

**TOWN OF BROOKLYN  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, November 15, 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: <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84765564828">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84765564828</a>	or Go to <a href="https://www.zoom.us/join">https://www.zoom.us/join</a> Enter meeting ID: 847 6556 4828
Dial: 1-646-558-8656 Enter meeting number: 847 6556 4828, then press #, Press # again to enter meeting	

**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, Seth Pember, Gill Maiato; Brian Simmons and Karl Avanecean (all were present in person). Sara Deshaies was present via Zoom. John Haefele was absent with notice.

**Staff Present:** Jana Roberson, Town Planner and Director of Community Development; Austin Tanner, First Selectman (both present in person).

**Also Present in Person:** Attorney Kathleen Cerrone, The Northeast Law Center; Lori Corriveau, Little Dipper Farm; Venus Corriveau, Little Dipper Farm; Sara Mooney, Farm Director at Little Dipper Farm; J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary. There were approximately fifty additional people in the audience.

**Present via Zoom:** Courtney Squire; Denise Brierley; D. Wimmer; Spiro Haveles; Christa Haveles; Bob Kelleher; Carrie Horton; J. Igliozi; Dalia Belliveau.

**III. Seating of Alternates**

Motion was made by C. Kelleher to seat Brian Simmons as a Regular Member for this meeting (November 15, 2022), in the absence of J. Haefele.  
Second by A. Fitzgerald. No discussion.  
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

**IV. Adoption of Minutes:** Meeting November 2, 2022

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 2, 2022, as presented.  
Second by B. Simmons. No discussion.  
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (7-0-0).

**V. Public Commentary** – None.

**VI. Unfinished Business:**

a. **Reading of Legal Notices:** Read at a previous meeting.

b. **Continued 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.

Attorney Kathleen Cerrone presented her rebuttal to comments that had been made at the November 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing. She requested that she be allowed time to speak again before deliberation by the Commission. Attorney Cerrone's comments included the following:

- Attorney Cerrone feels that the way that the public commentary was presented on November 2<sup>nd</sup> made an impression on her clients and on the Commission. She explained about "opposition work" and stated that Attorney Ainsworth has not identified the 30 or 40 Brooklyn residents that he says he is representing. Attorney Ainsworth was allowed additional time to speak on behalf of his clients, but then, many of his clients may have also spoken about similar points themselves, which may have manufactured the impression that there is more opposition to this Application than actually exists.
- Since the November 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing ran late into the evening, many speakers who support the Application had to leave prior to being heard. Some were so put off by the vitriol and heckling that they did not speak.
- Attorney Ainsworth did not present any experts to back up his claims about such things as decibel levels, lighting and groundwater nitrogen levels. The only expert that has spoken to this Application is the Applicant's Planner, Dr. Donald Poland.
- Attorney Cerrone stated that these are important factors that the Commission should keep in mind when determining how much weight to place upon the public comments.
- Regarding Attorney Ainsworth's suggestion that a glamping text amendment is not needed because the Zoning framework for a conservation subdivision is already in place in the Regulations (Section 6.G.1), she asked if that is preferable to the Commission or would they want to build flexibility into the Zoning structure so that a well thought-out glamp-ground that has been put through the special permit process could possibly be considered instead of a residential development or does the Commission want to exclude the glamping option altogether? This is the question before the Commission.
- Attorney Cerrone said that if the Commission follows Attorney Ainsworth's logic, a text amendment would never be able to be passed in a large zone and that is not true. She explained that the Application was thoughtfully put together by an expert Planner so that the size, setback and area requirements to permit glamping are so large that very few parcels would apply. She explained that suggesting a new use in a particular zone is community planning and that it is the Commission's job to analyze and make a decision to put in guidelines for the best use of the Zone.
- Regarding fear mongering about converting a farm entirely to glamping, Attorney Cerrone explained that currently, in the RA Zone a farm could be entirely converted to low-density residential uses and residential subdivisions. She gave examples of uses that could currently be allowed with and without a special permit. Glamping would provide a use

compatible with farming instead of conversions of the land which could be done without a text amendment.

