

**TOWN OF BROOKLYN
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, November 2, 2022 6:30 p.m.**

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

MEETING LOCATION:	
Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium, 119 Gorman Road, Brooklyn, CT	
Click link below: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87925438541	Go to https://www.zoom.us/join Enter meeting ID: 879 2543 8541
Dial: 1-646-558-8656 Enter meeting number: 879 2543 8541, then press #, Press # again to enter meeting	

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order** – Michelle Sigfridson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.
- II. Roll Call** – Michelle Sigfridson, Carlene Kelleher, Allen Fitzgerald, Lisa Herring, Seth Pember, Sara Deshaies and Karl Avanecean (all were present in person). Brian Simmons was present via Zoom.
Gill Maiato was absent with notice. John Haeefele was absent.
- Staff Present:** Jana Roberson, Town Planner and Director of Community Development (present in person); Austin Tanner, First Selectman (arrived in person at approximately 7:50 p.m. and took a seat in the audience).
- Also Present in Person:** Attorney Kate Cerrone, The Northeast Law Center; Dr. Donald J. Poland, PhD, AICP, Goman+York Property Advisers, LLC; J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary. There were approximately one hundred people in the audience.
- Present via Zoom:** Spiro Haveles; Christa Haveles; Marlene.
- III. Seating of Alternates**
- There was discussion regarding seating an Alternate.
- Motion was made by C. Kelleher to seat Brian Simmons as a Regular Member for this meeting (November 2, 2022), in the absence of J. Haeefele.
Second by L. Herring. No discussion.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).
- IV. Adoption of Minutes:** Meeting October 18, 2022
- Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 18, 2022, as presented.
Second by Seth Pember. No discussion.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (7-0-0).
- V. Public Commentary** – None.

VI. Unfinished Business:

a. Reading of Legal Notices:

J. Roberson read aloud the Legal Notice for **ZRC 22-007** which was published in the *Turnpike Buyer* on October 19th and October 26th.

Ms. Roberson stated that all written correspondence received up to November 1st was included in packets to Commission Members and that all correspondence received on November 2nd was not included in packets, but would be included in the public hearing record.

The Legal Notice for the Plan of Conservation and Development Update – Housing Chapter, had been aloud at the October 18th meeting of the PZC.

b. Continued Public Hearings:

1. Plan of Conservation and Development Update – Housing Chapter.

M. Sigfridson commented that the public hearing could be continued to allow the Commission members to review the proposed addition to the POCD or, if ready to take action, the public hearing could be closed tonight.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to close the public hearing for the Plan of Conservation and Development Update – Housing Chapter.

Mr. Fitzgerald withdrew his motion to give the public an opportunity to comment.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to close the public hearing for the Plan of Conservation and Development Update – Housing Chapter.

Second by S. Deshaies. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (7-0-0).

c. New Public Hearings:

1. ZRC 22-007: Revisions to the Residential-Agricultural Zone to allow Glamping as a Special Permit Use with specific standards, including Section 2.B Definitions, Section 3.C.2.4. Permitted Uses in the RA Zone, and Section 6.T Standards for Glamping.

M. Sigfridson opened the public hearing.

Attorney Kathleen M. Cerrone represented the Applicant, Little Dipper Farm, a three-member LLC, owning 588 acres in the Town of Brooklyn. She explained about the proposal and about the legal standards regarding the duty of the Planning and Zoning Commission (letter dated October 28, 2022 was included in packets to Commission Members).

Attorney Cerrone introduced Dr. Donald Poland and stated that his resume had previously been entered into the record.

Dr. Donald Poland, PhD, AICP, with Goman+York Property Advisers, LLC, an Urban Geographer and Professional Planner, gave a presentation, as a subject matter expert, regarding the details of the Application. Dr. Poland referred to his Report dated September 1, 2022 (included in packets to Commission Members).

Dr. Poland explained that “you’re not going to save the farm unless you save the farmer” and that the reality of farms today is that they need multiple revenue sources in order to be viable. He explained that, in the RA Zone, agriculture is not some passive use of vacant fields, it is actually a commercial activity occurring within a

residential zone. He spoke about the diversity of uses currently allowed in the RA Zone which are not solely residential or agriculture. Agriculture itself can be an intensive use. He explained about how tourism, hospitality and outdoor recreation are growth industries as consumers are now seeking out experiences that engage their passions and enthusiasms, rather than just products and services. This has given rise to a new market where sustainable agriculture has found new life by engaging consumers in experiences. Many farms in Connecticut provide farm-to-table dining, provide educational courses related to horticulture and agriculture, and provide special events where people can immerse themselves in the environment of agriculture. He said that Little Dipper Farm falls into this category of sustainable farm meets outdoor adventure. Dr. Poland explained that this proposal is about providing an alternative and related use of the property to help sustain the agricultural portion of it.

