

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

The Lyme Planning & Zoning Commission held a meeting on June 12, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at the Lyme Town Hall, 480 Hamburg Road, Lyme, CT, 06371.

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Tiffany Chairman, Hunter Ward, Phyllis Ross, Kelvin Tyler, Ann Rich, Bernie Gigliotti ZEO, and Patsy Turner Secretary.

**Regular Meeting**

**New Member to Commission**

Dave Tiffany, Chairman welcomed Ann Rich to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

**Continue discussion of regulation changes in support of farming and the setting of a timeline for moving this effort forward.**

Present at the meeting were a few of the members of the subcommittee; Baylee Drown, Janice Ehle-Meyer, and Bill Farrell.

P. Ross: The subcommittee did meet; the draft of regulations was reviewed, and the path to follow has been understood.

Ehle-Meyer: There many unanswered questions how to move forward and one issue is with commercial activities in a residential zone; is it parking, size of a farm stand, or setbacks????

Tiffany: The Lyme Plan of Conservation and Development shows that the people of Lyme are in favor of farms.

Tyler: Farms need to have the ability to support their existence.

Farrell: The Town of Lyme has a history of farming, traditional farming.

Tyler: Residents may be scared of the ideas of a storefront on a farm; concerns are with traffic, hours of operation.....people are concerned.

Drown: Those types of farms are considered entertainment farms which have busloads of people visiting; examples are Scott's Yankee Farm or Staehly's Farm Stand, which draw a lot of traffic. The types of farms we are doing is direct marketing with a small audience, there is growth.

Tiffany: In the past there were little farm stands and farm stores around town.

P. Ross: The retail should be in proportion to the amount of land and how the neighbors are buffered from the activities. The goal is to promote farming without scaring the people of Lyme.

Drown: Lots of vegetables can be produced on a small parcel and could be sold from the farm with adequate parking, without disturbing the neighbors, and while feeding my neighbors. That right should be protected.

P. Ross: The definition of a farm is not determined by the acreage. The commercial traffic needs to be in proportion to the space and screening; traffic, parking, and inconvenience to neighbors.

Drown: Residential and rural/commercial overlap. Neighbors would be consulted before changes are made to avoid major impacts to the neighborhood. Connecticut is a right-to-farm state.

Farrell: Farms may be operating outside the regulations that the commission will create. Supporting farming is written in the Plan of Conservation & Development. Special Permit applications cost the farmers for activities; that can get very expensive for farmers.

Gigliotti: If you agree with the notion that a farm is an evolving enterprise; a farmer may not know what needs to be done to keep a farm viable tomorrow. If the Vineyard wants to make changes, they would have to come back before this commission.

Farrell: Sometimes the wordings in regulations strip the farmers of their ability to grow and evolve.

A discussion continued about different types of businesses in town that need to go through the special permit process also. Farmers don't have the same resources.

Drown: Dairy farming is out-of-date without direct marketing. Direct farm marketing is essential for successful, vibrant farming.

Tiffany: People in town may still envision farming as how it is shown in pictures of the past in frames around this meeting room.

Drown: Local people value the products produced on our local farms.

Tiffany: The farms will self-limit due to demand.

The discussion continued about farmers markets and other local farms. Changes are being made to some of the old local farms to stay viable.

Gigliotti: Special permits could help regulate farm stands and farm stores.

Farrell: Farm stands/farm stores, livestock (head per acre); farms need support, prime soils are minimal in Lyme.

P. Ross: Positive spin can help with these issues; simple wording may be better.

(Example: parking sufficient and off street)

Gigliotti: There have been no complaints about the farm stands currently in town.

Farrell: Having no regulations in place is a limiting factor for farming.

The discussion continued about the amount of produce brought into the farms and the percentages are regulated by the CT Grown, Label/Logo. Farm stand/farm stores need to be the focus for the subcommittee. Generic wording in our guidelines would be helpful to the farmers. Direct marketing is farmers selling directly to their customers without a middleman. Business models change in farming continually.

Farrell: Farmers need the ability to add value to their agricultural commodity.

Examples of farm stands in other towns were discussed and how they make a living and how the regulations of their town affect the farm stand. Weddings are economical viable for farms. People want the beauty of a farm without being disturbed.

Tiffany: The subcommittee will meet again and the commission will have more discussions next month.

Gigliotti: Where does the commission stand on farm workers and housing on premise?  
Drown: It is a farming tradition that you house the farm workers. There are State Regulations on dormitories for farm workers.

P. Ross: The subcommittee has discussed housing on the farms. The town has changed over time and maybe they will be open to new things for farm operations.

Gigliotti: If a draft is ready for next month that addresses farm stand/farm stores under special permit and general definition of a farm in Lyme.

#### **Old Business**

#### **Joseph Fouquette, 509-1 Hamburg Road, Tax Map 38 Lot 6; cease and desist order for clearing and filling of wetlands within the Eightmile Watershed Overlay District.**

Gigliotti: There was a combined site walk at the Fouquette home with the Inland/Wetlands Commission members and the Planning & Zoning Commission members. Mr. Fouquette was informed at the Wetlands meeting that the material moved into the wetlands area needs to be removed and a professional will be required to create a plan to remove the material, what type of restoration can be done, and how to get a baseline of the soils which were covered over by the moved material. Rich Snarski was contacted and his number was given to Mr. Fouquette. There should be a report or a plan before the Wetlands Commission at this month's meeting. The area is not large. The cease and desist is still in place. If the property owner does not do what is required the information usually goes to court. This commission can wait to see how everything turns out with the I&W Commission.

#### **New Business**

#### **Discuss the HVAC on the top of the new Reynolds building.**

Gigliotti: Town regulations should not be used to settle personal issues with neighbors. A complaint came in about the HVAC units on top of the new Reynolds' building; they are over 35 feet in height. Gateway was contacted for their view on this issue; it is no different than a cupola or a chimney.

#### **APPROVAL OF OUTSTANDING MINUTES**

A motion was entertained to approve the minutes of the May 2017 Meeting. Tyler moved the motion and P. Ross seconded the approval; the minutes were passed.

#### **Adjournment**

The Planning and Zoning Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted,

Patsy Turner, Secretary