

MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
ZONING COMMISSION
MARCH 4, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Bancroft, Hudecek, Marquardt, Sayer, Sutherland
Alternate members present: Middleton, Smith
Absent:
Staff present: Jones, Gilot

Chairperson Sutherland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Special Permit #344, 715 Noank Ledyard Road, PIN 260911557487, RU-40/IP80-B Zones. Proposal is to expand an existing outdoor commercial recreation facility to include an aerial adventure park, mountain bike track and radio controlled vehicle track. Review is per Sections 7.1-27 and 8.3 of the Zoning Regulations. (715 Noank-Ledyard Road LLC, Owner, Thomas Vignato, Applicant)

Vice Chairman Hudecek read the legal notice.

Tom Vignato, owner of Fields of Fire, gave a history of the paintball park, and existing clientele. He detailed the site location and his proposal to expand the facility to include different types of recreation to attract new clientele. Mr. Vignato's plan is to add an aerial adventure park, a mountain bike course, and a radio controlled vehicle track, and he reviewed the safety aspects of each. Mr. Vignato detailed the existing site, and explained the proposed relocation of the paintball park and the location for each of the new operations. The paintball park would be moved away from the highway and the aerial adventure park will be placed closer to the highway.

Mr. Vignato reviewed the requirements of Section 7.1-27. Ten acres are required for outdoor commercial recreation; they are located on 50 acres. All activities will be located more than 250 feet from any property with a dwelling or residential zone. No motorized vehicles are allowed. The Zoning Official has determined that RC vehicles are not considered motorized. Loudspeakers will be used only in the Industrial zone between 9 am and 8 pm. Sanitary facilities will meet health district requirements. No concerts will be allowed or planned. A landscape buffer will be provided 50 feet adjacent to residentially zoned properties.

Mr. Vignato reviewed the special permit criteria. No permanent buildings are proposed. Mr. Vignato noted there are very few residences nearby, so noise would not be an issue. No permanent buildings are proposed. There would be no effect on the character of the neighborhood, as this is of a temporary nature. The orderly development of other properties would not be affected. The wetland location was described. A wetland permit was granted for widening the access driveway to accommodate two-way traffic. The existing parking lot will be relocated further into the site. There are no town-maintained

streets. The sight lines from the access are clear. There would be no significant increase in the volume of traffic because the business is staggered throughout the day. A water tank will be installed for emergency use. The utilities were reviewed and are adequate for increased use. Drinking water will be brought in. Protection of the environment and Long Island Sound were discussed. No fuel for vehicles will be sold at the site; clients will bring their own fuel in. Motorcycles and dirt bikes not allowed on track. ATV's are used to move equipment for the paintball operation.

Staff said the mailings were in order.

The Planning Commission's favorable referral was read into the record.

An email from Jim Bates, 11 Conrad Street, in favor of the application was read into the record.

Staff said she had no concerns regarding the expansion, and there are no environmental impacts, as the use is mostly temporary.

The Chair asked for comments from the public. There were none. The public hearing was closed at 7:06 p.m.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of February 4, 2015

MOTION: To approve the minutes of meeting of February 4, 2015, as written.

Motion made by Bancroft, seconded by Hudecek. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARING

1. Special Permit #344, 715 Noank Ledyard Road (Thomas Vignato, Applicant)

MOTION: To approve Special Permit #344, 715 Noank-Ledyard Road, for the expansion of an outdoor recreation facility.

Findings and Reasons for Approval

The Commission finds that the recreation facility meets the requirements of Section 7.1-27 of the Zoning Regulations regarding Outdoor Recreation Facilities.

The Commission also finds that the expansion of the recreation facility is in compliance with Section 8.3-8 of the Zoning Regulations in that the activity is appropriate for the site, it does not alter the essential characteristics of the area, it provides adequate and suitable vehicular circulation for the use, does not conflict with the purposes of these regulations, and will reasonably minimize the potential environmental impacts on adjacent water bodies, including Long Island Sound.

Motion made by Hudecek, seconded by Sayer. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. POCD Update

Staff said the consultant is working on revisions to the draft document.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission - None

2. Receipt of New Applications - None

VII. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Sutherland briefly addressed the memo sent to the Commission regarding the status of the marketing and zoning audit. Sutherland said she would represent the Zoning Commission on the Steering Committee. Hudecek offered to be an alternate.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF - None

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. made by Hudecek, seconded by Bancroft, so voted unanimously.

Susan Marquardt, Secretary
Zoning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant III