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**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
Draft Minutes
January 13, 2015**

Chairman Matthew Berger, called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Commissioners present this evening included: Matthew Berger, Lynn Conway, Virginia McCormack, Russell McDonough, and Alternate David Rezendes. Candace Palmer, Zoning Enforcement Officer was also present.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Secretary, Lynn Conway, read the call for the public hearings at 7:05pm.

New Business:

ZBA #15-01 Samuel Pitorkowski, owner; Bruce Hayn, applicant – Seeking a variance from ZR 5.1.1 Bulk Requirements to reduce the side yard setback from 5' to 3.41' and increase the F.A.R. from .25 to .32 for an addition to the residence and garage. Property located at 12 Willow St., Mystic. Assessor's Map 172 Block 12 Lot 4; Zone RH-10.

ZBA #15-02 Helene T. Ozycz – Seeking a variance from ZR 3.1.1.4 to reduce the side yard setback from 200' to 90' for an existing stable. Property located at 340 New London Turnpike, Stonington. Assessor's Map 138 Block 3 Lot 1; Zone GB-130.

Chairman read and accepted the new applications for public hearing February 10, 2015.

ZBA #14-19 66 Wolcott LLC – Seeking a variance from ZR 5.1.1 bulk requirements to reduce the front yard setback from 30' to 23'8.5" and reduce the side yard setback from 10' to 7'2" for a dormer and front landing with stairs located within an existing non-conformity. Property located at 66 Wolcott Ave., Stonington, CT. Assessor's Map 127 Block 13 Lots 5 & 9; Zone RM-20.

Ms. Palmer clarified there was a typo in the original application; front stairs are not being built. Application is for rear dormer, applicant stated that the dormer falls in line with zoning and POCD. Two letters of support have been submitted. Ms. Conway questioned lot lines.

Attorney Ladwig introduced TC Lyon who will be constructing the dormer. Mr. Lyon, contractor on the project, explained the shed dormer on the home. They are looking to add value to the structure of the home. The addition will allow for a master bedroom and bathroom. Attorney Ladwig explained that it is taking place within the existing non-conformity, and feels that it will be better to stay in the character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Rezendes asked for clarification on numbers. Ms. Conway asked for clarification on the setback and on the hardship. She expressed that the hardship provided was not well supported.

Public Comment in favor:

Mary Ann Dodd, neighbor, spoke in support of the dormer addition and believed it will clean up the neighborhood

No one spoke in opposition or with general comments.

Chairman Berger closed the public hearing. Mr. McDonough moved to approve the application, seconded by Ms. McCormack. All in favor 5-0.

ZBA & CAM #14-20 Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center

Staff presented the application. Ms. Palmer stated the hardship claimed were that due to the shape, topography, wetlands, agricultural soils and cultural resources. It is difficult to place the parking elsewhere while still providing the required handicap parking and the requirement of a 30' planted buffer would diminish views into the farm and out to the Mystic River. There are no residential properties that directly adjoin the subject lot. They have obtained previous approval by the IWWC and the Town Engineer does not have any additional comments.

Mr. Berger read a letter of support from CT DEEP Environmental Analyst Carol Szymanski for the record.

Stephen Dodd, volunteer for Coogan Farm, Chair of Farm Implementation Team, spoke on behalf of Maggie Jones. Mr. Dodd explained the support gathered from the community and how they obtained a great amount of feedback that went into creating the existing plan. The property can connect major parts of town in a nature friendly and healthy way. The giving garden will produce food that helps feed New London County.

Chad Frost from Kent & Frost Landscaping explained the purpose of the variances requested. He explained what the property would look like with the current buffers. Mr. Frost explained the hardships in detail, the shape and topography of the property, cannot encroach on wetlands, and agricultural soil issues. Mr. Frost closed expressing the impossibility of the project without the variance approvals.

Ms. Conway questioned the number of parking spaces planned versus what is required. Mr. Frost explained 12-16 spots required compared to 41 being requested. Mr. Frost explained that the required is based on floor space however that is not the Nature Center's use. Mr. Dodd explained that some spaces will be used by volunteers for the farm. Ms. Conway questioned the volume of traffic. Mr. Frost explained that most come for a minimum of an hour averaging a couple of hours and some even park at the Nature Center. Ms. Conway questioned the lighting on the property. Mr. Frost explained the lighting plan. Ms. McCormack questioned parking as well. Mr. McDonough questioned the security of the trails. Mr. Frost explained that there will be trail markers and maps provided.

Public Comment in favor:

Jennifer Herbst, resident on Cove Hill Road, expressed support of farm redevelopment as well as the Nature Center as a whole and it will support the community as well as tourism.

Ward Smith, resident of Seaport Heights, explained the meeting his homeowner's association had with the Nature Center. The Nature Center made plans accordingly to work with neighborhood. Without variance approval, the Nature Center may have to look back at the connector near the residential areas. Mr. Smith presented the original letter to the Nature Center to Ms. Palmer for the record.

Craig Floyd, farm manager of Coogan Farm, explained the history of farm and agricultural soil. He explained the ease of growth of food for the area, they have the ability to provide food for 22,000 disadvantaged residents across New London County. Produce can be provided year round.

Chris Eckersly, owner of Precious Memories, expressed support to have Coogan Farm as a neighbor. She has enjoyed all of the team work that Coogan Farm is providing.

James Davis, superintendent of Elm Grove Cemetery, spoke in support of need for the variance.

No one spoke in opposition or with general comments.

Mr. Berger closed the public hearing. Ms. Conway moved to approve the application, Ms. McCormack seconded. All in favor 5-0.

Review of meeting minutes: Mr. Rezendes, motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. McDonough. All in favor 5-0.

Mr. McDonough moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Rezendes seconded, all in favor 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.