

Planning and Zoning Commission
24 School Road | P.O. Box 1007 | Weston, CT 06883 | (203) 222-2618
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

Audio recording of the meeting is available here:

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Members Present: Chairwoman, Sally Korsh, James Carlon, Alex Burns, Megan Loucas, Richard Wolf, Michael Reiner. **Staff Present:** Richelle Hodza, Land Use Director and Marina Zegarelli, Recording Secretary

Sally Korsh called the meeting to order at 715pm

8 Norfield Road / File No. PZC-23-08-SD / Special Permit Application for change of use to operate a summer camp and after-school programs for children grades K-6 within the Village District / Applicant: Dan Pelletier d/b/a DIG USA / Owner: Weston Ventures, LLC, Jess DiPasquale, Manager, c/o Alliance Group, 1221 Post Road East, Westport / Date of Receipt: 8/7/2023

Beth Lampel, the Operations Manager of DIG, provided an update on the land and building proposed for the DIG Program. She noted that there were no requests for changes regarding the land or the building. In absence of these changes, there was a request to waive certain requirements, including the need for topography request, drainage plans, and a full A2 survey. Additionally, Ms. Lampel clarified that there were no alterations to the lighting since activities are conducted before dark. She went on to explain that Dan Petlier, the owner of DIG, met with First Selectwoman, Sam Nestor regarding parking at the location. They also engaged with other businesses within the Village district and received letters of support from members of the community.

Ms. Korsh requested specifications on how the application meets requirements set forth in the Village District regulations. Ms. Lampel explained that they have obtained a license from the state of Connecticut to operate a camp for up to forty kids plus coaches. Off-street parking would be designated for coaches and emergency vehicles only, while the Onion barn would be utilized for parent drop-off and parking. Ms. Korsh also emphasized the need for a Traffic Impact Study to determine expected traffic and suggested a lighting plan for year-round use and for the safety of transporting kids from the Onion barn parking to the Dig camp.

Mr. Carlon inquired about the septic and utility demand, as well as ADA requirements, expressing concern about handling 40 kids.

Richelle Hodza, Land Use Director, pointed out that certain features like the traffic study and lighting plan are not included in the application. The applicant is requesting a waiver for some of these requirements. She stressed that the Commission has the authority to waive these requirements but should make an informed decision.

Michael Reiner, expressed support for the program's operation but highlighted the need for a more complete application.

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Ms. Korsh referenced Weston's Special Permit and Site plan requirements in the Village District, calling for applications to be reviewed by an architect, landscape architect or certified planner prior to the Commission taking action. She emphasized the importance of involving a professional to help craft an application that provides everything that the Village District requires. The P&Z Commission is entrusted by the Community to do so.

Ms. Loucas spoke on obtaining written permission from the Town to operate and use the Onion barn for parking as well as the need for a contingency plan for the future to show enough parking on the actual site.

Mr. Wolf reviewed the Village District regulations that were approved two years ago. He spoke on the importance of cooperating with the participant as a Town to figure out how to make their proposal successful. He referenced the multiple letters of support from the community.

Jim Carlon spoke in his support of the DIG program. He noted the traffic in that area is a significant issue for Town residents that cannot be ignored.

Public Comments were heard from the following:

Jess DiPasquale, Owner of 48 Norfield Road, offered his full support of DIG operating at its current location. He spoke on the many parents in Town that love the program. He spoke on the population of Weston rising with new families; DIG is a great resource to have for the residents.

Margaret Wirtenberg stated this is a wonderful opportunity for P&Z to help create a plan that comes to life.

Edith, spoke on DIG teaching a sense of community to the kids as well as teaching strategy in the activities they play. She noted other programs do not teach critical thinking and strategy to kids. DIG is an amazing example to the kids of how to be a great citizen.

Courtney Christenson, 65 Norfield stated DIG is a multifaceted, intelligent and strategic program. Coach Dan gives back to the community, there is a scholarship aspect and stated she can't think of a better resource for the Town and families.

Nicole, 161 Good Hill, stated her 9 year old son attends DIG and Coach Dan is a mentor to her son. DIG is lifelong mentoring, not just a program.