- Attorney Ainsworth did not object to a glamp-ground as much as he objected to a wedding venue and party center. Attorney Cerrone noted that this particular property is already a wedding venue and a venue for parties which have been conducted on the property since before Zoning was passed. She named some of the uses on the property, none of which either historically or recently, have disturbed neighbors or wildlife or anyone at all. She said that if there is fear for this property becoming a commercial use, it already is. She said that the Applicant has been 100 percent transparent in their objectives. She asked, how many buyers are out there who would purchase 588 acres, immerse themselves in the history of the land and set out to honor it? If these owners were chased away, what commercial operation would come next? She explained that, on similarly sized parcels throughout Brooklyn, there are excavation and gravel operations which are permitted uses on this land. Attorney Cerrone explained that the owners of the property want to conduct agri-tourism and their goal is to maintain the land with the highest of agri-tourism standards.
- Regarding the statement that glamping is a made-up term, Attorney Cerrone stated that glamping is defined in the dictionary as, “outdoor camping with amenities and comforts such as beds, lighting and access to indoor plumbing, not usually used when camping.” The first known use of this word was in 2005 and is a combination of glamour/glamorous and camping. There is no definition of glamping as a commercial campground, as claimed by Attorney Ainsworth, and has never been associated as such a phrase. Attorney Cerrone said that Attorney Ainsworth quoted from an article (which she believes is the only source he used) stating that glamping is a growth industry. She asked if that is a negative and stated that what that shows is that quiet, respectful, high-end glamping is taking off as a viable way for people to come and enjoy farmland. She asked if that is wanted as an option in Brooklyn’s Zoning framework.
- Regarding conjecture about what an investor might do with glamping, she urged the Commission not to dabble in conjecture. She noted that a very successful restaurant and wedding venue already exists on this property and it has not devolved into a cheap bar or a tacky diner or a venue for loud, amplified music booming bass. It has not occurred and there is no reason to think that it would occur. She gave a reminder that it is not even a zoning consideration before the Commission since this property, as a wedding venue, is already grandfathered in. She said that Attorney Ainsworth’s fear mongering about the size of weddings, noise and amplified sounds, and lighting is disingenuous and not based in fact or in law or in any expert testimony whatsoever.
- Regarding concerns raised about traffic belie the fact that a traffic study would have to be a part of any special permit application process, not at this stage. Attorney Cerrone stated that there has not been a single traffic expert that would speak against this Applications. She said that there was a reference to the Applicant’s own traffic expert, but she reminded the Commission that he was speaking to the Planned Development Zone Application. She stated that the Text Amendment Application is focused upon one main question, “Do you want this use as an option in your Zoning framework?”

- Attorney Cerrone explained that to deny this Application based on concerns about sound, you would need an expert to explain amplification and decibels. The only testimony heard were statements from Attorney Ainsworth who is not an expert in decibels or sound. This issue would also be considered as part of the special permit application process. Attorney Cerrone explained that you cannot jump to the conclusion that by simply defining glamping as a use will create glamping-related sound problems throughout the whole RA Zone.
- The suggestion that a large crowd of 1,000 people would be snuck onto the property in flagrant violation of a maximum capacity, which the Applicants themselves suggest, is offensive and disingenuous.
- Attorney Cerrone referred to an ad published on October 26, 2022, in the *Turnpike Buyer* which belittled this Application. Some speakers at the last public hearing session claimed it as their own writing. Attorney Cerrone stated that this tactic was a shocking and appalling attempt to derail the Commission's process in conducting a public hearing and that it is close to libel and slander against the Applicant. She said that it can also be viewed as an attempt to influence and poison the opinions of the residents of Brooklyn just before the public hearing commenced. Attorney Cerrone entered the ad into the record with counterpoints (dated November 10, 2022) provided by the Applicant's Planning Expert, Dr. Donald Poland, in an attempt to correct the bias intended by the ad. She also added into the record, the full resume of Dr. Donald Poland who was unable to attend tonight, but asked that his counterpoints be read into the record so that they may be considered in their entirety by the Commission. Attorney Cerrone provided copies of the three documents to Commission Members and, then, read aloud Dr. Poland's memo regarding the ad that had been published in the *Turnpike Buyer* which, he states, is outside the norms of decorum and the integrity of a transparent land use application process. He further states that such an advertisement can also be construed as an attempt to influence the Planning and Zoning Commission before the public hearing has been formally opened. Dr. Poland's response to the *Turnpike Buyer* advertisement included the following points:
  - Glamping is not designed to change the unique character of a rural and peaceful town, but rather to help people come and enjoy it.
  - There are not ten locations where glamping could be allowed at this time.
  - Infrastructure is similar and less than a typical residential development.
  - Glamping by definition sets itself apart from trailer parks and motels. They are not at all the same, maybe a hotel-like experience. The impact on the land is much less intensive.
  - If trailers were to be used, they would have to be high-end with wheel removed and installed on platforms. Special permit use and language used in the proposed text amendment provide the PZC discretion to ensure that trailers use as units are high-end.
  - It is false to claim that a glamp-ground would be run by an "absentee commercial operator." There is no application for a glamp-ground before the PZC, so it is impossible to know who the operator would be at that time. Attorney Cerrone explained that many businesses are operated from corporate addresses from outside of the community in which they are located.

- There is nothing in the proposed text amendment that states that “numerous cottages, bunk houses, barns or utility buildings” will be constructed. It simply allows for glamping units and related structures to facilitate the operation of the glamp-ground. The number and type of such structures are unknown at this time as there is no application proposed for a glamp-ground. This would be considered as part of the special permit application process.
- There is no proposal to provide for “giant entertainment tents for lighted, sound-amplified outdoor events and concerts.” The proposed text amendment simply allows for customary and incidental uses that will need to be identified in any application for site plan and special permit which provides the PZC discretion.
- The proposed text amendment do not explicitly allow for stores, fast-food facilities or bars. It allows for food service from a menu-style restaurant, including a commercial kitchen. As part of food and beverage service, alcohol is permitted in accordance with State law. How these services would be provided would be part of the site plan/special permit application process. Attorney Cerrone noted that a retail store had been run alongside the restaurant on this particular property by past owners prior to the institution of Zoning in Brooklyn. Therefore, that use is grandfathered in.
- There are no “new roads” proposed as part of the text amendment application. Simply an access drive to the glamp-ground and internal drives to facilitate access to the glamping units.
- There is nothing that implies “increased water run-off and potential harm to groundwater supply.” Any application for site plan/special permit must comply with Section 7.H – Storm Water Management and the State of CT Storm Water Manual.
- There is no quantitative evidence or expert testimony that the proposed glamping use or the potential number of people (Rogers/visitors/employees) would cause “traffic, noise, litter, trash, congestion and pollution.” These considerations would be part of the special permit application process.
- No evidence has been provided to claim “destruction of wildlife habitat.” There is no application showing how such a glamp-ground would be designed to even make such a claim. Destruction of habitat would be counterproductive to the glamping experience and the aim of agri-tourism to bring people closer to nature and to enjoy the wildlife.
- The suggestion of public safety threats is disingenuous and inflammatory. Glamping is a high-end experience contrary to any public safety threats. Does anyone really believe that people in their glamping vacation are going to commit “property crimes” or “vandalizing” properties in Brooklyn?
- Any claims on increased emergency demands are unsubstantiated. These are occurrences of daily life that are beyond the scope and authority of Zoning.
- Dr. Poland reviewed extensive academic research on the impacts of the uses, especially on the impact of property values including residential property values. He has never come across a study of campgrounds or glamp-grounds, nor has he found any in any recent search. Most importantly, the large body of research on land uses and property value impacts consistently find that it is only the most

noxious uses (power plants, heavy manufacturing, dumps, airports and prisons) that negatively impact property values. Commercial uses have been found to have positive impacts on property values due to their amenity value that they contribute to the community. Based on Dr. Poland's research he does not find it plausible that glamping would negatively impact property values. To make such an unsubstantiated claim is inflammatory and false. Glamping can enhance property values by allowing the area to become a destination with a great reputation for beauty.

- It is also false and inflammatory to claim that glamping will destroy "family farm agriculture." The Applicant for the proposed text amendment is a family farm founded on an ethos of preserving agriculture. Why would they propose a use that would destroy the core value of their business?
- Property owners have the right to propose uses as do other property owners and residents have the right to be heard as part of the public hearing process on any zoning text amendment application. Zoning is about the reasonable use of land regardless of ownership and owners. Today, zoning is less about threats to our safety and more about adaptability to change. Unfortunately, we often fear change. Personal attacks, fear mongering and inflammatory claims have no place in zoning decisions.
- The proposed text amendment before the PZC for consideration is a thoughtful and rational plan for the use of land. It embodies all of the hallmarks of a modern zoning provision: provides detailed definitions; dimensional requirements; and the conditional use, specifically the special permit application approach, to ensure that the PZC has both input and discretion in any proposed application for such a use. The text amendment provides predictability and confidence. There is no uncertainty as to what can be proposed or what can be approved or denied. There is no reason for any fear of the unknown. The tactic displayed in the advertisement should be discounted by the Commission and its falsehoods should be rejected. In recognition that this text amendment has been thoughtfully presented, it should be approved or approved with any modifications that the Commission finds to be necessary under its own Regulations.

