

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

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Seating of Alternates**
- IV. Adoption of Minutes:** Meeting November 2, 2022
- V. Public Commentary**
- VI. Unfinished Business:**
 - a. Reading of Legal Notices:**
 - 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.
 - 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.
- VII. New Business:**
 - a. Applications:** None.
 - b. Other New Business:** None.
- VIII. Reports of Officers and Committees**
- IX. Public Commentary**
- X. Adjourn**

Michelle Sigfridson, Chairman

**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 Haefele 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. Haefele.
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 Iglizzo 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

Little Dipper Farm:

Proposed Modifications to the Zoning Text Amendment to allow Glamp-grounds and Glamping in the RA (Residential-Agricultural) Zone

November 10, 2022

I issue and submit this memo to the Town of Brooklyn Planning and Zoning Commission for their consideration the proposed modifications (see attached Text Amendment Modifications 11/10/22) to the above-mentioned Zoning Text Amendment application. At last week's public hearing, we listened to the concerns of residents and thought carefully about the questions asked by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and we recognized that the public discourse better informed us as to reasonable concerns that can be addressed by modification to the proposed text amendment. Therefore, in our continued effort to work with the community, we have revised the proposed text amendment that we believe further address community concerns, improve the proposed text amendment, and better protect public health, safety, and welfare. In addition, the modifications further seek to preserve and protect the rural-agricultural character of the community, while providing an opportunity to "promote economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture," as recommend in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The proposed modifications include:

- Cleaning up and tighten some language.
- Reducing the allowable percent of Glamping Sites with more than one Glamping Unit. This reduction decreases the percent of such sites from 50% to 30% of the total sites. This change directly reduces the density and intensity of the use and occupancy of a Glamp-ground.
- Reducing the allowable height of Glamping Units from 18 feet to 15 feet.
- Clarifying that if Glamp-grounds provide food service, it shall be a menu style restaurant. The prior provision could be interpreted as requiring food service.
- Reducing the structures for staff accommodations, from five to three. This is in direct response to a question asked by the Commission Chairperson.
- Reducing maximum occupancy for the Glamp-ground from 250 to 225 persons. This change, as with other modifications discussed above, directly reduces the density and intensity of the use and occupancy of a Glamp-ground.
- Reduced the required parking from 1.75 spaces per Glamping Unit to 1.50 spaces. This change was made to address concerns of excessive parking and parking areas and considering the reduction in the percent of multi-unit Glamping Sites—said reduction will likely result in fewer vehicles and less the demand/need for parking spaces.
- A new provision, 6.T.2 Standards, subsection 21 was added to ensure context sensitive design of applications for Glamp-grounds and Glamping. This provision clarifies that the site design and development standards apply to Glamp-ground applications. This was added to address concerns/comment that performance standards were needed and that lighting design needed to be more than dark sky compliant.

**TOWN OF BROOKLYN
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION****REQUEST TO CHANGE:
Modifications – 11/14/22****I. Proposed Text Amendment - Glamping**

[This language in [brackets] shall not be included in the Zoning Regulations and is provided simply to offer context and understanding. All other language shall be included in the respective amendments.]

[The following definitions are proposed to be incorporated into Section 2. Words and Terms, Subsection 2.B. Definitions, of the Town of Brooklyn Zoning Regulations.]

Glamping: ~~In general,~~ Glamping is used to describe luxury camping in unique and well-designed lodging structures located in areas that offer outdoor camping experiences with amenities such as beds, electricity, heat/ac, indoor plumbing, or food and beverage service usually not used when camping traditionally.

Glamping Site: A site or small unit of land not less than 1,250 square feet that consists of one (1) to three (3) Glamping Units. Glamping Sites must be associated with and within an approved Glamp-ground.

Glamping Unit: A lodging structure designed to be occupied for transient and recreational lodging. Such structures may include, but are not limited to, safari tents, yurts, teepees, hard-sided structures, small cabins, and other similar structures. Such Glamping Units must be part of the Glamp-ground operation and located on approved Glamping Sites. Glamping Units, like hotels, are not included in the definition of a dwelling, as defined in these Regulations.

Glamp-grounds: An area or facility consisting of two or more Glamping Units, with customary and incidental accessory uses.

Glamp-grounds, Accessory Uses: Customary and incidental uses to Glamp-grounds include, but are not limited to, food and beverage service, events, retreats, classes, passive and active recreation and related facilities, bath houses, maintenance facilities, and staff accommodations.

[Section 3.C. RA Residential-Agricultural Zone, Subsection 3.C.2.4. shall be amended to establish the use by including the following in the table of uses:]

7. Glamp-grounds and Glamping	Special Permit (PZC)
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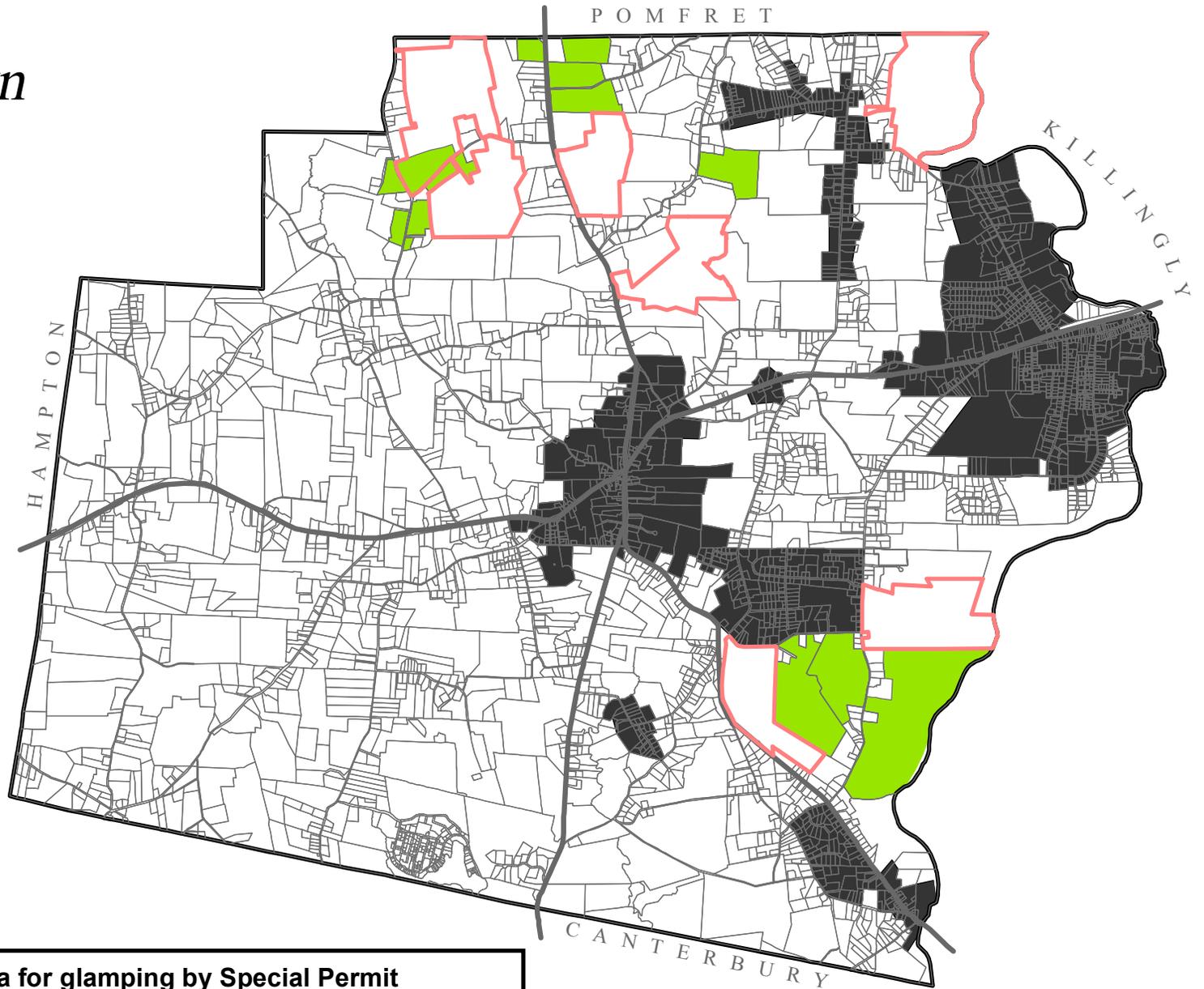
[Amend Section 6. Use-Related Provisions to include a new subsection as follows:]