Dr. Poland explained the following:

- This Application is for a text amendment that would apply to the entire RA Zone, not just Little Dipper Farm.
- The Applicants have done everything that they should do, trying to work with the Community and, specifically, with their neighbors to put forth a balanced application.
- They had met with the neighbors and heard from the neighbors for the prior Application and there was too much concern, too much risk, too much unknown. Therefore, the Applicant made the decision to pull that Application and go with the proposed text amendment for the glamping. He commented that the large, mobilized opposition to this Application is probably due to the prior Application where a plausible site was revealed. He stated that, although, the prior Application cannot be considered in the context of this Application, it does provide context. He stated that that possible site was considered in his process in drafting the proposed text amendment. He noted that they are not putting forth that site as an actual Application for consideration, it is just to provide context. The entirety of the RA Zone must be considered.
- The Commission may approve, modify or deny.

Dr. Poland reviewed all of the proposed changes:

- Five new definitions: Glamping; Glamping Site; Glamping Unit; Glamp-grounds; Glamp-grounds, Accessory Uses.
He explained that he had researched glamping facilities across the country to see what the norm was. He explained that he met with representatives of the glamping industry, to whom he had provided an early draft of the proposal, to get feedback. Dr. Poland feels that this has resulted in a better Application. His goal was to balance the needs of the Brooklyn Community with the needs of the industry to have an economically viable regulation, and with the needs of the neighboring residents and the concerns that they had expressed. A copy of the draft regulation had been provided to the neighbors, before it was submitted to the PZC, and their concerns were incorporated into the final draft of the proposed regulation that is now before the Commission.
- Section 3.C.2.4 – Add #7 Glamp-grounds and Glamping as a special permit use. He explained that any future application would be required to come before the PZC with a site plan and a special permit.
- Add new Section 6.T. Glamping; Subsection 6.T.1 – Purpose; and Subsection 6.T.2 – Standards. Dr. Poland gave a detailed explanation of each item 1-25.
 - 1) Minimum lot size 125 acres to minimize the impact across the RA Zone.

- 2) Four hundred feet of street frontage to protect the character of the frontage of the sites so that the driveway/entryway doesn't dominate, it minimizes the impact along the frontage. The number of parcels (eight) that meet the standard for 125 acres and 400 feet of frontage has been entered into the record. Two of the parcels are owned by Little Dipper Farm.
- 3) Three hundred foot setback. He explained that the 400 feet of frontage combined with the 300-foot setback is 120,000 sq. ft. which is just shy of 3 acres of land at the front of these sites that could be maintained as woodlands, fields, agricultural use, cropping, etc. This would protect the scenic landscape of the street frontage.
- 4) Two hundred-foot setback from any property line to provide buffering to surrounding properties.
- 5) Density – one glamping site per suitable acre. The State family campground density standard, for a traditional campground, is 15-25 sites per suitable acre.
- 6) Glamping Sites – minimum of 1200 sq. ft. and can accommodate up to three glamping units. Glamp sites with multiple units cannot exceed more than 50 percent of the total glamp sites. The occupancy of any glamp site cannot exceed 12 persons. The industry has found that a portion of the people that engage in glamping like to do it as families.
- 7) Limit of 18-foot height. He explained that a yurt, supported by a central pole, to achieve a 6.5 to 7-foot sidewall, would need a center pole of a higher level.
- 8) Due to concern regarding the quality of the glamping structures, glamping units, at a minimum, shall be designed for three-season use and shall be made of high-quality, durable materials.
- 9) Glamping units to be installed on raised, permanent platforms no less than 6-inches off the ground.
- 10) Menu-style restaurant food service, including a commercial kitchen. He explained that this is a key revenue source. It avoids the snack bar or vending stations found in ordinary campgrounds. A cost that ensures quality.
- 11) Primary access drive – 22 feet wide for the first 100 feet to provide adequate turning for emergency vehicles, then 12 feet wide internal.
- 12) He explained that the occupancy is to be transient to ensure no permanent residency.
- 13) Up to five on-site structures for staff. He explained that, in the industry, there is a direct relationship between the quality of glamping and the amount of staff.
- 14) Solid waste facilities to be provided and to be screened and secured from wildlife access.
- 15) Maximum occupancy for the glamp-ground shall be 250 persons including both lodging and event guests. He explained that there had been concern regarding large events.
- 16) Parking requirements – 1.75 spaces per glamping unit. He said that this is consistent with the industry and with parking standards. He explained that to provide flexibility in design, parking shall be provided within 500 feet of glamping sites. He said that this gives the opportunity for parking spaces to be right in front of the glamp sites or not. Maybe they are off in a side parking lot or maybe there is a mixture of personal parking spaces and parking lots. Minimum of five spaces shall be provided at lobby/check-in facility.
- 17) All lighting shall be dark sky compliant. He explained that it is about the experience and people will want to enjoy the dark skies. It will also be designed to be sensitive to the neighbors.

- 18) As part of the food and beverage service, the service of alcohol is permitted in accordance with permitting and service requirements of the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, Liquor Control Division. He explained that food and beverage service is critical to the glamping facility and that this could be further discussed through the special permit process.
 - 19) He explained that site plan and special permit would be required for such an application. To ensure that design is considered, submission of architectural information, renderings, photographs of proposed buildings, including identification of texture, color and type of building materials to be used, so that the Commission may consider the design aspects.
 - 20) He explained that under site plan/special permit, the plan must state the size of the site in square feet, the number of glamping units, and total occupancy for each site.
 - 21) The design of the facility shall comply with ADA requirements. He explained ADA will kick in and require that a percentage of the units be accessible and another percentage of the units will be required to be able to be converted to be accessible. ADA will also ensure that bathroom facilities will also be accessible.
 - 22) The design and operation of the glamp-ground shall comply with the Connecticut Department of Public Health regulations for family campgrounds. He assumes that the State will interpret a glamp-ground as a camping facility and, therefore, those requirements will need to be complied with.
 - 23) Wastewater systems shall comply with State Public Health Code.
 - 24) Potable water systems shall comply with State Public Health Code.
 - 25) All structures and glamping units shall comply with State Building Code and State Fire Prevention Code.
- Dr. Poland explained that concerns of sewage, pollution or groundwater are addressed by the State Codes that already exist.

Dr. Poland referred to the last two sections of his Report:

- Consideration of the Comprehensive Plan of Zoning – He explained that a zone change/ text amendment/map amendment should be reasonable in nature to not drastically change the character of the district. In the greater context of what is already being permitted in the RA Zone, he finds that the proposal of glamping is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan of Zoning and that it is well within the uses that can be utilized within the RA Zone.
- Consideration of the Plan of Conservation and Development – He explained that the POCD is an advisory document which the PZC must consider in its decision, but do not have to follow what it says.
When reviewing specific land use applications, he explained that he frames the review by asking the following two questions:
 - 1) Did the POCD process and its adoption conceptualize the kind of development in the general area of the community that is being discussed?
 - 2) Does the Application and development generally forward the goals in the Plan?

Dr. Poland commented that glamping was not considered as a use when creating the 2011 POCD, nor was it considered, specifically, in the RA Zone. He stated that, when you look at the other aspects of the POCD, we are not conflicting with other objectives, prime farmland soils, although, it could in some applications. He said that the plausible site that was put forth

in the prior Master Plan Application was not prime agricultural soils, even though other acreage at Little Dipper Farm is.

Dr. Poland stated that, in the context of this text amendment, the POCD recommends a vibrant, viable agricultural industry. That means a hybrid agricultural industry in this day and age, where there are opportunities for multiple revenue streams such as glamping.

Dr. Poland explained that the POCD also recommends promoting economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture. He said that there couldn't be a more direct objective that they are forwarding here. He said that the Little Dipper Farm is an exercise in sustainable agriculture and that glamping provides the opportunity for immersion of the consumer in that sustainable agriculture. The POCD also recommends identifying future innovative opportunities for farming additional lands. He said that, while it is not necessarily farming additional lands, it will support the continued farming of the existing lands at a site like Little Dipper Farm, if they went forward with it. He noted that there are other farms that this would be applicable to.

Dr. Poland stated that, in the POCD Supportive Material, Brooklyn residents rated tourism and heritage businesses as important (27.6%) and very important (30%). He stated that 57+% of Brooklyn residents support tourism and heritage businesses and this Application falls into that category. The POCD also recommends generating maximum growth of the Grand List. He explained that the almost 600 acres of land in the RA Zone at Little Dipper Farm could be developed as single-family, residential homes, yielding 125-175 units at the site. He commented that the greatest threat to agriculture is not glamping, it is residential development. He referred to a book, written by a Professor from Penn State University, entitled *The Last Harvest*. Dr. Poland stated that the Applicant has no intent to do that, they want to run an economically viable farm that can support that land in its agricultural context. He explained that the glamping provides an opportunity to maximize the Grand List. He explained about high-end, air-stream trailers (which are common in the industry) and that they are valued at over \$100,000.