Attorney Cerrone explained that, once again, this Applicant has taken to heart the input received and directed their Expert Planner to proposed certain modifications to the Application which had been provided prior to tonight's public hearing so that the Commission would have an opportunity to review them in detail. She explained that the modifications are aimed to reduce the density of each glamp-ground, reduce the number of staff housing structures from five to three, reduce the required parking, and spell out the context-sensitive design that glamp-grounds would have to fit in with the character of the area and the physical character of the proposed site, and take into account the proximity of neighboring properties and uses.

Attorney Cerrone stated that this Applicant, Little Dipper Farm, LLC and its Members have been honest, forthright and transparent in their intended use for this land. She explained that there has been so much conjecture, that she asked

her client to speak. She introduced Lori and Venus Corriveau as well as Sara Mooney, a member of their farming team.

Lori Corriveau read from a prepared statement and spoke about herself and how she and Venus came to Town and purchased an historic, hospitality business. They had a business plan and a bank loan to bring the property back to life. She spoke about the history of the property prior to their owning it. She spoke about how the 97 acres along Bush Hill Road and Wolf Den Road are protected in an agricultural easement with the State of Connecticut. The additional 488 acres are classified as forest and open space. She explained that they are not asking for a text amendment to allow glamping as a use in the prime agricultural soils on the property. She spoke of glamping experiences that she has had, about the nature experience at the Little Dipper Farm and about seed-to-plate creations in the restaurant. She explained how glamping would allow their property, in its entirety, to remain viable with a less intensive use than a housing development would be (the most likely alternative). She spoke about what a glamping experience could be like at the Little Dipper Farm which would also help other area businesses to prosper as well as the Town. She stated that the PZC should approve the proposal and she spoke of how the proposal fully conforms to the Brooklyn POCD while allowing them, as Brooklyn landowners, to realize the potential of the property while also providing significant economic drivers for the entire Town and Region as a whole.

Venus Corriveau read from a prepared statement and spoke about the positive things happening, over the first year, at the Little Dipper Farm: They have now have almost 75 members (30 percent local and 10 percent Brooklyn residents); foraging night; dark night sky event; Community Day in June; School Day; 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Harvest Festival (which had many events with over 200 people in attendance). She said that their vision is simple, thoughtful and good for the Town of Brooklyn. She asked that the Commission approve the proposal as it will not only make their full business plan viable, but will make their vision come to life in its full potential.

Sara Mooney, Farm Director at Little Dipper Farm, spoke about how she was energized to do good work with great people to develop a farm program for a real, vital farm that preserves the health of the land and inspires people to love it by demonstrating the vital connection between nature and farming. She explained that farming has never been an easy way to make a living. She spoke of the farming activity at the farm: Rebuilt the farm greenhouse; re-established the main garden and started several others; planted a field of elderberries; built trails; a large mushroom grow space in the woods; hired four students from the Killingly High School Ag Program; collaborated with a bee company; raised, harvested and sold hundreds of pounds of fresh produce at their farm stand and at the Brooklyn Farmer's Market; and she spoke of other events that have also taken place for farm members and the community at large. She said that they have demonstrated how a modern, regenerative approach to farming will sustain this farm and benefit all of Brooklyn. She noted that with all of the events, including the Harvest Festival, there have been no complaints from the neighbors. She said that she has dedicated her adult life to the healthy production of good food and protection of natural resources. She said that they have demonstrated again and again that they are here to do the right thing for this farm and their community.

M. Sigfridson suggested that the Dr. Poland's modifications to the proposal be discussed at this time (included in packets to Commission Members). Attorney Cerrone reviewed the information in Dr. Poland's memo:

- Reduce the number of total sites that could be multiple units from 50 percent to 25 percent.
- Reduce the glamping unit height from 18 feet to 15 feet.
- Clarify that if glamp-grounds provide food service, it shall be a menu-style restaurant food service.
- Reduce the number of staffing structures from five to no more than three.
- Reduce maximum occupancy from 250 to 225 including both, lodging and events.
- Reduce parking from 1.75 spaces per glamping unit to 1.5 spaces per glamping unit.
- Add Section 6.T.2, which would provide standards for the glamp-grounds and would be considered as part of the special permit application process.
- Infrastructure and design would be in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Zoning Regulations (parking and off-site impacts).

J. Roberson commented about a term that had been used – prime farming. She clarified that it is prime farmland soils. She stated that it is not in the proposal. Ms. Roberson referred to and read aloud from Section 6.T.2.5. She clarified that a suitable acre would be an acre with no designated wetlands soils or watercourses. Attorney Cerrone stated that the Applicant would be open to a modification that should an acre be identified as prime farming, that they not put a glamping site on that acre.

M. Sigfridson asked about the language regarding up to three structures for staff to be constructed (which seems like an accessory use) in addition to the glamping units. She said that there is no similar provision for food service-type structures. She asked where in the Regulations it would allow for that type of structure. She noted that classrooms and bathhouses are not listed in the Standards. Attorney Cerrone explained that the Applicant would need to show the Commission where the commercial kitchen would be located and propose that. Attorney Cerrone stated that they are proposing that this would not be an unstaffed glamping area. There would be 24-hour monitoring of the sites. She stated that you can run a glamp-ground without a commercial kitchen if you don't want that accessory use.

L. Herring asked about events by special permit.

There was discussion. Attorney Cerrone stated that it would be up to the Commission to consider under Section 6.J whether an event falls outside of glamping which would, then, require a special permit for that particular event. C. Kelleher stated that any events that are not grandfathered, she would like to see them subject to the Special Event Permit because it is required for other operations and to not require it for this one, would not be consistent with how we are treating others.

J. Roberson explained that the Ordinance is not the purview of the PZC, but the Events Facility special permit is. She will provide copies of both documents for informational purposes. She said that this could be addressed in a revision.

Ms. Sigfridson asked if an approval could specifically exclude events as an accessory use and require that any facility desiring to hold events also get an Event Facility Permit.



Ms. Roberson stated that it is an option. Ms. Kelleher stated agreement with Ms. Sigfridson as that is what she was also suggesting for any events that are not currently grandfathered. There was discussion. Ms. Sigfridson stated that it is not appropriate for the PZC to decide what is or is not grandfathered on that particular property at this time.

#### **COMMENTS FROM STAFF:**

J. Roberson stated that she had made a mistake on the list of qualifying parcels that meet the dimensional criteria that had been provided for the November 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing. One parcel (the Langevin parcel) has been removed from the list as almost 100 percent is permanently protected from development by Purchased Development Rights. Ms. Roberson explained that she has corrected her submission and it has been entered into the record. She noted that the green areas on the revised map/list of qualifying parcels dated November 10, 2022, represent areas that are permanently protected from development by PDR (copies were included in packets to Commission Members).

Ms. Sigfridson opened the floor to public comments. She asked that those who wanted to speak on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, but were unable to do so, speak first.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

- **Joe Bellavance** spoke on behalf of himself and his wife, residents of Brooklyn for a year-and-a-half. They have a B&B a couple of miles from the Little Dipper Farm. Mr. Bellavance read from a prepared statement in favor of the Application. They have participated in some of the events at Little Dipper and are grateful for all that they are doing to keep the land open and accessible to the public. He spoke of farming friends of his who have lost the farms that had been in their families for generations. He spoke about the facts of this Application and suggested a website (undercanvas.com) for those truly interested in finding out what glamping is which, he explained, is the opposite of large parties and loud noise. They are an expensive endeavor which are being incorporated at the edges of our National Parks. They are for people who come for the serene surroundings to sleep, in comfort, under the stars.
- **Karen Johnson**, currently a resident of Killingly, but a former PZC Member as well as Planner for the Town of Brooklyn, spoke representing Steve and Linda Trahan who live on Maynard Road. Ms. Johnson had submitted a letter prior to the November 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing and she spoke in support of the Application and of the urgency and need for options for large landowners in Brooklyn. Ms. Johnson advised the Commission that it is important to understand what the objective is that the text amendment is trying to achieve. She spoke about how gravel operations are permitted in the RA Zone. She said that the issue here is an additional option for a landowner. She spoke about the POCD and where resources are located. She noted that there is not one formula for protecting open space and large lands. She asked, on behalf of the Trahans, that the text amendment be approved.
- **Sherry Abrams**, Bush Hill Road, read a prepared statement. She feels that Dr. Poland is redefining agriculture. She said that RA Zoning was not changed to allow glamping anywhere else in Connecticut or New England. Brooklyn would be the first opportunity for this growing

industry to get a foothold in our State. She has not heard how Brooklyn and its residents would benefit.

