

Regular Meeting

The 1689th meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held at the Stonington Board of Education District Office at 40 Field Street, Pawcatuck on Tuesday February 15, 2022. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Fred Deichmann at 7:00pm. Present for the meeting were Fred Deichmann, Charles Sheehan, Ryan Deasy, Lynn Conway; Alternates Gary Belke, Marjorie Selinger, and Town Planner Keith A. Brynes. Chairman Ben Philbrick and Alternate Andy Meek were absent.

Seated for the meeting were Fred Deichmann, Ryan Deasy, Charles Sheehan, Lynn Conway, and Marjorie Selinger.

Minutes:

Mr. Deasy moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 meeting, seconded by Mr. Sheehan, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Administrative Review:

22-029ZON Ocean Community YMCA (C Frost) – Zoning Permit application for the removal of an existing pavilion and replacement with an outdoor classroom amphitheater. Property located at 1 Harry Austin Dr., Mystic. Assessor's Map 160, Block 6 Lot 14. Zone RC-120.

Landscape Architect Chad Frost presented the site plan. The existing pavilion near the beach has been unusable due to structural deterioration. The applicant is proposing to replace this with an outdoor amphitheater built into the hill as a low impact use. They will use stone and concrete pavers with terraced seating. A portion extends into the RC-120 Zone's Non-Infringement Area, but they feel the use is consistent with allowed activities in the area. The space will be open to the public as part of Williams Beach and is not restricted to members. The feature will come closer to the water than the pavilion due to the slope of the hill. The project is exempt from Coastal Area Management review as a minor feature that does not alter coastal resources. Mr. Brynes reviewed the Town Engineer's comments and a proposed stipulation for his final review. Mr. Sheehan asked about the flood zone and whether it is net fill or excavation. Mr. Frost stated that cuts and fills for this project are neutral and this is located outside of the FEMA Coastal Hazard Area. Mr. Sheehan stated he feels there may be additional sedimentation and erosion controls needed. The amphitheater can accommodate 150 children. The YMCA day camp has 200 children enrolled. Mr. Frost explained that they consider this feature to be part of a public greenway which is allowed in the Non-Infringement Area. Ms. Conway disagreed with this characterization.

Mr. Deasy moved to approve the application with stipulations, seconded by Mr. Sheehan, the vote was taken 4-1, motion approved.

Roll Call: Deichmann – approve, Sheehan – approve, Deasy – approve, Selinger – approve, Conway – deny.

Stipulations:

1. Final plans shall be reviewed to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.
2. Final plans shall state that cuts and fills for this project are balanced.
3. Erosion and sedimentation control measures shall be fully engineered.

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Old Business:

PZ2134SPA Susanne Toczko & Isobel Schultz (S. Cherenzia) – Site Plan application for the construction of an 8,000 square foot mushroom barn, fifteen 8' x 40' grow containers, and associated septic system, wells, utilities, access drives, hardscaping, and landscaping. Property located on Taugwonk Rd., Stonington. Assessor's Map 85, Block 2 Lot 1. Zone LI-130.

Project engineer Sergio Cherenzia presented the application. The property is located in the LI-130, Light Industrial Zone. The applicant successfully applied for a Zoning Regulation Amendment last year to allow agricultural uses in this zone. The neighboring properties in this zone are primarily residential, with many used previously for farming. This site would be used for indoor farming and production of mushrooms, with no retail sales on site. Mr. Cherenzia reviewed the site plan which sets the facility in the center of the property. There are wetlands on site and approvals have been granted by the Inland Wetlands Commission, Architectural Design Review Board and Police Commission. There are using an existing curb cut on Taugwonk Road for the access road which will run through the already disturbed area on site. There is an abandoned utility line that runs through the property which Eversource maintains rights to. The building is set outside of this area, in case it should be used again in the future. They are limiting their clearing as much as possible. The plan allows for more space than currently needed by the owner, but allows for expansion as needed. The barn will be a metal pre-fabricated building and the grow houses, located behind the barn, are refurbished shipping containers which will all be painted the same color. Mr. Cherenzia reviewed the stormwater management plan which includes a new stormwater basin. There will be a concrete loading zone, but the rest of the drive and parking will be crushed stone. They have received septic approval from Ledge Light Health District.