6.T. Glamping
6.T.1 Purposes
<p>The intent of this regulation is to allow for Glamp-grounds and Glamping as principal uses in the RA Zone. The aim is to encourage tourism, agritourism, and economic development, while ensuring the Glamp-grounds and Glamping activities and accommodations are of such size and character to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.</p>
6.T.2 Standards
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The minimum lot size for a Glamp-ground is 125 acres. 2. The Glamp-ground parcel shall have 400 feet of street frontage. 3. No Glamping Site/Unit shall be located within 300 feet of the fronting street that provides access to the Glamp-ground facility. 4. No Glamping Site/Unit or Glamping related building shall be within 200 feet of a property line. 5. The density of Glamping Sites shall be one site per suitable acre. A suitable acre is defined by the Connecticut Department of Public Health regulations for Family Campgrounds as dry land available for unit site development—dry land meaning land not designated as wetlands or watercourse. 6. Glamping Sites shall be designed at a minimum of 1,250 square feet and Glamping Sites designed to accommodate two or three Glamping Units shall have an additional 250 square feet for each additional unit. No more than 5025% of Glamping Sites shall be designed to accommodate more than one Glamping Unit and no Glamping Site shall be designed to accommodate more than 12 persons. 7. Glamping Units shall not exceed 1815 feet in height, including the raised permanent platform. 8. All Glamping Units, at a minimum, shall be designed for three-season use and shall made of high-quality durable materials. 9. All Glamping Units shall be installed on raised permanent platforms no less than 6 inches off the ground. Any Glamping Unit that is manufactured on wheels shall be installed on the raised platforms with the wheels removed. 10. Glamp-grounds <u>providing food service</u> shall provide menu-style restaurant food service, including a commercial kitchen. 11. The primary access driveway to the Glamp-ground shall be 22 feet wide for the first 100 feet to provide adequate turning for emergency vehicle access. Internal drives shall be a minimum 12 feet wide. 12. Occupancy for Glamping Units shall be transient, and no Glamping <u>Site or</u> Unit shall be rented to the same guest for more than 14-consecutive nights or a total of 60-nights in a 12-month period. 13. Up to fivethree structures may be provided for Glamp-ground staff accommodations on-site. 14. Sufficient solid waste facilities shall be provided. All such solid waste facilities shall be screened and secured from wildlife access. 15. Maximum occupancy for the Glamp-ground shall be a total 250225 persons including both lodging and event guests. 16. The parking requirements for a Glamp-ground shall total of 1.751.50 parking spaces per Glamping Unit. Parking shall be provided in designated areas within 500 feet of Glamping Sites. A minimum of five (5) parking spaces shall be provided at lobby/check-in facility.

17. All lighting shall be dark sky compliant.
18. As part of 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.
19. As part of any application for Site Plan (Section 9.C) and Special Permit (Section 9.D), the applicant shall submit architectural information, elevations/renderings (or photographs of similar building) of proposed building, including the identification of texture, color, and type of building materials to be used.
20. The application for Site Plan (Section 9.C) and Special Permit (Section 9.D) shall locate each Glamping Site, noting the size of the Site in square feet, the number and size (square feet) of Glamping Units on each Site, and total occupancy for each site. In addition, the height of each Glamping Unit shall be provided on the plans.
21. The application for Site Plan (Section 9.C) and Special Permit (Section 9.D), as submitted by the applicant, shall employ a context sensitive design approach for the Glamp-grounds. Such an approach shall give due consideration to the character of the area, the physical character of the proposed site, proximity of neighboring properties and uses, and demonstrate to the Commission that the design of the proposed Glamp-ground and the associated uses, structures, facilities, and infrastructures are designed in accordance with the applicable provisions Chapter 7 (Basic Standards) of these Zoning Regulations and to mitigate off-site impacts.
- 21-22. The design of the Glamp-ground facilities shall comply with ADA requirements.
- 22-23. The design and operation of the Glamp-ground shall comply with the Connecticut Department of Public Health regulations for Family Campgrounds (Section 19a-2a-29 of the *Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies*).
- 23-24. Wastewater systems shall comply with the Connecticut Public Health Code.
- 24-25. Potable Water Systems shall comply with the Connecticut Public Health Code
- 25-26. All construction of buildings, structures, and Glamping Units shall comply with the Connecticut State Building Code and Connecticut State Fire Prevention Code.

Town of Brooklyn

CONNECTICUT



Legend

- Tax Parcels 2021
- PDR's
- Non-RA Zones
- RA Zone

Parcels meeting qualifying criteria for glamping by Special Permit

Parcel_ID	Acres	Location	Owner
CT-019-19-9B	239.41228	BUSH HILL RD	THE LITTLE DIPPER FARM LLC
CT-019-18-19	159.01425	WOLF DEN RD	THE LITTLE DIPPER FARM LLC
CT-019-27-8	125.17835	420 POMFRET RD	POND VIEW HOLDINGS LLC
CT-019-32-128	193.61288	430 ALLEN HILL RD	430 ALLEN HILL ROAD LLC
CT-019-26-19	150.43379	248 POMFRET RD	SANSOUCY PAUL
CT-019-32-119	137.76806	63 CREAMERY BROOK	BRODEUR LUCIEN A IRREVOCABLE TRUST
CT-019-43-5A	234.22372	DAY ST	ROCKY RIVER REALTY CO

11-10-2022 This list corrects the previous list submitted by Jana Roberson.

Jana Roberson

From: mwins@charter.net
Sent: Tuesday, November 01, 2022 10:46 PM
To: Jana Roberson
Subject: Letter of Opposition ~ Firelight Camps Yelp & Trip Advisor Reviews
Attachments: image007.jpg; image008.jpg; image010.jpg; image012.jpg; image014.jpg; image022.jpg; image023.jpg; image024.jpg; image025.jpg; image026.jpg; LDFMeeting.docx; Sunfox-Site-Map.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Evening Jana,

I'm submitting additional letter of opposition as a Brokers Opinion. This letter is longer as per the time restraints for Weds public meeting. I will try and attach a handful of the 1-2 star Yelp & Trip Advisor Reviews for the Firelight Camps together. I may have to send Trip Advisor separately.

All best,

Maria Gandy-Winslow, GRI
New England Homes & Fine Properties, LLC
Broker, Owner
860.779.1099
860.455.5541 cell

From: swins@charter.net
To: mwins@charter.net
Cc:
Sent: Monday October 31 2022 7:45:06PM
Subject: Firelight Camps Yelp Reviews

RECEIVED

NOV 2 - 2022

Good Evening Jana Roberson:

My name is Maria Gandy-Winslow. I have lived as a resident of Brooklyn for 29 yrs. I've been an active Realtor for 25 years. I am also a woman owned, small business here in Brooklyn for the past 7 yrs. My daughter is also a woman owned small business here in Brooklyn. I'm in opposition to the proposed RA zone change under a Text Amendment.

I've been asked to give a Broker's Opinion in regard to the proposed development of said LDF property and proposed Text Amendment as presented. I have reviewed and studied the application for an RA Zone Change under a Text Amendment. As I understand, this would affect the Town of Brooklyn as a whole.

In my opinion, changing the zoning under a Text Amendment will open the door to the unrestricted development of all our town's vital open spaces and waterways. Destination entertainment and lodging facilities designed to attract hundreds of visitors would further negatively impact our back roads & pristine habitats. Building such attractions on untouched, historic farmland will bring traffic, commerce, noise, general disruption and displacement of abundant wildlife.

In my opinion, folks who shop for a home in a rural/agricultural/small town setting are going to be less attracted to a property that is near some of the businesses mentioned in the above referenced activities.

Proximity to campgrounds, entertainment venues and the like, directly diminish the desirability of purchasing a home near such entities. Implementation of LDF's non-agricultural plan involving glamping/camping, food and beverage services and outdoor entertainment and the attendant consequences of an influx of visitors may lead to properties being listed for sale and the acceptance of lower than market offers.

In my opinion, property values of homes adjacent to and along any and all of the associated access roads will negatively be impacted. In referencing LDF's immediate proposal on their own property, i.e. Wolf Den Rd, Bush Hill Rd, Herrick Rd, Hyde Rd. Woodward Rd, Fitzgerald Rd, Laurel Hill Rd. Elliot Rd, RT 6, Putnam Place Rd, and also including our neighbors of Pomfret's roads, i.e. RT 101, Kearney Fork, Kearney Rd & Youngs Rd will negatively be impacted.

