

**SUFFIELD ZONING AND PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
August 19, 2013**

Present: Chester Kuras, Vice Chairman
Frank Ravenola, Secretary
John Murphy
Ellie Binns
Charles Sheehan
Mark Winne, Alternate

Absent: Frank E. Bauchiero, Jr., Chairman
Gina Pastula, Alternate
Mark O’Hara, Alternate

Also Present: Bill Hawkins, AICP, Town Planner
Jim Taylor, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Gerry Turbet, Town Engineer

The proceedings of this meeting were voice recorded.

I. ROLL CALL

In the absence of Chairman Bauchiero, Vice Chairman Kuras called the meeting to order at 6:56 pm and then asked Mr. Hawkins to take a silent roll call. In the absence of one regular member, Vice Chairman Kuras appointed Mr. Winne as the alternate voting member. For the record, Secretary Ravenola read aloud the legal notice published in the Hartford Courant on both August 8, 2013 and August 15, 2013.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

File# 2013-10: Special permit request from M & J Bus, Inc. for a school bus depot located at 1353 South Street; Map 31, Block 25, Lot 75. Representing the applicant was Attorney Theodore Harris of Stevens, Harris, Guernsey & Quilliam, P.C., 351 Main Street, Niantic, CT. Also present was Michael Beebe, President of M & J Bus, Inc., 130 Ingham Hill Road, Old Saybrook, CT.

Attorney Harris explained the reason for the special permit request by stating that M & J Bus, Inc. was awarded the contract to service the Suffield School District. He said M & J Bus likes to locate their buses within the Town they are working with to keep the buses close to the area they are servicing, which also provides benefit to the Town in terms of tax revenue. Attorney Harris went on to describe the site and that his client is not proposing any physical changes to the site aside from re-stripping the parking area. He also explained the employee parking, site lighting, bus circulation on the site, and hours of operation.

Attorney Harris pointed out the area shown on the site plan where a possible future maintenance building would go if it were ever proposed. He explained they are not seeking approval of the maintenance building at this time and would seek site plan approval if it were proposed in the future.

Attorney Harris mentioned that there would be only minimal maintenance on the buses taking place at the site (i.e. changing a headlight or possibly a tire) and that more involved maintenance would be taken care of off-site. Overall, he feels the proposed use as school bus storage for the Town of Suffield is much less intrusive than the former use as a valet parking facility.

Vice Chairman Kuras asked the Commission if they had any questions for the applicant. Mr. Ravenola asked the applicant to clarify the employee parking. Attorney Harris responded that the site has employee parking shown on the south side of the parking lot. Mr. Sheehan asked if employee parking was adequate. Attorney Harris responded that the parking spaces shown are adequate.

Mr. Murphy stated that he wanted to make sure that any approval given is limited to parking school buses that serve only the Town of Suffield. Mr. Hawkins responded that the regulation under which the applicant is seeking approval is for municipal use only. Mr. Winne asked that the applicant do something to the existing screening to make it look more attractive, as it has not been maintained very well recently. Attorney Harris responded that they would clean up the screening area and possibly add some plantings. With nothing further, Vice Chairman Kuras asked staff to read through their reports. After a brief discussion, Vice Chairman Kuras opened the hearing to the public for those who had comments for or against the application. They were as follows;

- Peter Bermani, 1348 South Street – Was neither for nor against the application but expressed concerns about lighting, hours of operation, and snow plowing.

With nothing further, Mr. Winne made a motion to close the public hearing for file #2013-10 at 7:23 p.m., seconded by Mr. Ravenola. Motion passed unanimously 6-0-0.

III. NEW BUSINESS

File #2013-11: Special permit request from Friends of the Farm at Hilltop (FOFAH) for a permanent farmstand located at Hilltop Farm, 1616 Mapleton Avenue; Map 82H, Block 53, Lot 4B-1. Mr. Sheehan made a motion to accept File #2013-11 and set the public hearing date for September 16, 2013; seconded by Mr. Ravenola. Motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

File #2013-12: Special permit request from Friends of the Farm at Hilltop (FOFAH) for a winter farmers market located at Hilltop Farm, 1616 Mapleton Avenue; Map 82H, Block 53, Lot 4B-1. Mr. Winne made a motion to accept File #2013-12 and set the public hearing date for September 16, 2013; seconded by Mr. Ravenola. Motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

File #2013-13: Request from Kathleen Mormino for a text amendment to three (3) sections of the Suffield Zoning Regulations. Add “Hobby Farm” definition to Section II – Definitions; Amend Section IV(B)-Use Table to add “Hobby Farm”; Amend Section IV (D)(2)(b)- Residential Zone, Permitted Uses to add “Hobby Farm”. Mr. Sheehan made a motion to accept File #2013-13 and set the public hearing date for September 16, 2013; seconded by Mr. Ravenola. Motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

File #2012-18A: Request from Mark O’Neill to set the performance bond for the 10 lot Hamlet on South Main subdivision located at 432 South Main Street; Map 35, Block 48, Lot 95-1.

Vice Chairman Kuras asked Gerry Turbet to read through his report for the Commission. Mr. Turbet described the recent changes to the rules and regulations on bonding and outstanding items from the subdivision after which he recommended that the Commission set the bond at \$90,000.00. Mr. Sheehan asked about the storm water detention system which was followed by a brief discussion about the subdivision. With nothing further, Mr. Sheehan recommended the performance bond be set at \$90,000.00 per the Town Engineer’s recommendation and report for File #2012-18A. Mr. Ravenola seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

File# 2013-10: Special permit request from M&J Bus, Inc. for a school bus depot located at 1353 South Street; Map 31, Block 25, Lot 75.

There was a brief discussion regarding installation of a security gate and additional lighting if needed. The Commission felt that lighting and the gate could be approved by staff without the need to come back with a site plan modification application. Mr. Murphy stated that he would like to see the approval letter specify that the buses at the site are for municipal use only. Mr. Taylor asked that the Commission consider a condition that would require the landscaping be maintained to an appropriate industrial standard. With nothing further, Mr. Sheehan made a motion to approve File #2013-10 subject to the bus storage being for municipal use only; landscaping is maintained to an appropriate industrial standard to the satisfaction of staff; seconded by Mr. Ravenola. Before a vote was taken Mr. Sheehan amended the motion to include the storage of snow from plowing is to be confined to the site; seconded by Mr. Ravenola. Amended motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

V. MINUTES

Mr. Winne made a motion to approve the July 15, 2013 regular meeting minutes as submitted, seconded by Mr. Ravenola. Motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sheehan made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Winne. Motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Francis Ravenola, Secretary

cc: Assessor, Building Official, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Director, Selectmen, Town Clerk, Town Engineer, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Commission Counsel, File