- Dr. Poland stated that his findings are that the proposed amendment satisfies the Comprehensive Plan of Zoning and also satisfies the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Dr. Poland offered to answer questions.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMISSION/ STAFF:

- **L. Herring** stated that she has questions, but would like to wait until later.
- **A. Fitzgerald** commented about the list of eight properties that this proposal would apply to (prepared by J. Roberson and included in packets to Commission Members). He voiced concern about giving the whole Town the opportunity to understand what the extent of these changes would be. He said that everyone is just concentrating on the Little Dipper Farm, but it's not just that one property.

J. Roberson explained that the proposal would apply to the RA Zone which is 85 percent of the Town. The first lines of the proposal are some qualifying criteria which Dr. Poland addressed very clearly: the parcel has to be 125 acres; it has to have 400 feet of frontage; it has to be in the RA Zone. Ms. Roberson explained that, for the list of eight parcels that meet the qualifying dimensional criteria (at this time – parcel boundaries can change), that she submitted for the record, she used the Town's GIS system to identify exactly which parcels that this could be applied to. She further explained that it is very common and typical for dimensional criteria to be incorporated into

zoning regulations. She noted that there is another parcel that is not wholly within the RA Zone that would meet those criteria, but because a portion of it is outside the RA Zone, it cannot qualify for a proposal if this Application were to be approved. She stated that, although the proposal, if approved, would apply to the entire RA Zone, those dimensional criteria significantly reduce the locations where it could be applied for. Each proposal would be by special permit and would be looked at on its individual merits and the appropriateness of the property itself.

Ms. Roberson explained about the properties on the list: two are owned by Little Dipper Farm which is not all active agriculture (there are some forestry areas and the field areas that you can see from the road are permanently protected through a purchase of development rights by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and nothing can be built in those areas without the permission of the Commissioner of the CT Dept. of Agriculture; one is a rock quarry; one is a Christmas tree farm; one is a sod farm; one is land that is leased by a farmer, but is owned by a public utility; another one is probably hayed regularly – not active agriculture; she could not recall one of the parcels. Ms. Roberson stated that the Little Dipper Farm would be here if they didn't find it to be crucially necessary to their business.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that Langevin already has an event facility with plenty of acreage and he feels that all residents of the Town are aware that this would apply to other parts of the Town.

Ms. Sigfridson stated that the Legal Notice referenced the RA Zone and does not reference a particular parcel. She is not sure how you would get people to read the paper or come to the meeting. Not closing the public hearing would give another opportunity for people to be heard.

- **M. Sigfridson** asked Dr. Poland about the proposed definition of glamp-ground and she suggested replacing “two or more Glamping Units” with “two or more Glamping Sites.”

Dr. Poland agreed to this change to the language.

Ms. Sigfridson also asked about what “securing the entitlement for the Stone Acres Farm site” means.

Dr. Poland explained that it is the land use approval process and that he was involved in other public hearings like this one with more opposition, in 2017 or 2018.

- **A. Fitzgerald** asked if there are State regulations covering glamp-grounds. Dr. Poland explained that there are State regulations specific to family campgrounds and that they defined campgrounds as family campgrounds. He stated that, as far as he knows, there is no State law or regulation related specifically to glamping, which is not uncommon with a relatively new use. Uses are regulated more at the local level. He assumes that the State Department of Health, from a Health Code perspective, would consider an application for a glamp-ground in the context of the existing State regulations for what they call family campground.

- **M. Sigfridson** commented that, under the State regulations, we could consider all glamp-grounds as campgrounds, but not all campgrounds are glamp-grounds.

Dr. Poland agreed with that as a fair statement. He clarified that, while the State has its regulations, the regulation of the use, regardless of State regulations, it all falls under the PZC's purview of zoning and will be guided by this text amendment. He explained that this does not open the door for traditional family campgrounds and that they will remain prohibited.

- **M. Sigfridson** asked about Section 6.T regarding staff accommodations. She asked if staff would be living on site.

Dr. Poland explained that it is fairly common in the industry, at the very least, that the glamp site manager often resides on site. This would be the discretion of the PZC during the special permit process. He explained that there could be less than five.

- **L. Herring** asked if the maximum total of 250 could be reduced what the maximum capacity is for others in Connecticut.