In putting together a Broker's Opinion, I'm tasked with the thought as to what properties are or would be, similar to what LDF's conceptual plan under a Text Amendment would resemble. We first begin with immediate properties within the town of Brooklyn. First and foremost, there is only one comparable property here in Brooklyn and that is Paradise Drive of Paradise Lake. There are no other properties with such a setting. Scrutiny of the market for homes at or around Paradise Drive helps to inform the impact on home values of camping related activities

and how it originally came to be for the Town to, under necessity, to create and implement the current zone guidelines. (I will allow another to fully go into those details).

My next comparison, if possible, would be the Hole In the Wall Gang Organization in Eastford. Since this was a stretch. I called and spoke to a well-informed staff member to get an understanding of acreage purchased, percent usable of that acreage and what it is used for. HITWG purchased 325 acres with less than 10% allowable for development due to wetlands, ledge, zoning & special restrictions. HITWG is strictly, without exception, providing a service to children with life threatening illness with outreach to their families.

Upon disclosing my intention for coming up with a near impossible task guessing as to how LDF could compare in a reasonable unbiased way, as there is nothing remotely comparable, HITWG clearly stated they wish to not be associated in any way shape or form to seasonal glamping in Brooklyn.

Two other such possibilities for comparison would be Sunfox Camp Ground, located in Lisbon and Charlie Brown Camp Ground located in Eastford. Sunfox amenities include a heated pool and hot tub, 80x40 event tent, basketball, RC Racetrack, 2 Volley Ball courts, a Soccer field, fishing & canoeing. Of the 80 RV sites on 60 acres, 78 are supported by dry wells. None of the 80 sites are located in or around the two ponds located on the property. (I've included a site map)

Charlie Brown Camp Ground, accommodate 80 campsites on 30 acres bordering the Natchaug River. No septic systems allowed, as the water table is too high. This property floods incredibly during seasonal down pours and nor'easters. Both camps are completely self-contained with only one access point. Traffic would affect one road, two at most before the highway.

Though I am a Realtor, I am first and foremost an advocate for the preservation and protection of our watercourses & wildlife. The immense infrastructure and necessary construction would be far too great an upset to all the natural habit surrounding the Bush Hill Pond. The Coyote, Deer, Fox, Waterfowl, Migratory Birds, Bobcat and all the like; all heavily rely their survival from this natural watercourse. It would be a great shame if this text amendment were allowed to happen.

Lastly, I've attached the many 1-2 star reviews from Yelp and Trip Advisor for FireLight Camps. Tents can be removed. The infinite infrastructure needed to support this fleeting venture cannot. I fully oppose the RA zone change under a Text Amendment.

Maria Gandy-Winslow, GRI ~ New England Homes & Fine Properties, llc



Dan B.
Paradise, PA
👤 31 ⭐ 76



5/8/2021

On our first visit, seven months after New York confronted the coronavirus pandemic, we were understanding of the staff's struggle to keep the business running. Although the bathhouses and bathrooms probably were not being deep-cleaned as often or as well as they should have been, and the tents were looking mildewy and ragged, efforts were being made, and the campers were doing a good job to keep each other safe.

Flashforward to the next season, and our visit started well. The tents were replaced or refurbished. The facilities were clean. Then, things quickly went sideways.

On our first evening, we received an email at 8:30 PM informing us that there would be a large event the next day. It was quite a surprise for those of us who had reserved our stays long in advance to hear that the owner had decided to host a five-hour comedy show for well over 100 on the site. Campers were left without a place to park, without the s'mores and drinks listening to music by the campfire for which we had paid, without clean and safe restrooms for children or unvaccinated campers, without a quiet and restful campsite. The staff were left utterly unequipped to handle the fiasco – also having been told by the owners at the last minute that the event was happening.

It is difficult to imagine that owners so willing to take advantage of their customers and their staff during the pandemic and on Mother's Day weekend can be expected to ever deliver a safe and satisfactory experience.



Michaela C.

Newport Beach, CA

👤 6 🌟 3 📷 2

📷 📷 📷 📷 8/8/2017

📷 2 photos

My friends and I booked 2 tents at Firelight Camps in hopes of having a fun girls weekend in the woods... Didn't turn out exactly as we'd hoped.

I'm going to start with the vandalized car because it was the nail in the coffin for us and reason why we'll never go back again.

We woke up early Saturday to enjoy the continental breakfast and coffee, which was sub-par. It was a small table with store-bought muffins, bagels, individual yogurts with a handful of toppings, a jar of uncooked oats, some fruits and hard-boiled eggs. Coffee also wasn't great and not that hot. But I digress....

Cut to, we decided to check out the spa to see if they had any available appointments for us. It's worth noting, in order to get to the spa you have to walk up to the parking lot at the top of the camp and then up another set of stairs from there to get to where the spa and hotel are. As we started making our way through the parking lot we looked towards where we parked our car and noticed some people standing around, then quickly noticed something was wrong. When we walked closer, we realized someone had bashed in 3 of the windows of our rental car!!!! (see photos). One of the workers and the owners, Bobby and Emma were standing there asking if this was our car. In short, the police had already been there and left and they said they didn't think we needed to call them again... weird. They also said the police officer stated they had another call similar to this in a different area and it was probably some college kids being dumb. We later called the police station ourselves and found this to be untrue. There had been only one report of this and it was at Firelight Camp...even weirder. One other car was also vandalized that was parked two cars behind us and only their one back window was bashed-in. The whole situation didn't feel right and it's a little difficult to believe that a random person off the street did this. If you've ever been to the campgrounds, you would know it's not easy to get to the camps parking lot. When you turn-into the entrance, you first pass the steakhouse and their parking lot, then down to the hotel and their parking-lot, THEN you go down a thin, winding gravel path that leads down to the camps lot. It's not easily accessible and definitely not a smart choice if someone is looking to do something like that

and get away quickly, doesn't make sense. Also note, our car was parked all the way in the back of the parking lot. Conveniently, there are also no cameras in that lot, only down by the main tent. The owners were nice and Bobby ended up driving us to the rental car place so we can sort everything out. After he dropped us off however, we never heard from or saw the owners again for the rest of our trip. Our car was vandalized in their parking lot, we expressed we felt unsafe and were thinking of leaving and they didn't seem overly concerned at all and never followed-up with us. I understand that it was a very unusual situation but, they didn't handle it appropriately and we were left feeling uncomfortable and unhappy.

In addition to the vandalized car (as if that wasn't enough), we ran into several other issues within the first 12 hours of our stay.

- * They couldn't put our tents together upon check-in (even though we booked together and under the same name) and were placed completely across the campgrounds from one another.
- * There are "quiet hours" which start at 11pm and they take them very seriously.
- * One of our tents was placed next to a family whom later complained that we were making too much noise at 11:30pm...on a Friday.
- * One of the workers, Tom came to our tent after the neighbor complained to tell us we needed to stop what we're doing and move to the event tent. *We were told we couldn't drink on the campgrounds due to their liquor license, which is the reason we were in our tent.* Tom said he was vetoing that so we can move to the event tent. He was not very friendly.
- * Once in the event tent, we tried playing music and Tom quickly came to shut that down. Mind you, it's pouring rain and you can barely hear each other talk in the tent, but ok we did what we were told. There was also a bachelorette party staying there that was also put into the main tent next to where we were that was told to be quiet and no music.... poor bride. We tried to enjoy ourselves, but no music, pouring rain, and having Tom constantly walk by and feeling like we were being babysat was too much, so we quickly ended our night.

So, if you're looking for an unorganized, potentially unsafe and boring campground, this place is for you! Even though the camp is marketed towards young couples, adults, BACHELORETTE PARTIES, encouraging Wine and Brewery tours and tequila bars, and minutes away from downtown Ithaca, make sure you wrap that up quickly and are in bed by 11pm. Oh and hopefully, you're placed next to people you book with and not near families and crotchety older women. Cheers.



Samantha R.

Brooklyn, New York, NY

0 4



4/21/2018

This is a bit overdue but now that spring is on its way, I've been looking into camping/glamping sites. I stayed at Firelights last September hoping to have a romantic weekend with my boyfriend. When we first got there to check in, it seemed like we irritated the staff by even being there. Everyone was extremely unfriendly. Noticed that all of the lounge furniture in the main part of the camp looked extremely disheveled.

Upon initially seeing our tent, it was cute -- the bedding and furniture was a little worn and dirty, but I just figured it was because we were there towards the end of the season. We went back to the main area for some hiking info and I guess the girl was too busy blankly staring at us while she was wiping down some mugs to even bother asking if we needed help. Ended using some trail brochures from a hotel in town.

At night, we went out to the bonfires and they were pretty exclusive. A tightly knit group and some guitar player took over the main bonfire. We had to sit over off to the side with a stranger that again, seemed really pissed we were even there. I went to make hot cocoa to salvage the night and when I took a sip I literally spit it out. It's supposed to be some special homemade recipe of theirs but it tastes super spicy and pretty gross. I tried to buy a s'mores kit and they were completely sold out. How do you sell out of s'mores when you are a CAMP site? There was basically nothing else for us to do and no one wanted to give us the time of day. We gave up and went back to our tent to find multiple MASSIVE spiders everywhere. It was honestly horrifying, we barely slept. As soon as we woke up we were packing to leave.

I was thoroughly disappointed. Wasn't the pinterest-esque glamping experience I had in mind. Even when I actually camp and pitch a tent myself I have never seen such large disgusting spiders. Super unfriendly staff. Overall place was pretty dirty. The showers were so disgusting that we booked a day at the spa just to feel clean again after the entire experience.

Can't believe how much money was wasted on such a lousy experience. Don't bother! Go camping on your own.



Cindy G.

Haddam, CT

 0  2

     8/17/2015

Be careful booking! Imagine you have four children and both grandparents live out of state. Now imagine you are turning forty and your fabulous husband actually plans a special fortieth weekend glamping for you. He thinks ahead, gets the grandparents to come watch the kids and books months in advance. It's all paid for and you can't wait for your special weekend of pampering. Two weeks before arrival firelight sends an email - not even a phone call just an email saying oops! We've double booked. No room at the inn for you. What firelight?! Two weeks before? After you've already taken our money? We had local activities booked in the area that had to be cancelled. Shame on you! Too short notice for us to even find a sweet alternative. Turning forty is hard enough without you Firelight.

Pam N.
Croton-on-Hudson, NY

 0  3

  7/26/2016

Beware of bachelorette parties! They advertise for these "bachelorette packages" yet don't warn guests before they book! Instead of a serene and tranquil getaway it was loud and filled with girls drinking and partying all weekend! Quiet hours were not obeyed or reinforced by the staff. Tents were not organized so that other guests could be separated from the bachelorette party. Yoga instructor never showed for the Saturday class and staff had no clue where she was or was informed that she was not coming. Was clearly a very disappointing weekend, not the getaway one would expect from seeing their website. Call before you book and make sure you get what you pay for. I think the Boy Scouts run a better camp environment by reinforcing rules and respecting other guests. Staff should also know when to stop providing drinks to inebriated guests. Policy should be updated to enforce drinking rules around the guests tent area, appropriate clothing needed in the bathroom area and the campgrounds (bathrooms are shared between men and women). You would think this should be obvious but unfortunately for the guests this past weekend it was not.



Jennifer N.

Fairport, NY

 4  3

...



10/12/2016

I've been looking forward to Glamping for well over a year and couldn't have been more disappointed by our experience a few weeks ago. The tents are incredibly close to one another and there is NO natural barrier between them as there is with traditional camp sites. We had bugs crawling in through gaps where the safari tent was attached to the poles in the ceiling, also something I've never experienced while camping in a traditional tent.

The campsite was completely full but only 1 camp fire was lit, so there was no place to sit by the fire in the evening. And as has been mentioned multiple times below, the quiet hours are clearly not mandatory, as we could hear the other campers by the campfire well past midnight. To make this even more enjoyable, our "neighbors" were laughing and talking loudly once they made it back to their tent at around 1:00 am.

I tried really hard to enjoy this experience that I shelled \$200/night for but ended up wishing that I had just rented a traditional campsite elsewhere for a fraction of the cost.



A.M.

Rochester, NY



1



7



7/2/2016

Disappointed. We wanted to love Fire Light but unfortunately we were left feeling let down. The idea is a nice one and some of the details charming but the tent had easy access to chipmunks who were in our tent rummaging through garbage that has been left in the waste basket from the previous guest and even after we took it to the central garbage they kept coming back in all day and night. We also had something nesting in between the layers of canvas at the roofline that made noise all night and ran above our heads. We did not get any sleep. We could hear the noise from the main campfire area as well as our too close for comfort tent neighbors on both sides. We had asked for a secluded tent and were given tent #5 per the advice of the front desk. It was NOT secluded. The bathhouse shower area was not clean and had mildew and mold on the shower curtains and bugs on the ceiling and walls. It was not kept tidy. We left early the next morning after our small GF breakfast of a tiny piece of GF bread and a yogurt.



Jennifer W.

Brooklyn, NY

@ 0 ☆ 6



7/31/2015

High hopes, a bit dashed. This was our first experience "glamping", having previously utilized more traditional campsites. We wanted to still be outdoors, enjoy the stars, nature, and some peace, while having a more comfortable place to sleep. Unfortunately, that's not what Firelight was able to provide.

Starting with the positives. The canvas tents were comfortable and well-appointed. The visual aesthetic of the campground was lovely, with soft glowing lights and two campfires. The bathhouse and showers were well-designed and functional.

The largest issue is the noise, and it's hard to pinpoint whether it's Firelight's issue or can be laid at the feet of the type of people "glamping" attracts. Firelight serves a complimentary happy hour from 5:00 to 6:00 pm, and on the first night of our stay, the people around the campfire were pretty well drunk, obnoxious, and loud. It seems clear that many of them had been over-served at the bar. We chose to sit at the second campfire, but since it's only twenty feet away, there was no peace and quiet to enjoy. The third night of our stay, a huge crowd gathered in the main tent and got louder and louder as the night progressed, several hours past the camp's 10:00 noise guideline. At checkout, the man at the desk asked me if it was campers or people from the nearby resort (as if I'm supposed to know who's who), which is when I learned that Firelight allows people from the La Tourelle resort on the same property to utilize their facilities (but apparently not heed the camp's guidelines).

I lived in Ithaca for several years a while back, so I'm aware of the type-B, laid-back pace of many of its residents. However, a bit of urgency from the employees would have been appreciated. They moved at a snail's pace, so the bathroom was constantly out of towels, the breakfast foods and coffee not replenished quickly, and the waste bins in the bathroom overflowing. There was a giant smear of what I hope was dirt from the contractors (yes, contractors... we'll get to that) on the back of a bathroom door for three days, so cleaning was not a top priority.

Firelight is as pricey as any bed and breakfast, but without the more scrumptious breakfasts that most B&Bs offer. Breakfast was the exact same thing three days in a row. Bread, muffins, yogurt, and a tiny bit of fruit (if it was refilled). As one of the owners is a former Food Network competitor, there was a higher expectation for the food (especially for the price of our stay).

Which brings us to the contractors. A new shed was being built, so there was hammering in the morning. Contractors were also constructing pathways around the bathhouse, which sometimes impeded access to the facilities. If you are going to be doing work on the campground, some options are a) inform people of the dates that work will be done so they can decide if they still want to book, or b) offer a discount during that time.

Dogs are allowed on the property, but not everyone curbed them. One person did pick up their dog's waste, but then didn't know where to dump the baggie, so left it sitting on the porch of the bathhouse. Gross.

The website advertises propane heaters in the tents, but I guess they don't put them out in July, even though one of the nights was very cold.

There were also a fair amount of smokers, not all of whom adhered to the camp's guidelines about where smoking is allowed.

Overall, some of what made the stay uncomfortable was just the basic inconsideration of the other guests. However, there is plenty of room for Firelight to make some small fixes -- more urgency in keeping things up to snuff, enforcing the noise rules, not over-serving obviously inebriated guests -- that could make it a great experience.

Jana Roberson

From: mwins@charter.net
Sent: Tuesday, November 01, 2022 10:47 PM
To: Jana Roberson
Subject: FW: Firelight Camps Trip Advisor Reviews
Attachments: image002.jpg; image004.jpg; image011.jpg; image012.jpg; image014.jpg; image018.jpg; image019.jpg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Please see attached reviews. Again, just a handful.

All best,

Maria Gandy-Winslow, GRI
New England Homes & Fine Properties, LLC
Broker, Owner
860.779.1099
860.455-5541 cell

From: swins@charter.net
To: mwins@charter.net
Cc:
Sent: Monday October 31 2022 7:30:02PM
Subject: Firelight Camps Trip Advisor Reviews



bomeal wrote a review Sep 2016

📍 LaFayette, New York • 1 contribution • 2 helpful votes



Another beware of bachelorette parties

"I just read another review spot on describing our night here. The quiet hours were not enforced. I even went to the main tent at 1:00am Monday morning to ask to please at least turn down the music . The man politely acknowledged and about thirty minutes later we awoke to Fetty Wap thumping louder and the drunken girls party raging on. So instead of our quiet night away we are currently up at now 1:40 am writing about our stay. I expect the owners make this right."

