stated he would not be using the garage for any of his propane equipment. Again, she allowed this use following non-conforming (1) and (4) of the amended regulations. She did not require a new application be filed and approved.

ZEO asks for clarification regarding approval of same business uses in business districts – In reviewing the amended regulations, the following districts require Zoning Permits, Simple or Zoning Permits with Site Plan Review by Commission, or in some cases Special Permits for new business uses in existing structures: DMRD, BDD,TCDD and TVCD. Two examples of applications requiring Zoning permits with Site Plan Review by Commission:

1. 142 Old Turnpike Rd, previously a restaurant, Zone change from Commercial to TCDD in 2020. On 11-17-21 an application was filed by Sara Alers to open a restaurant (amended Zoning Regs 275-11.2#13 requires Zoning Permit with Site Plan Review for both new and existing structures). The application was approved by the Commission (PZC #21-43, 11-22-21).

2. 27 Main Street was previously a restaurant. Zone changed from R-20 to DMRD. On 11-8-21 an application was filed by Jill St Cyr to open a restaurant. Amended Zoning Regs 275-12.2 #13 requires a Zoning Permit with Site Plan Review by Commission for new and existing structures. The application was approved by the Commission (PZC #21-40, 11-22-21)
 - R Blackmer asks what approval are they to apply for.
 - ZEO says for non-conforming uses, there are places that if the use previously existed, for example the 2 restaurants cited above in the DMRD and TCDD, a Zoning Permit with Site Plan Review by Commission is required.
 - Planner comments that ZEO is trying to do her job to the letter of the regulations, and suggests that she should be given broad latitude on if it was the same as prior use or less intensive. She believes that would be consistent with the intentions of the Commission: less intense less red tape for private owners. There may be instances where Cindy feels an application may need to be presented to the Commission. The Planner's question is whether that is something to articulate in the regulations for future ZEOs.
 - J Salce comments and believes that if its simple she should be able to do it
 - B Santos comments saying that if it was a candy store and now, they want a restaurant that 2 completely different uses and needs to come before them
 - ZEO comments she has no problems in the business districts, it's the residential districts that concern her.
 - R Blackmer comments that he believes she has been doing a great job.
 - Planner asks if they would like her to work on articulating something saying that the commission gives the ZEO permission to use her judgement on their behalf, more explicitly.
 - R Robbin comments that they should look up how long the business was there?
 - J Salce comments that she feels that ZEO can use judgment
 - A Hill comments keep it simple.
 - B Santos comments that to protect the town legally they should write up something that they're giving her the authority
 - Planner comments that she will have something for the next meeting.
2. Discussion of required site plan for 347 Riverside Drive future application
 - ZEO explains this gentleman wants to open a car lot with service and that it's a 4-month process, ZEO asks if he needs to get an engineer or if he can sketch it out.
 - R Blackmer comments that a sketch will be fine
 - J Lenky asks about riverside sand and gravel and that they disappeared.
 - ZEO says that she got a letter from the attorney representing the new owners and that 1,500 was taken out of the bond for taxes owed in MA. ZEO reads the letter.
 - B Santos asks for town attorney to send a letter asking for the money back

10. Correspondence

1. CT Federation of Planning Quarterly Newsletter
2. Town Of Douglas Planning Board Public Hearing
3. CT Federation Of Planning & Zoning Agencies
4. Town Of Douglas Planning Board Public Hearing

- J Lenky comments that CT Federation of Planning Quarterly Newsletter is a good time
- R Blacker asks if J Rice got his 25-year recognition.
- J Lenky states yes and says R Blackmer is due also

11. Signing of mylars (requires a roll call vote)-none

12. Old business

1. Information for Continuing Training from CLEAR Land Use Commissioner Training
2. NVCOG, Land use coffee hour – short term rentals
 - Planner comments it's just a webinar.

13. New Business

1. 8-24 for a proposed expansion on Town Property of the TEEG Building
 - A St Onge comments the Selectman had a recent meeting and agreed on expansion of TEEG and TEEG staff are present to explain more.
 - A Miller – Executive Director introduces herself as well as A Rich - Human Resources and Scott Moorehead registered engineer.
 - A Miller comments that they have expanded their services and thought of expanding the building, but determined that it would be better to build a new building across the street. She is asking what are the next steps and what do they need to do
 - Planner comments that they would just be approving the general use of town property.
 - J Lenky asks the size of the building
 - A Miller states 5,200 sq/ft
 - Planner asks the First Selectman if they are looking for the approval tonight.
 - A St Onge states that they are looking for that mainly because they can start looking for grants.
 - B Santos moves to approve with conditions, and he withdraws his motion
 - R Blackmer move to approves conceptually under 8-24 so that TEEG can look for grants 2nd M Krogul all in favor

14. Review of ZBA Minutes-none

15. Citizens Comments – none

16. Commissioners Comments

- J Lenky asks about the seating that they used in last months meeting
- K Orr asks about the brewery that's going in. It was confirmed that the application was approved when she was absent.
- M Krogul asks what's going on at the package store on riverside drive and that it's an office building going up.
- ZEO states that the carwash is on hold, and they had the approval for everything else previously and they are complying.

17. Next meeting March 25, 2024

18. Adjournment

- K Orr moves to adjourn all in favor meeting adjourned at 8:59

Respectfully Submitted, Kevin Calabro, Recording Secretary

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Planning and Zoning Committee. Please refer to the next meeting's minutes for approval of, and/or amendments to, these minutes.