Dr. Poland explained that he did not research maximum capacity in this way. He spoke about the residents concern regarding large, amplified events/concerts and explained that when he put the draft forward to the industry he included the density provisions (number of units per site and total of 12 occupants per site). He spoke with them about total density and they went back and forth on it. He tried to provide certainty that this property/use is not going to overrun by large crowds. The industry suggested a combined cap and recommended 250 which offers flexibility and provides a safety net. Again, he explained that this could be discussed during the special permit process.

At this time, C. Kelleher stated that she would like to hear from the public.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Attorney Keith Ainsworth, a practitioner of Environmental Law in New Haven, represented about 30 residents. He stated that he had been before the PZC for the Little Dipper Farm's previous Application for a Planned Development Zone. He said that while the Applicants have added clarity of what they are doing based on feedback, there are so many problems with this Application that it should be denied, chiefly because this is the antithesis of community planning. It is a single Applicant presenting an Application that has town-wide impacts because it is changing a zone that covers the largest portion of the Town's land mass. He said that the PZC's job is to think of the worst thing that could happen because once you create a regulation somebody could use it. He explained that eight is the minimum number of parcels that could take advantage of the regulation because parcels could be combined. He said that this is the conversion of farm land to a non-farm purpose. He spoke about the broad definition of agriculture in Connecticut which is the cultivation or harvesting of living things (plants and animals). There is nothing in the definition for glamping or glamp-ground. He said that if the solution to protecting the agriculture in Brooklyn is to make farms economically viable with a use that is not farming, you're not preserving the farming use, you are converting part of that farm into something else and you're losing that agricultural heritage. A campsite is not farming. He said that there is nothing in the proposed regulation that indicates that farming has to occur on the site. It is not a required additional use, so somebody could convert the farm entirely to camping. He said that glamping is a made-up term and it doesn't exist anywhere in Connecticut law. It means commercial campground. He said that they have an aspiration toward quality, but there is no guarantee of that. He said that an investor would drive it toward the minimum, not the maximum, unless they think it's going to bring them more revenue, but you don't know that now. All you know is that someone could come in and do the minimum. He said that, if it go the way they thought it would, they will immediately start driving it down to the minimum.

Attorney Ainsworth referred to Attorney Cerrone's letter dated October 28, 2022 (included in packets to Commission Members) in which, she cited a number of cases dating back to the 1950's, before many towns had zoning. He said that her letter speaks of the text amendment being consistent with the POCD, but Attorney Ainsworth added that it also has to further the purposes of the Zoning Regulations (safety/health/welfare/property values). He said that the reason why he is representing 30 citizens is because they are terrified that their neighborhood is going to change from quiet agricultural. He said that a glamp site comes awake at night and that the proposed regulation does not say anything about sound. He said that it would

probably, largely, be a wedding venue. Attorney Ainsworth stated that he thinks that Attorney Cerrone's statement about public comments in her letter was an attempt to insinuate that the folks here have to be listened to, but don't really have to and he thinks that's wrong as this is a Community conversation.

Attorney Ainsworth spoke about how the PZC needs to consider that this could change the face of Brooklyn if all of the sites that are available now and the many others that could get assembled, turn into glamp-grounds and how there would be a lot of campgrounds, wedding venues, party centers and when you combine that with campsites, star-gazing towers, beverage service and food service, it starts to sound a lot like a party thing. He spoke about legalized cannabis adding to it. He said that part of protecting the agricultural heritage, is protecting the setting (quietude/sounds at night), not just the views.

Attorney Ainsworth spoke about the statutory requirements and about potential problems with traffic. He stated that there are a number of terms that have no limits: Definition of Glamping as being well-designed and luxury; On-site beverage service – could be a bar, a liquor store-type operation; Agri-tourism – there is no requirement that the events be related to the agricultural activities. He explained that you're just commercializing farmland and the Commission needs to decide whether that will be the face of farming in Brooklyn.

Attorney Ainsworth stated that the 200-foot setback is the minimum and is not a consolation for the neighbors as sound carries.