Read less

Date of stay: September 2016

Trip type: Traveled as a couple

This review is the subjective opinion of a Tripadvisor member and not of Tripadvisor LLC. Tripadvisor performs checks on reviews.



Helpful



Share



PSN10 wrote a review Jul 2016

3 contributions • 14 helpful votes



Beware of Bachelorette Parties!

"Beware of bachelorette parties! They advertise for these "bachelorette packages" yet don't warn guests before they book! Instead of a serene and tranquil getaway it was loud and filled with girls drinking and partying all weekend! Quiet hours were not obeyed or reinforced by the staff. Tents were not organized so that other guests could be separated from the bachelorette party. Yoga instructor never showed for the Saturday class and staff had no clue where she was or was informed that she was not coming. Was clearly a very disappointing weekend, not the getaway one would expect from seeing their website. Call before you book and make sure you get what you pay for. I think the Boy Scouts run a better camp environment by reinforcing rules and respecting other guests. Staff should also know when to stop providing drinks to inebriated guests. Policy should be updated to enforce drinking rules around the guests tent area, appropriate clothing needed in the bathroom area and the campgrounds (bathrooms are shared between men and women). You would think this should be obvious but unfortunately for the guests this past weekend it was not."

[Read less](#) ▲

Date of stay: July 2016

Trip type: Traveled with family



Thomas P wrote a review Jul 2020

1 contribution • 2 helpful votes



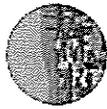
July Visit/Third Time Staying

“Extremely disappointed in this visit. We understood there would be some changes because of COVID-19, but the level of customer service has gone down. Staff seemed less friendly and engaged. Bathrooms were not cleaned well and the complimentary breakfast was plain horrible. Possibly ownership is spending less time on the property. Such a shame.”

Read less ▾

Date of stay: July 2020

Trip type: Traveled as a couple



njb wrote a review Nov 2019

1 contribution

...



Soooo COLD

"I have very mixed feeling about Firelight Camps. On the one hand, it was a different sort of experience than the usual hotel, our tent was nicely furnished, and the complimentary breakfast was nice. On the other hand, our tent was a little on the dirty side (a dead bug hanging from the ceiling, dead bugs under the bed), the restrooms were a bit of a walk from the tent, and the showers were on the dirty side. We also arrived a little late (~8:00pm, I think), and no one was to be found in the lobby tent for a good 10 minutes. BUT there were two big issues with our stay: 1) We had very loud neighbors, and tents are obviously thin-walled, and 2) IT WAS FREEZING. I get that they have special heat-conserving blankets, and I overheard that they used to have heaters in rooms but now they don't due to fire code, but in mid-October, it was in the 30sF, and it was uncomfortably cold, even with two in the bed. For the price (similar to a decent hotel), we were disappointed in the situation (granted, they tell you up front on the website that there is no heating, but make it seem like it's no big deal; let me tell you, it is!). Though just my opinion, it seems unsafe, particularly for vulnerable populations, to be exposed to these temperatures all night."

Read less

Date of stay: October 2019



Rooms



Sleep Quality



Service



Jilla904 wrote a review Jun 2018

📍 Cape Vincent, New York • 2 contributions • 3 helpful votes

...



Glamping at Resort Prices

"I wanted this to be more than what it was. The tents are nice and the bed is super comfy. The meeting area is nice but not as pictured. The bar is extremely pricey. The rate they are charging is over priced for what you get. The bathrooms were dirty, showers had used hair ties walls of shower were dirty, hair on sink. Overall the tents and check in area are Glamping and the bathrooms and meeting areas are camping. Don't pay the price... go camping to a State Park."

Read more ▾

Date of stay: June 2018



denrus wrote a review Aug 2020

1 contribution • 1 helpful vote



Disappointed

“The shower rod fell on me as I tried to close the curtain... shower doors are revealing as is one of the bathroom doors... our tents power went out... and wasn't numbered. Over priced. Tent had mildew.”

Read less ▲

Date of stay: July 2020



Value



Service



Cleanliness



Karen S wrote a review Jul 2020

📍 Orchard Park, New York • 6 contributions • 2 helpful votes



Over priced

“Have stayed here a couple of tears ago. Place is run down since then, poor maintenance of grounds, tents have mold and mildew on them. Bathrooms are clean and nice. You can only drink your own alcohol in your tent not on the grounds. To me it is a poor value and will not go there again.”

[Read more](#) ▼

Date of stay: July 2020

SUNFOX CAMPGROUND

15 Kenyon Rd. Lisbon CT 06351 (860) 376-1081

DISC
GOLF
COURSE

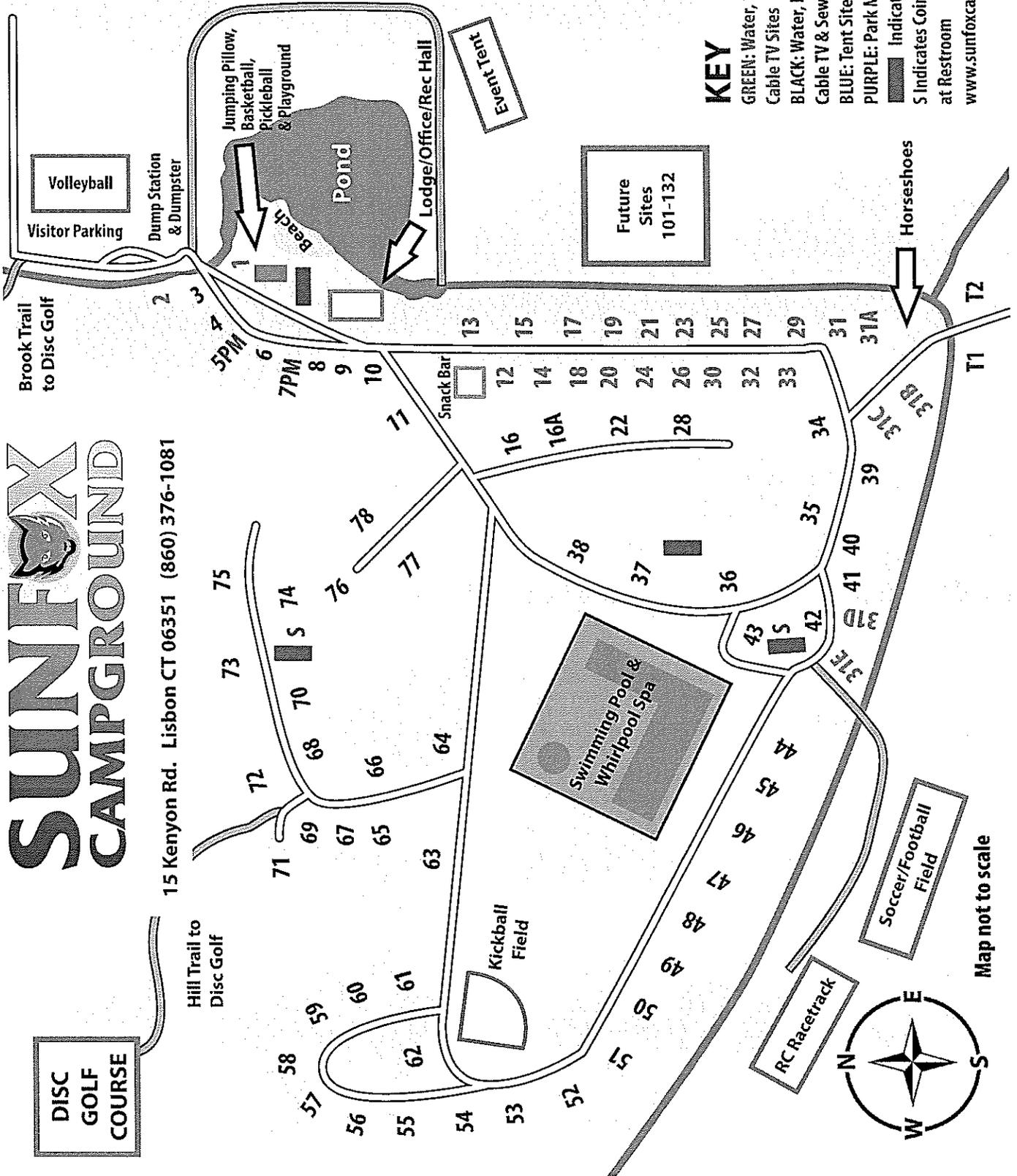
Hill Trail to
Disc Golf

Brook Trail
to Disc Golf

Volleyball

Entrance

Wagon Rides
& Hiking Trail



11/1/22

RECEIVED

NOV 2 - 2022

To whom it may concern;

I am writing this letter of support for the plans being proposed at The Little Dipper Farm(ZRC22-007), to include outdoor recreational use of their space, and all other proposed plans to have this unparalleled landscape dedicated to the growth and support of our living lands and the wellbeing of people who will visit there.