Chris Pacheco, owner of Seacoast Mushrooms, spoke about his business and operations. They use the space to accelerate the natural growing process from two years to as little as two months by using nutrient enhanced sawdust and climate-controlled environments. No manure is used and spent waste is stockpiled and composted for sale as garden soil to local landscapers. They have outgrown their current space and Mr. Pacheco walked through their space needs for operations. They currently produce 1,500 to 2,000 pounds of mushrooms a week. The business only operates during the daytime. Lighting will be full cut off and kept to a minimum.

Mr. Cherenzia reviewed how the project meets bulk and other zoning requirements. They are able to address the Town Engineer's comments. There is no sign proposed on the road at this point in time. They will likely install their existing wall sign on the new building. The Natural Diversity Database Report by CTDEEP recommended construction practices to protect a species of turtle that may live nearby. Construction is mainly in the existing farm fields away from their habitat. These recommendations will be addressed during construction.

Mr. Sheehan moved to approve the application with recommended stipulations, seconded by Mr. Deasy. Mr. Brynes summarized a stipulation requested by the Architectural Design Review Board for them to review final building colors. Mr. Sheehan amended his motion to add the stipulation, seconded by Mr. Deasy. The vote was taken, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Stipulations:

1. Prior to the issuance of a Zoning Permit, final plans shall be signed by the Commission and recorded.
2. Final plans shall be reviewed to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.

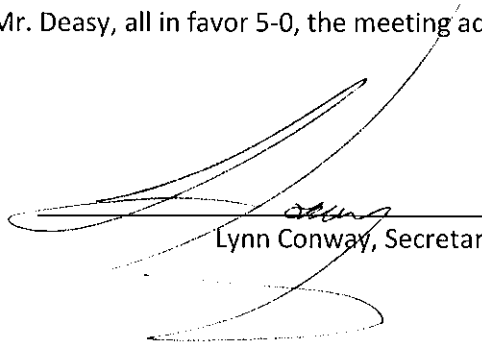
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3. The applicant's design engineer of record shall provide inspection services and certify to the construction of the stormwater management system to ensure compliance with design specifications. Certifications shall include, but not be limited to: system bottom inspection, material specifications and testing and system installation prior to back fill. In addition to inspection services, as-built conditions of the drainage system shall also be provided to the Department of Planning prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance.
4. The applicant shall post an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Bond prior to the issuance of a Zoning Permit. The bond shall be either in the form of a certified check or irrevocable letter of credit meeting the requirements of Section 8.6.3 of the Zoning Regulations. The bond amount shall be established by the Town Engineer after an estimate of the costs of installing and maintaining appropriate erosion and sedimentation control measures is provided by the applicant and approved by the Town Engineer. Work shall remain bonded for a minimum of one year from the date of completion.
5. CTDEEP's Natural Diversity Database Review approval shall be provided. Plan modifications may be required to address any relevant CTDEEP recommendations or requirements.
6. Color samples of all 4 building elevations of the barn shall be reviewed by the Architectural Design Review Board prior to construction.

PZ2201SUP & CAM Secchiaroli, LLC (S Cherenzia) - Special Use Permit & Coastal Area Management Review applications for the renovation and demolition of a portion of an existing restaurant building and construction of a new one-story, 5,000SF building for Retail and Accessory Storage. Property located at 29 Old Stonington Rd., Mystic. Assessor's Map 153, Block 1, Lot 4. Zone GC-60.

Mr. Deasy moved to open and continue the public hearing to March 15, 2022, seconded by Mr. Sheehan, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Mr. Sheehan moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Deasy, all in favor 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 8:03pm.



Lynn Conway, Secretary