- He feels that the 18-foot height seems high.
- Regarding high-quality materials, he said it is subjective and totally unregulated. Regarding the five structures, he said depending on the size of the structures, there could be a significant number of people living on the site. He asked if they would be included in the maximum occupancy.
- Regarding maximum occupancy that would protect everyone from larger events, he explained that it is an enforcement problem. He said that there is an enormous amount of pressure not to enforce against a local existing business.
- He spoke of there being no standard for how many events they could have.
- He said that there is no statutory or regulatory definition of what dark-sky compliant means. He said that the Commission would need to put performance standards on it (specific lumens and specific locations). He said that lighting near wetlands disturbs the breeding cycles of many wetland species.
- He said that the Commission should know, before making a decision, what is in the *Guide to Operations of Family Campgrounds* which was incorporated into the proposed regulation.
- Regarding 6.T.2.23, he spoke about nitrogen loading which, he said, could overload the carrying capacity of nearby wells.
- He stated disagreement with the Applicant's Planner regarding his statement that glamping is equivalent to residential uses because they both provide shelter. Attorney Ainsworth stated that so does a stable, barn, motel, brothel, hotel, air B&B. He said that shelter is broad and that glamping is its own thing, not equivalent to residential. He explained that residential and farming are compatible with each other, but commercial uses are not.

Attorney Ainsworth stated the following in closing:

- This proposal fundamentally changes the zoning scheme in Brooklyn;
- It leaves loopholes that allow for nuisance levels of activity;
- It lacks sufficient standards to protect existing neighborhood homes;
- Where standards have been proposed, they are, as a practical matter, unenforceable;
- This does not protect agriculture;
- The text amendment isn't really needed. He referred to Section 6.G.1 Conservation Subdivision.

- He said that his clients urge the Commission not to experiment on the Town of Brooklyn and to deny this Application. He said that the Glamping Industry knows that there are no glamping regulations in Connecticut and, if this passes, they will want to use it as a model. He said that the motivation for this is being driven by investors.
- Attorney Ainsworth stated that he disagrees with the fundamental concept of protect the farm at all costs because, at some point, it's no longer a farm. Are you protecting a farm or converting it?

David Loughlin, stated that he is one of the people who edited and helped pay for the ad in the *Shopper's Guide*. His concerns include:

- Number of properties that are eligible could change;
- It is unclear whether the 125 acres must be a contiguous parcel;
- Destruction of natural/wildlife habitat;
- Increased run-off;
- Camping can't be found in the State of CT Agriculture or the POCD;
- Recently the PZC did not change commercial to residential behind CVS, he hopes that the PZC would not now perform the opposite action by allowing commercial development inside of the RA Zone;
- Little Dipper Farm is not a family farm trying to keep their heads above water;
- He asked PZC to reject this Application.

Debbie Cornman, Bush Hill Road, read a prepared statement in opposition (submitted for the record). She referred to, and read from, the Regulations regarding the PZC's duty to protect residents. Her concerns include:

- How the maximum occupancy of 250 will be enforced.
- How will theft, vandalism and trespassing be prevented?
- Glampers carrying guns, mixed with alcohol.
- Will hunting be allowed on the land? Will they follow safe hunting practices?
- Only one resident trooper which is currently insufficient.
- She and her neighbors won't feel or be safe to walk in her Community anymore if this proposal is approved due to hundreds of people coming into the Community and increased traffic.
- Fire. Will Firelight Camps out of Ithica, NY, enforce and protect?
- Mental health and well-being due to noise. Will decibel levels be measured and controlled? How late into the night will noise be permitted? Who will enforce?
- She said that this is a very risky experiment being done on a large scale.
- Property value.
- Quality of life.
- Character of Brooklyn.
- She asked that the Commission deny the Application.

Todd Clark, Wolf Den Road, abutter to the property, spoke in opposition. His concerns include:

- Whether, if approved, the 125 contiguous acres could be reduced to 40 or 50 acres in the future;
- He is concerned about the 30-acre pond on the property, loss of natural habitat, conservation; water contamination with invasive species;
- Noise;
- Traffic;
- What if Little Dipper Farm sells the property after approvals are in place;

- Absent landlords;
- Marijuana;
- Brooklyn has never allowed campgrounds or new mobile homes unless you are replacing one that was there prior to Zoning.
- He asked that the Application be denied.

Jim Doherty, Bush Hill Road, said that a lot of his concerns had already been brought up. He added the following and read part of a prepared statement (submitted for the record):

- Bush Hill Road and Wolf Den Road are considered scenic roads each with 500 cars per day and are 18-feet wide in some areas which is narrow. He has concerns about increased traffic. The Applicant's Traffic Engineer said that traffic could increase by 30 percent or more. The roads are not designed for that amount of traffic. He is also concerned about increased litter with the increase in traffic.
- How will the maximum of 250 people be enforced? Does it include the 100 seats in the restaurant?
- Noise. He said that the decibel limit at the property line is 70. He explained that sound travels long distances.
- He said that many valid concerns have been raised that need to be considered before any decision can be made.
- He said that this development will clearly destroy the character of the scenic area, specifically, an iconic property that is listed on the Historic Register and already has development restrictions to control what goes there.
- He asked the Commission to deny the Application.

Norman Berman, Bush Hill Road, stated that many of his concerns had already been touched on by others. He read from a prepared statement in opposition of the Application (submitted for the record).

- Excerpts from articles regarding glamping, which he read aloud, were included in his letter.
- He urged the Commission to deny the Application.

At this time, 9:01 p.m. M. Sigfridson called for a five minute break. The public hearing resumed at 9:07 p.m.

Maria Gandy Winslow, spoke as a real estate broker and represented other residents, as well as herself. She read aloud from a prepared statement in opposition as a Broker's Opinion (submitted for the record). In her opinion, the Application should be rejected to protect the Town's public health, safety, welfare, natural habitat and property values. She stated that she had attached, to her submittal, a comparison of campgrounds with sites around their ponds, Yelp Reviews, Trip Advisor Reviews, and Firelight Camps Reviews, which she said would address a lot of the public's concern of worst case scenario.

Jacqueline Igliazzi read aloud a prepared statement in opposition. She said that permitting glamp-grounds in the RA Zone will impose financial burdens onto the Town's taxpayers and to the Town itself. She said that approving this text amendment is in direct conflict with the Statutory purposes of Brooklyn's Zoning Regulations. Her concerns include:

- Staff structures;
- Four times increase in the number of dwelling in this area (from 82 people to 332 people) and four times the traffic, noise, demand for water, waste; and four times the risk of pollution, trash and fire.

- More calls for police, fire and rescues.
- Roads will need to be widened and straightened.
- Glamp-grounds are water hogs. Water is a shared resource.
- Decreased property values due to increased risk of fire.
- Increase in homeowner's insurance rates.
- She asked that the Commission reject the Application.

Hans Koehl, Bush Hill Road, his concerns include:

- He referred to the POCD noting that preserving farmland is the #1 priority.
- The proposed regulate does not state whether the 125 acres must be a single, contiguous parcel and it also does not state that it cannot include land that is on which the development rights have been sold, even if that use is passive.
- No hours or months of operation are stated.
- What would happen if business is not successful or terminated for other reasons? He said that this could, potentially, put a huge tax burden on the Brooklyn taxpayers.
- He said that this needs serious consideration.

Stan Karro stated that the Agriculture Commission was originally, fairly enthused about the idea, but as things moved forward they became concerned about issues regarding glamping. Mr. Karro said that he was speaking in support of the neighbors. He hopes that the property will be preserved. He asked that the PZC reject the Application.

Karl Lieder spoke in favor.

- He commented that we all value the property and the Applicant does as well. He said that they are trying to address as many of the residents' concerns as they can. He said that they could have 500 cattle there or they could have swine. There are all sorts of things that could happen there. He said that we are all scared, even the owners, but he explained that change is inevitable. He said that what they are proposing, in many ways, is better than what he sees happening in other places. He hopes we can all work together to make it even better to be something we can all live with.

Mark Olivo stated that some of his concern had already been brought up. He noted the following:

- There is no maximum acreage stated.
- No maximum of units/sites.
- He has concerns about safety, medical, fire and infrastructure as these were not clearly defined in the requirements. He said these need to be taken into consideration as there is not enough detail to make an informed decision.

Mary Kalencik, TLC Yard Care, (letter included in packets to Commission Members) spoke in favor.

- She said that she has reviewed all of the information regarding the Application.
- She said that she has had conversations with a lot of people in Town and, while most of them have a lot of questions, they are not opposed to the plan.
- She attended the dark sky event last week which she said was wonderful.
- All properties hold the potential for development. It is progress.
- It saddens her that the Booth's have spoken out against this plan.
- She said that septic, well water, and traffic concerns are valid and are being addressed by paid professionals. She said that fire concerns need to be addressed by the Town and the Fire Department. She noted that there is a 26-acre pond on the property.

- She commented about the ad that was in the *Turnpike Buyer*, the letter that was in *The Villager*, and comments that had been made by a Realtor.
- She said that the primary goal of the Applicant is to provide educational opportunities to people which will likely benefit our schools, our Parks & Recreation Department, our senior citizens and our entire Community.
- Much like Allen Hill Farm, Lapsley Orchard, Wright's Mill Farm and Stonehurst, Little Dipper Farm will bring visitors and revenue to the Town. She said that in four years, she has never gotten caught in traffic at any of them.
- She said that she believes that alcohol will be used responsibly, drugs will be prohibited unless they are legal, there will be rules about noise and there will be rules about lights. She said that the night sky is one of their greatest assets.
- She said that people will go there to enjoy the land and learn, there will be glamping where stunning nature meets luxury and the Town and every one of us will benefit from it, even those who are against it.