I offer this support based upon my direct experience with the owners, my direct experience on the property, my experience living in this area for the last 21 years, and my professional opinion as a psychologist with a 25-year career in the field of mental health and wellbeing.

I have had the privilege to meet and work with the Little Dipper Team over the past six months. I have taught yoga and meditation classes at the farm to a small private group through the summer months, and generously, Venus and Lori supported my fundraiser for cancer treatment. In addition we have attended community events that are both educational and connect us to a broader group of residents in our area we may have never met. Finally, my husband, Mike Morrill, worked with the team at Little Dipper to give 3 busloads of children from Killingly Schools the opportunity to apply their classroom experiences in science and sustainability to the real-world classroom at Little Dipper. Hosting these types of events demonstrates to the true spirit and intention of Little Dipper Farm.

These are individuals who have applied their talents and resources to offer people a refuge. A chance to move away from our devices and experience all the glorious beauty of the Quiet Corner. I spent many years of my career running the Counseling Services at the University of Connecticut, and now serve as the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Campus Life and Wellbeing at the University of Massachusetts. My main goal at UMass is to develop our Outdoor Adventure and Education program, precisely because we are in a mental health pandemic. The research on this matter is undeniable, and points to the fact that reconnecting with the natural world is a significant balm for the chronic anxiety plaguing our communities.

I look forward to Little Dipper Farm becoming a resource. The team there has actively worked to engage members of the community, and to build a network of opportunity for those interested in hope and positive growth for this area. If we are interested in the health of our community, investing in and supporting Little Dipper is an active step in that direction which I hope you will take.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth J. Cracco, Ph.D.

Attn: Planning and Zoning Commission
Re: Little Dipper Farm
November 2, 2022

RECEIVED
NOV 2 - 2022

My name is Jennifer Nemeth, I live at 131 Day Street, and my husband Matt and I own and operate The Ice Box and Sütő at 17 South Main Street.

I am speaking to the commission this evening in support of Little Dipper Farm's (LDF) request to revise "ZRC 22-007: Revision to the Residential-Agricultural Zone to allow Glamping as a Special Permit..."

I am a lifelong resident of Brooklyn, and I have seen this town go through many changes. Some of those changes are specific to the open land that I knew as a child. My own street for example saw its open land give way to rows of cookie cutter houses. I know this has also been the case on South Street and many others across the board as open farmland was sold to contractors and developed.

There are still acres and acres of open land, however, and much is still being farmed by generational families. What happens to that land when the last generation no longer wants to/can no longer farm? We can only hope that the purchaser of the property will have a plan that includes preserving the open spaces and honoring the land like the folks at LDF do.

Over the past year we have gotten to know Lori and Venus, as well as Brian their executive chef, and the farm manager Sara. We also know local community members who are now employed by the farm. They have explained their vision and hopes for the property as well as their desire to be a part of making Brooklyn the best little town it can be.

I have also read, and respect the concerns, of neighbors to the property.

Part of the concerned raised is that what is being allowed at the LDF property could be used and misused at other locations around Brooklyn. I would respond by saying that I'd hope that the ZEO and P&Z in general would/should be able to enforce any potential misuse of that act as well as others so it shouldn't be a concern of the public. The requirement to monitor and enforce any issues would be dealt with by the town, and not private citizens. I am certain the representatives of this town would never let a "tent city" that was presented in the photos come to fruition. To present that photo as a warning for the future of Brooklyn is a false comparison, if you ask me. We are certainly not perfect, but we do have our act together more than that.

Bottom line we shouldn't limit LDF in their endeavors because of "what ifs with potential other locations."

Instead, we should embrace the lovely folks at Little Dipper Farm and help them as they preserve the beautiful property we all know and love. Any changes or additions that are made will only enhance our town, our local economy, and our community.

I thank you for your time and consideration this evening.

Jenn Nemeth

KAREN JOHNSON
1819 UPPER MAPLE STREET
DAYVILLE, CT 06241

RECEIVED
NOV 2 - 2022

November 2, 2022

Michelle Sigfridson, Chair
Brooklyn Planning & Zoning Commission
4 Wolf Den Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

RE: ZRC 22-007 Revisions to the Residential-Agricultural Zone to allow Glamping

Dear Chair Sigfridson & Members of the Commission

I am writing in support of the proposed request to allow Glamping as part of the permitted uses in the RA Zone. I represent Linda and Steve Trahan and their family members who reside on Maynard Road in Brooklyn and are life long members of Brooklyn and care very deeply about the fabric of this community.

As some of you know, I previously served as Town Planner and under my tenure, the first Conservation and Open Space Plan was adopted 30 years ago. This plan was a collaborative effort between Steve Broderick, Don Francis and members of the Conservation Commission. The basic premise of this plan is incorporated in the current Plan of Conservation and Development ("POCD"), specifically the notion of prioritizing overlapping critical resource areas for preservation. The plan also outlined suggestions for fostering active agricultural operations and many of these initiatives have been implemented.

The current POCD ("POCD") outlines objectives and key priorities for Agriculture on Page 18, including:

- 1) *To preserve key important farmland areas*
- 2) *To promote viable agricultural clusters*
- 3) ***To promote economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture***
- 4) *To resolve conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses*
- 5) *To serve as a conduit for agriculture issues between agencies, boards, commissions, elected officials, and local farmers*

The question before you this evening is does the proposed text amendment further these goals? To answer this question, it is helpful to understand more about Agritourism and agricultural preservation? Agritourism is a relatively new concept, Connecticut has not defined this term but an Office of Legislative Research Report, states:

"Agritourism" According to its report on agritourism, the National Agricultural Law Center says any definition of agritourism should include that it:

- *combines elements of the tourism and agricultural industries;*
- *attracts members of the public to visit agricultural operations;*
- *provides recreation, entertainment, or educational experiences for visitors; and*
- *may increase farm income.*

The critical goal from the POCD is:

To promote economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture!

I submit that the key to agricultural preservation is to provide alternatives to traditional farming. Successful agricultural operations in Brooklyn have survived in part due to legacy farms (Ennis Family) and diversification of 'crops' i.e Christmas Trees (Allen Hill Tree Farm) and Bison (Creamery Brook Farm). Another much more lucrative cash crop for larger parcels along the eastern edge of town has been gravel. Fortunately, options existed that worked for these farms. The sale of Hillandale Farm reignited this conversation about how to sustain agriculture in Brooklyn. Jimmy Booth and his family valiantly carried on the family legacy for as long as it was sustainable; and then it was not, and they sold the farm to an incredible family with local ties who know and love the property. The model for sustainability requires new ideas!

The POCD states under Agriculture (Page 18), ***"Surveyed residents consistently cited farmland preservation, the rural quality of the Town, and agricultural heritage as very important priorities."*** Other less tangible agricultural preservation benefits are related to the above which may be more about the vistas and the 'idea' of farming. We love driving by grazing horses, well-manicured pastures and stone walls lining scenic byways. What most do not appreciate, is the effort and cost of maintaining these properties. This passive agricultural experience can also become an active experience - and that is the benefit and the connection for Agritourism; the opportunity to be part of the farm environment, stay on the land and directly observe the daily operations of farmers. Camping allows for participation in an environment that most cannot experience every day - as a tourist, I have 'glamped' in Tanzania on the Serengeti and in Chile at the base of Torres Del Paine in Patagonia. These experiences provided a deeper understanding of the environment and the local culture.