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Maria Rowbothom, 83 Kettle Creek Road, showed support for DIG and stated how it's a wonderful program for our kids.

Tyler, 55 Canton Hill Road, showed full support of DIG program.. Having Dig in the center of Town is an amazing resource. No other towns do what DIG is doing. DIG is teaching the kids how to Respect each other and the community.

Emily Bernstein, 284 Newtown Turnpike, stated this is a wonderful asset to the Town.

Rosanna, 25 Langner Lane , stated her two children have attended DIG since they moved here in 2020. DIG is a wonderful resource to the Town

29 Rogues Ridge Road / File No. PZC-23-10-SD / Soil Disturbance Application and response to cease-and-desist order issued in connection with excavation, filling, and grading without a zoning permit /

Applicant: Vicki Kelley, Realtor, for Dr. Edward B. Strauss / Owner: Edward B. Strauss, MD / Date of Receipt 9/11/2023

Dr. Edward Strauss, explained he had a house built on 29 Rogues Ridge Road, but there is inadequate driveway access. In June 2023, he obtained a driveway permit and initiated construction on a new driveway to connect his property to Lords Highway. In July 2023, he received a cease and desist order for operating without a soil disturbance permit. Ms. Hodza informed the Commission that the initial cease and desist order issued in July was due to complaints about machinery, noise, and active construction. She also highlighted areas of erosion on the property, emphasizing the absence of proper sediment and erosion controls. There was a discussion regarding the possibility of implementing a bond to address potential additional erosion impacting Lords Highway.

Ms. Korsh made a motion to direct the Zoning Enforcement Officer to approve the Soil Disturbance Permit on the condition that an updated site plan be provided to the Land Use Office that is modified to show the course of the road and its location, and that is a consultation with the Land Surveyor, Rose Tiso & Co., LLC to determine if an appropriate bond is required. Ms. Loucas seconded the motion, all were in favor, the motion carried (6-0).

Michael's Way / File No. PZC-23-09-FZP / Flood Zone Application for the replacement of Bridge No. 7001, Michael's Way over the West Branch of the Saugatuck River / Applicant: Town of Weston Public Works / Date of Receipt 9/11/2023

Sean Laudati, P.E. showed the aerial view of Bridge No. 07001 located on Michaels Way. He noted the location is within a FEMA Flood Zone. He showed the existing structure built in 1955 with a timber deck supported by steel beams. He addressed the purpose of the project being determined that the bridge is in poor condition due to heavy rust and areas of section loss in the steel beams. He showed site photographs showing upstream and downstream elevations. He reviewed the proposed bridge replacement including new five foot sidewalks installed on both sides of

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the bridge. He reviewed construction to be complete in fall 2023 as well as the construction cost to be funded by 80% Federal funds and 20% state.

Mr. Wolf expressed concern that the bridge, being less than thirty years old, should have been functional for double that expected lifespan. He questioned the possibility of seeking recourse against the designer and builder for the premature failure. He emphasized the responsibility to investigate and research the potential to recover expenses from the original developer.

Ms. Loucas made a motion to approve the flood zone application for replacement of bridge no. 7001 over west branch Saugatuck river and Mr. Burns seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried (6-0).

Communications Received

Email from Aspetuck Land Trust requesting a letter of support for property acquisition

Ms. Korsh referenced the Email from Aspetuck Land Trust. She explained that as an elected board that applies statutory requirements, it is not appropriate for the Planning & Zoning Commission to issue a letter on an acquisition of private property. She noted the First Selectwoman has issued a letter in support of the acquisition for Aspetuck Land Trust.

Other Business Proper (any additions to agenda require 2/3 vote) A. Review of memoranda dated 1/2/2020 re General Procedural Guidelines and Violations of Planning and Zoning Regulations

Ms. Korsh requested the Commission to consider having the Land Use Director formally appointed as a Zoning Enforcement Officer. This appointment would allow the Land Use Director to act when ZEO is absent/ not available.

Ms. Korsh called for a vote to appoint Richelle Hodza, Land Use Director, as the Zoning Enforcement Officer, the Commission voted all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm