

**TOWN OF BROOKLYN  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, April 19, 2022 6:30 p.m.**

**3 WAYS TO ATTEND: IN-PERSON, ONLINE, AND BY PHONE**

<b>Clifford B. Green Meeting Center, Suite 24, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT</b> <b>Masks are optional for vaccinated individuals.</b>		
<b>Click link below:</b> <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84765564828">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84765564828</a>	<b>or</b>	<b>Go to <a href="https://www.zoom.us/join">https://www.zoom.us/join</a></b> <b>Enter meeting ID: 847 6556 4828</b>
<b>Dial: 1-646-558-8656</b> <b>Enter meeting number: 847 6556 4828, then press #, Press # again to enter meeting</b>		

**MINUTES**

- I. Call to Order** – Michelle Sigfridson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.
- II. Roll Call** – Michelle Sigfridson, Carlene Kelleher, Allen Fitzgerald, Lisa Herring, Sara Deshaies and Gill Maiato (all present in person).  
John Haefele, Seth Pember and J.R. Thayer were absent.

**Staff Present (in person)** Austin Tanner, First Selectman.

**Also Present in Person:** Zack LaBonte, Core Holdings, LLC; J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary.

There were 13 additional people present in the audience.

**Present via Zoom:** Bob

- a. Move Alternates up to Regular positions on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to appoint the following Planning and Zoning Commission alternates to the following open positions on the Commission:

Term expiring 1-1-23: Sara Deshaies

Term expiring 1-1-24: Lisa Herring

Second by C. Kelleher.

There was discussion regarding a possible remaining open position. Mr. Tanner stated that Gill Maiato is official as an Alternate for this meeting.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0-0).

**III. Seating of Alternates**

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to seat Lisa Herring, Sara Deshaies and Gill Maiato as Voting Members for this meeting (April 19, 2022).

Second by C. Kelleher.

Discussion: Ms. Sigfridson explained that Mr. Maiato was not actually a member of the PZC yet. No vote taken.

A.Fitzgerald rescinded his motion and C. Kelleher withdrew her second.

Motion was made by A. Tanner to add the following Item to the Agenda:

- II. a. Move Alternates up to Regular positions on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Second by A. Fitzgerald. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0-0). See above, Agenda Item II. a.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to seat Gill Maiato as a Voting Member for this meeting.  
Second by C. Kelleher. No discussion.  
Motion carried unanimously (5-0-0).

**IV. Adoption of Minutes:** Meeting April 6, 2022

Motion was made by C. Kelleher to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 6, 2022.  
Second by L. Herring. No discussion.  
Motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

**V. Public Commentary – None.**

**VI. Unfinished Business:**

a. **Reading of Legal Notices**

M. Sigfridson read aloud the Legal Notice for ZRC 22-001.

b. **New Public Hearings:**

1. **ZRC 22-001:** Request to change Zoning Regulations Sec. 4.C.2.5. to add self-storage facilities as a permitted use in the Restricted Business Zone, Applicant: Core Holdings, LLC.

Ms. Sigfridson stated that the certified mail receipts had been submitted and that the public hearing notice had been sent to the NECCOG and to the Town of Plainfield.

Zack LaBonte, Core Holdings, LLC represented himself and gave an overview of his proposal for a Zone Change:

- Mr. LaBonte began by speaking about specifics for a particular property within the RB Zone (660 Wauregan Road) which he would like to develop for self-storage units.

Ms. Sigfridson explained that that particular project is not before the PZC for consideration tonight. She explained that it would be a two-step process. She said that self-storage facilities are allowed in certain areas in Town, but not the RB Zone. What is being considered tonight is whether to add self-storage facilities as a use, by special permit, within the RB Zone.

There were no questions or comments from the Commission at this time.

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

**Victoria Fradette**, Wauregan Road, voiced concern regarding increased traffic, children and adults walking. She asked if an environmental impact study had been done.