As a founding member of the Last Green Valley (then the Quinebaug-Shetucket National Heritage Corridor), we wondered if we would ever regret sharing our beautiful quiet corner with the rest of the world! The conclusion is we must share these resources and educate communities to foster preservation. Now is a pivotal moment in the effort to save these agricultural lands - because there will be change to these farms, it is undeniable. The concept before you provides another tool to continue the legacy that was started a century ago. Lori and Sara of Little Dipper Farm presented to the Agricultural Commission in August, a citizen comment was made that the Booth's didn't need glamping! Very interesting in that the Booth family used many options available to them to sustain the farm over the years, a woolen mill and clothing manufacturing, The Golden Lamb restaurant and the many events held there, the

sale of agricultural development rights, a horse feed business initiated by Jimmy and his brother, an excavating business, home heating service business, and there may be many more. The legacy of the Booth family is in the property, it's in the barn, it's in the historic home - the question is how do you sustain this? I submit the answer to how you sustain farming, the idea of farming and agricultural lands in Brooklyn - is not the same answer for every property. The answer for the community is that you must provide options and each landowner may decide what is best for them and their long-term business model - do not be confused - farming is a business - and if you want these beautiful vistas, stone walls, grazing horses and well-manicured pastures to remain part of this community's fabric - you must provide options!

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Johnson

Karen Johnson, AICP

Copy To: Jana Butts Roberson, AICP

Little Dipper Farm

RECEIVED

NOV 2 - 2022

~~This will create~~

I see how this creates jobs, but does it generate revenue?

Lodging tax?

Occupancy fee?

Hotel tax?

\$1./person/night tax?

Thank you,

Nathaniel Aaron S

125 acres yet only

200 ft from property line.

I live next to an air B&B

property which has a pool

pretty much in my backyard.

Super annoying, noise, language

not appropriate for my kids.

If 125 acre why not

say 1000 ft from property

line.

Thank you,

Nathaniel Aaron S

RECEIVED

NOV 2 - 2022

Public Hearing on Revisions to Residential-Agricultural Zone to Allow Glamping
Comments to Brooklyn Planning & Zoning Commission on November 2, 2022

Good evening. My name is Debbie Cornman, and my husband and I have resided on Bush Hill Road in Brooklyn since 1984. I raised both of my children here.

As a side note, for those who are curious, I am one of the people who edited and helped pay for the ad in last week's Turnpike Buyer. I just want to be transparent.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you.

Our Zoning Regulations state and I quote, that the "Zoning Regulations for the Town of Brooklyn, Connecticut were adopted to:

1. protect the public health, safety, convenience, and property values;
2. lessen congestion in the streets;
3. secure safety from fire, ... and other dangers;
4. promote health and the general welfare;
- ...
5. prevent the overcrowding of land;
6. avoid undue concentration of population; and
7. facilitate the adequate provision for transportation, water, sewerage, ... and other public requirements."

My question to the Commission is how is modifying Residential-Agricultural Zones to include commercial ventures – specifically commercial glamping - consistent with your mission and your obligation to protect the residents of Brooklyn?

You are charged with protecting our public health and safety, but permitting commercial glampgrounds actually increases the risks to our health and safety unless there is strict and adequate enforcement of the regulations, which is highly unlikely. We simply don't have the resources to do that in our town.

First of all, who will ensure that no more than 250 guests are at the commercial glampground? Who will actually count the number of guests and then enforce the maximum? Do you think that hired staff are going to do that – that they will keep track of everyone who is there and then throw people out? Unlikely.

With the possibility of 250 people coming into town each day – more than that if there is more than one commercial glampground in town - how are you going to prevent theft, vandalism, and trespassing?

And what about glampers carrying guns and mixing that with alcohol? The zoning change allows the sale of alcohol at the glampgrounds.

And is hunting going to be permitted on the land? If so, who is going to ensure that guests follow safe hunting practices, which will be especially important because Little Dipper Farm's land abuts residential property?

We currently have one resident trooper, which is wholly insufficient now. How will he or she be adequate with the addition of commercial glampgrounds. When my security system went off a couple of years ago, it was two hours before the trooper arrived – plenty of time for the burglar to sit down, have a meal, and then steal everything in my house. How is this going to work when hundreds of additional people come through our town each week? Will the town hire more troopers at a cost to the taxpayers? Unlikely.

I have always felt safe living here and taking walks in my community. But I won't if this requested zoning change is passed. There will be hundreds of strangers coming into my community, the vast majority of whom will be law-abiding citizens but not all. Compound that with the substantial increase in traffic, and I will no longer feel safe walking down our narrow country roads. People already speed down these roads, but when you increase

that by hundreds of additional cars and drivers who are unfamiliar with the roads, that is simply a recipe for disaster. My neighborhood and other neighborhoods like it will no longer feel or be safe.

Again I ask, how is this zoning change protecting our public health and safety, which is your obligation according to your own Zoning Regulations?

How is this zoning change going to keep us safe from fire? Who is going to oversee where campfires are built or cigarette butts are thrown? Who is going to ensure that no one lights a campfire when a ban on outdoor fires is in effect because of drought conditions? Who is going to make sure that campfires are adequately extinguished at the end of a camper's stay? Are we going to trust that an out-of-state glamping company will enforce this and protect us? Because that is who is going to run Little Dipper Farm's glampground, according to them – a company called Firelight Camps out of Ithaca, New York. Do we believe that they will enforce this from afar? Unlikely.

There will undoubtedly be more fires if this text amendment is passed. Is the town going to hire paid firefighters because of the challenges of getting additional volunteer firefighters? That is going to cost the taxpayers money, which makes it unlikely.

Again I ask, how is this zoning change protecting our public health and safety, which is your obligation according to the Zoning Regulations?

In addition to our physical health and safety, what about our mental health and well-being? Aren't we entitled to peace and quiet in our own homes? This zoning change will allow "glamping units" and "glamping-related buildings." This means the potential for concerts with amplified sound, parties, and other events close to people's homes. The noise will be loud and disruptive. How will decibels be measured and controlled? How late into the night will noise be permitted? Who will ensure that any regulations about noise will be enforced? Will the staff who reside on the property do that? Unlikely.

This is a very risky experiment. And we are not talking about doing it on a small scale but on a very large scale. Usually when you invest in a new venture, you start with a small pilot project to see if it is feasible and a good fit. But the first time that we are going to this in our town, we are going to do it on a large scale. We are talking about glamping on 125-acre parcels in at least 8 potential locations. The way that this amendment is written, there is the potential for not a handful of glamping units but well over a 100. If this doesn't go well, there is no turning back.

I moved to this area to be free of commercial endeavors. This is clearly a commercial operation to make money, and we are not zoned commercial. This proposal is not about agriculture or preserving the land. It does not benefit the residents. My property borders Little Dipper Farm. My peace and serenity, my privacy, and my safety will end if this text amendment is passed and glamping is permitted. And my property value will plummet, which on the positive side means I will be paying lower property taxes, but I will lose money if I ever try to sell my house. But this is less about my property value and more about our quality of living and the character of our town. I value the beauty and tranquility of the land here, and I don't want to see that destroyed with the addition of what is basically one or more commercial resorts.

I know that the lawyer for Little Dipper Farm has tried to discourage you from making a decision based on the opinion of the residents, but you are here to look out for the town and for us. Simply put, this text amendment is not good for Brooklyn, and I strongly encourage you to think about your obligation to protect our health and safety, and vote against this zoning change.

Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted by Debbie Cornman, 66 Bush Hill Road, Brooklyn, CT.

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NOV 2 - 2022

November 2, 2022

Norman Berman
98 Bush Hill Road, Brooklyn, CT

I grew up on a 60-acre farm in nearby Moosup. I returned to CT after working and living in the Boston area for over 50 years. I'm here tonight to join with many of my Brooklyn neighbors in opposing a zoning change that is unnecessary, offers no benefit to the town and poses a serious threat to the town's beauty, character and wellbeing.

The proposed amendment seeks to introduce something new and untried. Not residential, not agricultural. But you are being asked to redefine RA zone to help install a fast-growing part of the hospitality industry on our beautiful, local farms.

An article appearing in a Cornell's Hospitality School's journal, is entitled **Glamping: The Present (and Future) of Alternative Lodging** - August 6, 2021 by Amanda Hartman '22(CHE)

"In the last few years, an unlikely marriage has occurred between nature and luxury that has spurred an entirely new industry (and word): 'glamping'."

In that article, the Founder and CEO of Firelight Camps, a glamping company, acknowledged the difficulty of shoehorning commercial luxury campgrounds into an established zoning plan. He said:

"We've been in front of many state and municipal planning boards who don't know what to make of us. We get questions like, 'Is this a hotel? Is this a resort? Is this a campground? Is this a motel?' The way the zoning laws are written makes it so that Firelight Camps doesn't cleanly fit into any of those categories, which can slow down approvals processes."