- **Eliza Kimball**, Pomfret, feels that she will be impacted even at a mile away. She does not feel that glamping is needed here and that there are other opportunities that would not put such a terrible burden on the Town and Region's resources. She is concerned about maintaining open space and protecting wildlife habitat. She said that she did not hear terrible negativity at the last public hearing as she feels that people were speaking from their hearts and that it was nothing personal. She feels that glamping would be a terrible mistake for all of us and she feels that it will fail. She feels that people from cities wouldn't come here for mountain biking because there are other places they could go. However, some of the other activities sound wonderful. She feels that there needs to be a lot more research.
- **Kerry Youhaas**, Brooklyn resident and business owners, feels that we are not welcoming outsiders and that there is an undertone of bigotry. She feels that we are lucky that the Applicants invested the money to purchase the property and want to maintain the land as agricultural/open space. She feels that if we are worried about glamping in this area, we should also be worried about the people who are currently living in tent communities out by Paradise Lake without running water and electricity. She said that glamping is the least of our worries and she feels that what the Applicant is asking for is reasonable and that the Commission would be able to put limitations on what they would be able to do on the property. She said that there is no way to pay the bills if they leave the land completely untouched. She spoke of how it is already a wedding venue and remembers a time during the 2010's when a bride was delivered there by helicopter, but that was not disruptive. She thanked the Applicants for coming into the community and for preserving the land.
- **Debra Metsker** stated that her concern is not the Little Dipper Farm, but about changing zoning for the whole Town for the Farm (one business). She said that we don't own the land, we are just taking care of it for the next generation.
- **Jim Doherty** (had submitted a letter dated November 2, 2022) asked if Brooklyn wants to be the catalyst for glamping to begin here and spread to other communities. He does not feel that it is the right place or time. The text amendment is still too vague in the overall scope and defining things. He said that the reality is that this has nothing to do with agriculture and it will just become another commercial development. He feels that it does not meet the POCD or protect property values, safety, over-crowding or congestion issues. He said another speaker had referenced that glamping, in other parts of the country, is placed adjacent to national parks, but he said, not adjacent to residential and agricultural properties. He said that we've heard from some people on the Agriculture Commission and that is their area of expertise and they did not speak favorably on this proposal which, he feels, should be considered by the Commission. Regarding decibels, he said that you don't have to be an expert to use the computer to look it up, as he had done. He asked that the text amendment be denied.
- **An unidentified man** asked about the number of properties that currently qualify under this text amendment and if there is anything that would prevent an investor from purchasing land not currently of the right

size and combine enough parcels to create a parcel that would satisfy the size and frontage restrictions in the proposed text amendment. Ms. Roberson repeated what she had said at the initial public hearing which is that property boundaries can be adjusted quite easily. The unidentified man stated that there is no reason why this could not pop up anywhere in the 85 percent of Town represented in the proposal.

At this time, Ms. Sigfridson asked if there was anyone online who wanted to comment. Ms. Roberson stated that there was nobody indicating that they want to comment. Ms. Sigfridson stated that if there was anyone who wanted to participate remotely, they would need to indicate that they would like to do so.

Ms. Roberson stated that she had received three additional letters earlier in the day which were not included in packets to Commission Members. For the record, she stated that the letters were from the following and she gave a brief summary of each: Joseph Igliozi (who feels the Application should be denied); David Lochlan (who asked that the Application be rejected); and Henry Moses (who asked that the Regulations not be changed).

#### **COMMENTS FROM STAFF:**

J. Roberson stated the following for the record:

- The public hearing opened November 2<sup>nd</sup> and may be continued to the next regular meeting which is December 7<sup>th</sup> or it may be closed tonight. She stated that, once the public hearing is closed, no additional testimony may be received.
- Regarding concerns or changes that the Commission might be considering before the public hearing closes, the basic rule is that, if it did not come up during the public hearing, it is off the table.
- The Applicant has the right to rebut any information or facts brought up during the public hearing.
- The Commission will be allowed to deliberate after the public hearing is closed.
- Ms. Roberson referred to her Staff Guidance (dated 11/5/2022) in which she included references to the Connecticut General Statutes concerning how the PZC makes decisions. She also referenced Attorney Cerrone's letter dated October 28, 2022, submitted with her testimony, which identifies, specifically, Statutes and Case Law relative to a Planning and Zoning Commission making a zoning regulation change.

#### **Things that must be considered by Statute:**

- The Zoning Regulations and the Zoning Map together.
- The Plan of Conservation and Development (recently amended). Dr. Poland addressed in his testimony/letter that there is no specific mention of glamping in the POCD. However, he has outlined, in his testimony, statements from the POCD that he finds are somewhat related to glamping.
- The Statutes require that the Commission determine that the Regulation change, if proposing to adopt it, will aid in protecting the public health, safety and welfare or property values, and attain the purposes of the Regulations.

#### **Things that the Commission may consider:**

- Public comments. Ms. Roberson explained that the individual decisions of each Commission Member will be the collective vote.

Ms. Roberson offered to any questions regarding process.

### COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- **M. Sigfridson** explained that she feels that the proposed amendment tries to address concerns from abutters, about disruption to the residential uses in several ways:
  - Proposed 6.T.2.4 – She suggested possibly increasing the buffer.  
Attorney Cerrone explained that these are overnight stay facilities and there is no amplified sound from the glamping units. They are places to sleep and there are one to three per acre. She suggested that the 200 feet is more than sufficient. She stated that the modifications added Section 7. She stated that an Applicant with a large parcel would have no objection to expanding the buffer requirement.
- **Austin Tanner** read from a prepared statement in support of the Application noting that the special permit process allows the Commission discretion to impose limitations. He spoke of compromise and being open-minded toward new ideas to sustain the majority of the land as scenic and open. He feels that the glamping idea enhances by bringing farm and city together for a learning experience. He commended the Applicant for the amount of care that had been put into preparing the Application.
- **L. Herring** commented that someone else may come before the Commission wanting to have a glamping space that is different than saving farmland.
- **C. Kelleher** would like the Conservation Commission to provide input.  
J. Roberson explained that there would be an opportunity for the Conservation Commission to weigh in, if they choose to, because they will be meeting before the PZC meets again.  
M. Sigfridson agreed with reaching out to the Conservation Commission for their comments. The public hearing would need to be left open to receive their comments.  
Ms. Roberson stated that she had forwarded the proposed Regulation change to Chief Breen of the Mortlake Fire Department. Chief Breen reviewed the proposal and replied that it would be more appropriate to discuss during the special permit process should this Application be approved.
- **B. Simmons** asked if the public hearing is open to receive comments from Brooklyn residents only or if others can comment also.  
J. Roberson explained that residents from other towns may also submit testimony.  
Attorney Cerrone commented, legally, that it is up to the Commission how much weight they put on different public input. Presumably, if someone doesn't live in Brooklyn, you would put less weight on their comments than for someone who lives in Town.
- **A. Fitzgerald** asked when the text changes (revisions) were submitted and posted.  
Ms. Roberson stated that she received them on November 10<sup>th</sup> and that she posted them on the PZC's web page on that same day. She explained that the full text is available there under the heading "Glamping Proposal."

**Mr. Fitzgerald** asked if the Applicant would consider adding “quiet time” (before 9 a.m. / after 9 p.m.) like campgrounds have.

Attorney Cerrone stated that the Applicant would have no objection to that.

**Mr. Fitzgerald** asked about the height reduction from 18 feet to 15 feet. He asked if there is a square footage requirement. He feels that the language is vague.

Attorney Cerrone explained that it would have to fit into the required 1250 sq. ft. footprint. There was discussion. J. Roberson read aloud Section 6.T.2.6 of the revised proposed language.

Ms. Sigfridson asked if the Applicant would consider a maximum square footage for each unit. There was discussion regarding density and clustering. Ms. Sigfridson said that we should try to not leave it open to interpretation. The Commission should figure out what its preference is and make sure that it is drafted clearly to effectuate that intent.

Mr. Fitzgerald feels that it should be defined by the square footage of the structure, not just by the height.

Ms. Sigfridson stated that answers to these questions would be needed.

S. Pember commented that he feels that the square footage needs to be included because the description isn’t just yurts (there are trailers, teepees, etc.). He feels that a maximum square footage on each unit should be set regardless of whether we go ahead with this proposal or not. He feels more research should be done and he agrees that the Conservation Commission should be asked to weigh in, even if they send it back saying that they need a site plan.

- L. Herring and R. Roberson explained about the need for the Commission to discuss these issues before the public hearing is closed.
- M. Sigfridson asked why the platforms are needed.  
Lori Corriveau explained that it differentiates from a typical campground. It makes it more of an investment/higher-end experience.

Mr. Fitzgerald added that it makes a difference rather than being on the ground and it minimizes the impact to the land (erosion).

Ms. Sigfridson asked if there was anyone online indicating that they wanted to speak. There were none.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

- Scott Winslow, 233 Herrick Road, commented that, at the last public hearing, there were two 125-acre parcels identified for the allowable glamping portion that have not been identified this evening. He asked that they be considered by the Commission.
- Mr. Clark asked, if this Application is approved and the glamp-ground comes into Town, could we see three 125-acre glamp-grounds on Little Dipper’s 488 contiguous acres. Instead of a maximum of 250 people, it would be 750 people. He said that, if this goes through, everybody with 125 acres will probably be getting offers to sell. If you have 300 acres, could you have two separate glamp-grounds on your property?

Attorney Cerrone explained that it would be subject to special permit application. The Commission would decide whether it would be appropriate for that particular property. The Commission could limit the number of units and glamping sites. There was discussion.