Ms. Sigfridson explained, again, that no particular project is before the Commission. She asked if there were more general questions or comments about this proposal which would affect many different properties in Town, both along Route 6 in the RB Zone there and the entire Business Zone in this neighborhood on Route 205. She explained that, if this proposal is accepted by the Commission, then, the Applicant would need to apply for a special permit for a specific project at a specific property which would require another public hearing.

**Mark Curreri**, 656 Wauregan Road, asked if there is another way, other than the publication, that the public was supposed to have been notified. He said that he lives directly adjacent to the property and he said that the people from the community are present because they have concerns and are opposed to having a storage facility in that location. He said that the property has special concerns because it is in a wetlands. There are water sources that run across their property and into the part that where the Applicant would like to propose a self-storage facility. Mr. Curreri stated that, in the spring, it floods on his side. He feels that it would require excavation on other properties to mitigate the water. He is concerned that if it is paved, that would cause more water run-off.

Ms. Sigfridson explained that applications to change the Zoning Regulations are published in the *Turnpike Buyer* and on the Town website.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that the Applicant is seeking a change to the Zoning Regulations

Ms. Herring explained that there are a lot of uses that are already allowed.

Ms. Sigfridson explained that the Commission is not considering a particular property and that Mr. LaBonte included some renderings just to show what his plan are, but the Commission will not be considering specifics related to that property.

Ms. Sigfridson stated that the Commission should consider whether self-storage facilities would complement the other types of uses envisioned in the Zone and the other uses that already exist there. She noted that there is a lot of residential in the Zone.

Ms. Sigfridson explained about the two areas/zones (a section in West Wauregan and a section on Route 6 between Church Street and the intersection with Route 169) that would be affected if this Application were approved.

**Zack**, 650 Wauregan Road, is concerned about square footage. They don't mind the AMVETS being there because they are not noisy and pretty-well contained. They are okay with Cozy Corner Restaurant. He said that the people present all agree that they don't want a giant self-storage facility there with people coming and going at all hours of the night. He is concerned about traffic and also about crime which is surging in the area.

Mr. Tanner noted that, currently, there is not a lot of restriction on square footage, it would just be a different process to go through.

**Don Nash**, voiced concern about lights being on all night long. He said they are opposed to having that view in their backyard.

Mr. LaBonte explained that there are multiple uses under RB that could be developed on that property. He said that it is good to understand what the concerns are.

**Alex Monterro**, 655 Wauregan Road, said that, from his porch, he will see a whole bunch of storage bins with cars going to them.

**Brett Nash**, 654 Wauregan Road, is concerned about backyard flooding, his leach field, that his property stakes don't match, theft/crime, traffic, Mr. Curreri's property, tree line, lighting, children, heavy truck traffic, dirt and dust from triaxles, speeding,

Mr. LaBonte stated that he would make sure that they do the grading in a manner that would not cause problems for other people. He wants to be a good neighbor and is confident that it can be worked out.

**Paul Brennan**, 651 Wauregan Road, is concerned about operating hours (24/7?), traffic, lighting, number of units. He asked where else in Town self-storage facilities are allowed. The more units, the more traffic, the longer people will be going in and out. He suggests a cap on the number of units.

Ms. Sigfridson explained that self-storage is allowed in the PC District. She explained that in Brooklyn, we let the free market decide how many different types of businesses pop up.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that it is also allowed as an agricultural reuse.

**Mark Curreri** said that none of the storage facilities in the area are located in residential areas. He feels that it is not proper for a residential area for security reasons and vandalism.

Mr. Fitzgerald read from the Regulations regarding Section 8.2 of the CT General Statutes. He said that the areas of concern are being addressed by the public, such as traffic and property values, and that the PZC considers the Application based on input from the public.

**Zack** commented that he feels that a storage facility won't be beneficial to the community and there is a good chance that it will fail. He is concerned about having abandoned failed businesses in the neighborhood.

Mr. Tanner stated that comments are still being directed toward a specific project. He read aloud from the Regulations regarding the purpose of the RB Zone and uses already permitted.

**Paul Brennan** commented that the size of the unit and hours of operation play a big part (15 units means 15 cars going there once a week/month / 400 units means may 100-200 car per day going there).

Mr. Tanner explained that there are provisions in the Regulations to address bigger projects and that the PZC has the ability to restrict hours and lighting.

Ms. Sigfridson explained that the Commission needs to consider if this type of use is similar to the things already allowed there or is there something different about self-storage, as a business, that we would not consider allowing that, in general, in the area (e.g. employees at businesses go home at the end of the day).

**Julie Caouette**, 656 Wauregan Road, next door to the property, voiced concern about hours of operation, comings and goings at all hours of the night, lights being on all night which would impact quality of life in a residential area, security, transient people coming around her property, property values.

**Victoria Fradette** asked if there is a way to appeal if the Application is approved.

Ms. Sigfridson stated that now is the time to voice your opinion and she explained that interested parties can sue which is available as a remedy.

**Mark Curreri** stated that there is a strong representation of the neighborhood present and their recommendation is to vote against the Application.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked how many present are individual property owners. He, then, said, after seeing raised hands, that there were approximately ten separate homes represented.

**Alex Monterro** stated that he bought his house about eight or nine months ago and if there was a storage unit, he would not have even looked at the house.

**Paul Brennan** said that Mr. LaBonte had provided information regarding his intention to build self-storage units on a particular property in their neighborhood and he expressed that he feels that the public should be allowed to ask questions regarding their concerns. He asked if he plans on having lights on all night long, if he plans on putting 400 units in the back and does he plan for it to be open 24 hours a day.

Ms. Sigfridson stated that, if there are specific questions that he would like answered, the Commission would allow Mr. LaBonte to answer them. However, she explained that those factors would not be considered by the Commission in deciding on this Application.

Mr. LaBonte addressed questions/comments:

- Typically, self-storage is a localized business (3-5 mile range), so there wouldn't be transient people coming from outside areas.
- The facility would not be open 24 hours a day. There would be a gate with key-card access for people to in and out during certain times.
- There would be small, localized lighting on the buildings which he assumes, from a security standpoint, would be on all night.
- He would start by putting in 144 units. He explained that he feels that the property could accommodate 200 units.

**Mark Curreri** commented that the Plainfield Police are in the village of Wauregan quite often due to vandalism and domestic problems. He stated that there is access from the back of the property, from the River and from Wauregan to the neighbors' properties. He said that anything can be stored in the units and there could be security/safety issues. He said that he is opposed.

**Paul Brennan** commented about a store that got robbed three times (at midnight with people present) within the eight months since it has been opened.

**Kelly Nash**, 654 Wauregan Road, asked if there would be an alarm system. Mr. LaBonte explained that there would be one way into the property which would be controlled by a gate, outside from that, it would be a secured area with a fence. There would be security cameras.

**Victoria Fradette** explained that her biggest concern is safety. She is concerned about hundreds of people looking into her backyard.

**Don Nash** asked how many properties Mr. LaBonte has invested in to push this along.

It was explained that Mr. LaBonte had not invested in another property on Route 6 also.

Mr. LaBonte explained that if this Application were approved, then a special permit would need to be applied for. It would be on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Sigfridson commented, for the record, that the self-storage units on Allen Hill Road is in a residential zone and has created problems for the neighbors in that area, not home invasions or violent crimes, but more of inconvenience (based on what she has heard). Mr. Fitzgerald stated agreement.

C. Kelleher stated that she does not feel that the RB Zone on Route 6 is an appropriate place for self-storage units.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to close the public hearing for **ZRC 22-001**: Request to change Zoning Regulations Sec. 4.C.2.5. to add self-storage facilities as a permitted use in the Restricted Business Zone, Applicant: Core Holdings, LLC.

Second by S. Deshaies.

Discussion: M. Sigfridson explained that once the public hearing is closed, no additional information may be taken.

Motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

c. **Continued Public Hearings: None.**

d. **Other Unfinished Business:**

1. **ZRC 22-001**: Request to change Zoning Regulations Sec. 4.C.2.5. to add self-storage facilities as a permitted use in the Restricted Business Zone, Applicant: Core Holdings, LLC.

There was discussion and Mr. Fitzgerald explained that he is basing his decision on public health, safety, welfare, or property values that are not consistent with the POCD and the intent of the Zoning Regulations. He said based on the people that live there that own property, they have a real problem with it and he feels that it will affect their lives way too much.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to deny the proposal to change Sec. 4.C.2.5. of the Zoning Regulations to add self-storage facilities as a Special Permit Use in the RB Zone with the finding that the changes will not aid in the protection of public health, safety, welfare, or property values and/or are not consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development or the intent of the Zoning Regulations.

Second by S. Deshaies.

Discussion:

- Mr. Tanner explained that he is in favor of the zone change.
- Mr. Maiato stated that he is in favor of the zone change.
- Ms. Herring explained that she could see how hours of operation could be a concern in the zone.
- Mr. Fitzgerald commented that the spaces could be rented out to contractors or people who could repair cars there.
- The definition of self-storage was read aloud.
- Ms. Kelleher commented that it would be difficult to try to enforce/set limits on what goes in the units. She also is concerned about extending the RB Zone along the Route 6 area. She does not feel that it is consistent with the POCD.
- Ms. Sigfridson stated that the RB Zone is intended for uses that generate low volumes of traffic. Based on the concerns expressed from the neighbors tonight and her personal knowledge of what the impacts have been from other self-storage facilities, she will vote in favor of the motion to deny.

Motion to deny carried (5-1-0). Gill Maiato was opposed.

2. **ZRC 22-002:** Request to amend Zoning Regulations Sec. 7.A.3.4. to allow hanging signs in the Planned Commercial (PC) Zone, Applicant: The Ice Box (Matt & Jenn Nemeth). **\*Public Hearing scheduled for May 4, 2022.\***
3. **SD 22-001:** A proposal for a one-lot subdivision on Woodward Road (Map 10, Lot 25-5), Applicant: Gary McMahon. **\*Awaiting parcel history\***
4. **PDZ 22-001, ZRC 22-003, ZC 22-001:** A proposal for a Planned Development Zone near and around the intersection of Wolf Den Road and Bush Hill Road, including 538 Wolf Den Road and totaling 13 parcels on 534 acres, Applicant/Owner: Little Dipper Farm, LLC. **\*Public Hearing scheduled for May 4, 2022.\***

**VII. New Business:**

a. **Applications: None.**

b. **Other New Business:**

1. Scheduling of Public Hearing re: “Opt-Out” of certain provisions contained in Public Act 21-29.

Ms. Sigfridson explained that the Commission had expressed an interest in pursuing “Opt-Out” rights. Therefore, a public hearing needs to be scheduled.

Motion was made by L. Herring to schedule a public hearing regarding the “opt-out” provisions contained in Public Act 21-29, Sections 3, 5 and 6 for the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to be held on May 17, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in the Clifford B. Green Memorial Building, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT and via Zoom.

Second by S. Deshaies. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

**VIII. Reports of Officers and Committees – None.**

Ms. Sigfridson stated that she has not heard anything new regarding the POCD since it was sent to NECCOG for review/assistance.

**IX. Public Commentary**

There was discussion regarding whether the public hearing for **PDZ 22-001, ZRC 22-003, ZC 22-001**, Little Dipper Farm, should be held in a bigger facility due to the possibility that a large number of people may attend. It was decided that, if necessary, it could be moved to another, larger room in the Clifford B. Green Memorial Building. Mr. Tanner will check to be sure. There was discussion regarding making sure that everyone has a chance to be heard. Mr. Fitzgerald will be on vacation, but may be able to attend the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting via Zoom.

**X. Adjourn**

M. Sigfridson adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault  
Recording Secretary