Kathy Poisson, Day Street, said that did not know about the public hearing, but she saw the ad in the *Turnpike Buyer*. She is opposed.

- She asked the Commission to reject the Application.
 - She does not feel that the fire, police and EMT services are equipped to handle this.
 - She asked if it would make sense to put it out for a referendum since it affects so much land in Town.
- M. Sigfridson stated that a referendum is not the procedure for a zone change.

Lachelle Rosinsky spoke of her concerns:

- She explained that she is a short-term rental owner and she feels that is what the proposal is. She explained that there is no mention of a minimum number of nights' stay in the proposal. She feels it needs to be added.
- She said that, if approved as it is, Brooklyn will be dealing with short-term rental issues.
- She spoke about a resort tax of 4-8 percent that she has to pay on every short-term rental.
- She said that this is not farming or agriculture, it is a short-term rental opportunity, an investment.
- She said that this opens up a whole other aspect that Brooklyn needs to be aware of.

There were no comments via Zoom.

Nathaniel Aarons – J. Roberson read aloud his questions/comments:

- 125 acres, yet only 200 feet from property lines. He suggested 1,000 feet from property lines.
- Lives next to an air B&B which pretty much has a pool in his backyard. Super annoying, noise, language not appropriate for his kids.
- He sees how this creates jobs, but does it generate revenue?
- Lodging tax?
- Occupancy fee?
- Hotel tax?
- \$1 per person per night tax?

J. Roberson stated that Mary Kalencik had submitted two pages of testimony, but has requested that the first page be removed from the record. What she wants included is the letter that is on her business letterhead.

J. Roberson entered into the record the following corrections:

- Brooklyn does not have municipally designated Historic Districts. Brooklyn does have National Registered Historic Districts and Bush Hill is one of them.
- New mobile homes were permitted in Brooklyn for the first 20 years of Zoning (1972-1992).
- There was a statement made that Wolf Den Road is a scenic road. She is not aware of Wolf Den Road being designated as a local scenic road. Bush Hill Road is a Town designated scenic road. M. Sigfridson stated agreement. Ms. Roberson will look into it.

Ms. Sigfridson suggested continuing the public hearing to give more opportunity for public commentary.

Attorney Cerrone stated that she would like to wait until the next session of the public hearing to make further comments.

Motion was made by L. Herring to continue the public hearing for **ZRC 22-007: Revisions to the Residential-Agricultural Zone to allow Glamping as a Special Permit Use with specific standards, including Section 2.B Definitions, Section 3.C.2.4. Permitted Uses in the RA Zone, and Section 6.T Standards for Glamping,** to the next regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to be held on November 15, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. at the Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium, 119 Gorman Road, Brooklyn, CT and via Zoom.

Second by A. Fitzgerald.

Discussion: C. Kelleher asked about getting advice from the Land Use Attorney before the November 15th meeting.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (7-0-0).

d. **Other Unfinished Business:**

1. Plan of Conservation and Development Update – Housing Chapter.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to adopt the Brooklyn Housing Plan 2022-2027, originally prepared in accordance with CT General Statutes Sec. 8-30j, as an amendment to the Brooklyn Plan of Conservation and Development as described in CT General Statutes Sec. 8-23 and specifically as the new housing chapter to replace the previous chapter on housing. The amendment will become effective fifteen days from the publication of the legal notice.

Second by S. Pember.

Discussion: S. Pember stated that Ms. Roberson did a terrific job.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (7-0-0).

2. **ZRC 22-007: Revisions to the Residential-Agricultural Zone to allow Glamping as a Special Permit Use with specific standards, including Section 2.B Definitions, Section 3.C.2.4. Permitted Uses in the RA Zone, and Section 6.T Standards for Glamping.** – Continued to November 15, 2022.

VII. New Business:

- a. **Applications:** None.
- b. **Other New Business:** None.

VIII. Reports of Officers and Committees:

a. Staff Reports

Margaret Washburn's Report dated October 31, 2022 was included in packets to Commission Members.

b. Budget Update – No discussion.

c. Correspondence – None.

d. Chairman's Report – None.

IX. Public Commentary – None.

X. Adjourn

M. Sigfridson adjourned the meeting at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Secretary