Attorney Cerrone offered that, to refine this Application based on the Commission's input, they could have their Expert Planner come back on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Attorney Cerrone gave an example that the Commission could require that there be a mile between two glamp-grounds.

Ms. Sigfridson asked that the Applicant inform their Planner that this is a concern of the Commission and the Community.

Discussion continued.

C. Kelleher suggested that there be only one glamp-ground allowed on any one parcel. Ms. Sigfridson stated that the threat still remains if they have separate parcels.

Ms. Roberson stated that parcel boundaries can change and free-splits can happen and she said that the Applicant has offered to address these concerns in a revision.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS VIA ZOOM:**

- **Dalia Belliveau**, stated that she had submitted two letters. She said that her primary concern is not so much with the glamping as much as the actual decision that the Commission will have to make concerning her property which is residential and agricultural and she wants to keep it that way. She said that she is opposed to the Application. She asked if it is true that this proposal affects the entire Town when it comes to the change of residential and agricultural. She said that the effort to reach out to the Community is as strong as it should be because one Applicant could affect all of us. She said that she has contacted the Farmers' Union and the Fire Commission. She suggests that the State Police be contacted as only one Resident Officer is assigned to us. She is concerned about changing residential agricultural and adding commercial to meet the needs of one Applicant. She added that the term for agriculture at the Federal or State level has is no mention of glamping, camping or anything like that. So, she feels that Brooklyn would be making a decision to come up with its own definition of agriculture and is probably the only Town in the State doing that. Ms. Sigfridson stated that some of Ms. Belliveau's concerns have been previously addressed. She explained that the Commission is well aware that the proposal affects the entire Town and they have discussed potential impacts with regard to scope in the Town. She explained that the Commission will rule on the Application based off of its analysis as to whether this proposal is good for the Town, not whether this proposal is good for this Applicant. Ms. Sigfridson clarified that the State of Connecticut defines agriculture and agriculture is one of the uses that is currently allowed in our RA Zone as well as other potential uses that have been discussed. The PZC does not have the authority to change the Federal or State definition of agriculture, but is being called upon to consider allowing an additional use in our RA Zone.

Ms. Sigfridson commented that there is additional information that the Commission would like to receive and consider and that leaving the public hearing open would give another chance to be heard on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Attorney Cerrone stated that if the public hearing is continued, the Applicant would do their rebuttal at the next session and she explained that they would carefully give the considerations of the Commission to their Expert Planner and ask him to attend on December 7<sup>th</sup> as his input is essential.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked where the 125 acres comes from. He asked why it wouldn't be more.

Attorney Cerrone stated that it was to limit the number of parcels that would be affected by this Application.

Lori Corriveau explained that it was 150 acres, but there were only three parcels that would qualify and Little Dipper Farms owns two of them, so it was reduced to 125. It is not their intention to monopolize.

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

**Eliza Kimball** commented that the decision that Brooklyn makes will affect and put a large burden on the entire Region and on the open space. She spoke about foundations, building codes, health codes, water and this will be a major change. She feels that not enough emphasis is being put on the Regional aspect. She stated that it's easy for Brooklyn to make this decision, but the rest of us are selling our development rights to protect open space. She said that it would be nice if other people could take that into consideration. She said that there are other options and once you've lost this open space, it's lost forever. You're never getting it back.

Motion was made by A. Fitzgerald 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 December 7, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium, 119 Gorman Road, Brooklyn, CT and via Zoom.

Second by C. Kelleher. No discussion.

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

At this time, Ms. Roberson explained that a Special Permit Application had been received: SP 22-006: Special Permit for a State Route Business Enterprise (Craftsperson) at 481 Pomfret Road, Applicant: Mindy J. Delp.

The Applicant was not present. Ms. Roberson explained that State Route Business Enterprise allows craftspersons and allows them to sell items that they make. The Applicant is a quilter and wants to sell her quilts, but would also like to sell other crafters' products.

Ms. Roberson stated that she will provide copies of the Application to Commission Members. She pointed out that one particular aspect is not consistent with the current Zoning Regulations. Ms. Roberson asked that the Commission Members review the proposal and give her guidance on how to handle it.

Ms. Roberson explained that it does not need to be added to the agenda to accept the Application. It is automatically received by default.

#### **c. New Public Hearings: None.**

d. **Other Unfinished Business:**

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. – Continued to Wednesday, December 7, 2022.

**VII. New Business:**

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

**VIII. Reports of Officers and Committees**

Ms. Roberson stated that the Quarterly Newsletter from the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies was included in packets to Commission Members.

**IX. Public Commentary** – None.

**X. Adjourn**

M. Sigfridson adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault  
Recoding Secretary