Tonight, you are being asked to change the rules to accelerate the approval process based on the absurd notion that luxury and nature somehow go together. The applicants are trying to forge a connection between glamping, camping and agriculture – that's nonsensical.

One writer for a camping organization captured it in a nutshell:

"For all of its pros, we can't say that *glamping* is camping in any way, shape, or form. Comparing camping to *glamping* is like comparing kayaking down a stream to taking a cruise down that stream in a luxury ocean liner. When you are glamping, you are essentially a client at a high-end resort."

Literature in the hospitality industry is full of market research and articles about how to become a player in the fast-growing glamping business.

Just two weeks ago an article appeared in Advanced Outdoor Solutions entitled:

Tapping Into the Growth of the Glamping Industry by Kathleen Walsh October 12, 2022

“Now is absolutely the best time to expand into the glamping industry, as the market size has continued to grow steadily. The US glamping market is expected to grow from \$569 million in 2020 to \$1.5 billion in 2026...

Research suggests that glamping appeals primarily to those between 18-32 years of age due to **the illusion** of being in the great outdoors or isolated from the modern world, while still maintaining access to the luxuries of home.”

Why include events in a zoning provision focused on alternative lodging? The answer appears in the same article.

“Another rising trend in the world of glamping is the increased popularity of outdoor music festivals. ... Younger people are particularly interested in communal glamping options that allow them to be around their friends in cabins, pods, tents or yurts around a common area that allows for socialization.”

What is worrisome is how the “luxury” and amenities that are the very essence of glamping are going to be supplied to glamp grounds on local farms. The answer is infrastructure.

Roadways, drainage, electricity, communications, lighting, heat, air-conditioning, bathrooms, running water, showers, sewers, waste disposal, linen service, restaurants and bars, TVs, entertainment, events, and housing and physical plant required to support and accommodate necessary staff. All these things are needed to provide the resort-style luxuries to commercial, luxury campgrounds. And all these things are irreversible - once infrastructure is built – it stays.

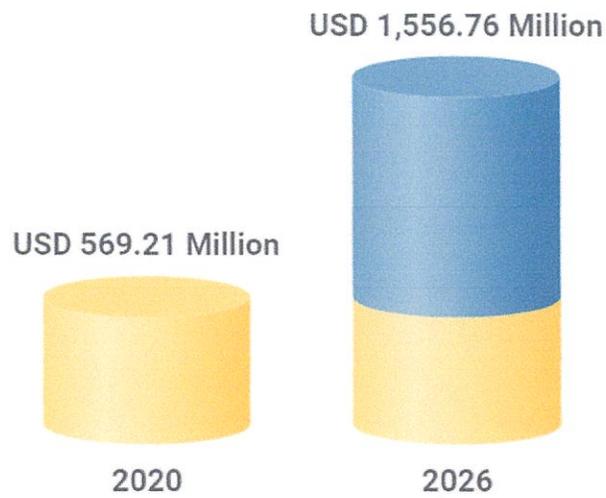
Glamorous camping has nothing to do with agriculture, and very little to do with camping. It has everything to do with the hospitality industry, commercial resort lodging, outdoor concerts, and the extensive infrastructure necessary to support them – none of which belong within Brooklyn’s residential or agricultural zones.

This proposed change in RA zone does nothing to (a) protect the public health, safety, welfare or property values - just the opposite and (b) does nothing to help attain the purposes of the Brooklyn Plan of Conservation and Development.

I urge you to reject this amendment.

U.S. Glamping Market

Market forecast to grow at a CAGR of 18.3%



<https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5511433>

RESEARCH AND MARKETS
THE WORLD'S LARGEST MARKET RESEARCH STORE

CAGR = Compound Annual Growth Rate

Information about Glamping Sites and Units
(based on information provided in Little Dipper Farm application)

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Maximum of 250 lodging and event guests on a glampground.

One glamping site per acre (43,560 square feet). Maximum of 125 glamping sites.

No glamping site shall be designed to accommodate more than 12 persons. (If there are 3 units on the site, that is 4 people per unit.)

One to three glamping units per glamping site. "A glamping unit is a lodging structure designed to be occupied for transient and recreational lodging. Such structures may include, but are not limited to safari tents, yurts, teepees, hard-sided structures, small cabins, and other similar structures.)"

No more than 50% of glamping sites shall accommodate more than one glamping unit.

Glamping sites with one glamping unit shall be a minimum of 1250 square feet.

Glamping sites with two glamping units shall be a minimum of 1500 square feet.

Glamping sites with three glamping units shall be a minimum of 1750 square feet.

No glamping site/unit shall be located within 300 feet of the fronting street that provides access to the glampground facility.

125 acres used for glamping sites:

- 125 glamping sites
- 63 sites with one unit
- 62 sites with three units
- Total: $63 + 62 \times 3 = 249$ units (maximum allowable on 125 acres)

100 acres used for glamping sites:

- 100 glamping sites
- 50 sites with one unit
- 50 sites with three units
- Total: $50 + 50 \times 3 = 200$ units (maximum allowable on 100 acres)

62 acres used for glamping sites:

- 62 glamping sites
- 31 sites with one unit
- 31 sites with three units
- Total: $31 + 31 \times 3 = 122$ units (maximum allowable on 62 acres)

40 acres used for glamping sites:

- 40 glamping sites
- 20 sites with one unit
- 20 sites with three units
- Total: $20 + 20 \times 3 = 80$ units (maximum allowable on 40 acres)

"Glamping units shall not exceed 18 feet in height." – A 2-story house with average height ceilings is 18-20 feet tall.

"Up to five structures may be provided for Glampground staff accommodations onsite." – Are these houses? How close will they be?

Little Dipper Proposal Public Hearing 11/2/2022

1. **Traffic/Safety**– Bush Hill Rd and Wolf Den Rd, are narrow scenic roads and only 18' wide in some places that carry's currently about 500 cars/day.

- The Commercial Luxury Camping venue has a proposed capacity of 250 people and that number could double including people participating in other activities or going to the 100 seat restaurant on the property.
- This development could easily increase the traffic count by 30% or more on roads not designed for this much traffic and would add more large trucks to the roads.
- Even in the developed commercial zone along Rte. 6 a proposal that would increase traffic by 30% or more would unlikely be approved there let alone in an RA zone.
- We have personally observed several close calls with both trucks and cars on Bush Hill Rd. In one incident an 18 wheel tractor trailer had to swerve onto the soft shoulder to avoid hitting oncoming traffic and came within a few feet from rolling over.
- There will be additional road maintenance as the pavement is already starting to crack and deteriorate in multiple areas on the road.
- Adding additional alcohol sales on site in addition to the existing restaurant will also lead to more safety issues.
- Unfortunately there have already been two traffic fatalities 1 each on Bush Hill & Wolf Den Roads.
- Additional Commercial Luxury Camping developments in an RA zone that would be allowed if this application were to be granted will bring all of the same concerns/impacts to other areas in Brooklyn.

1. **Noise** – My understanding is that the standard for noise is 70 decibels at the property line.

How will this standard be met with:

- Amplified music events with as many as 250 – 500 people participating in multiple activities/events on the property at the same time including the 100 seat restaurant.
- What is the capacity limit on music events and the total capacity on the property
- What other unknow events are planned that we are unaware of at this time
- Who is going to monitor and control the enforcement of our right to quiet enjoyment of our properties

2. **Litter** – there is already an existing litter problem in this area.

- Large bags of trash/garbage, nip, energy drinks, beer cans, wine bottles, fast food trash including large numbers of coffee cups.
- Clean up on Earth Day this year yielded a significant amount of trash being collected.
- The litter issue will continue to increase with the proposed development
- Who will be responsible to pick it up on a regular basis

The extreme increase in population density, congestion, traffic, noise and all of the other concerns you will hear tonight raises many valid concerns that need to be considered in this matter as called out in the regulations before any decision can be made.

Of note recently an application for an apartment complex in a commercial zone along Rte. 6 by CVS was not approved. So the question is if a softer use like residential apartments wasn't approved in a commercial zone. How can a large and intrusive commercial development with so many undefined controls be approved in an RA zone.

This development will clearly destroy the character of such a scenic area and specifically an iconic property that is listed on the historical register and already has development right restrictions in place that were purchased by the state. If approved it could change the character of the entire town.

We would urge the board to not approve this proposed development in an RA zone that has nothing but downside for the town.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim & Kathy Doherty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim & Kathy Doherty
44 Bush Hill Rd
Brooklyn, CT 06234

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NOV 2 - 2022

01:45:18 course1: Can we have a referendum?

01:49:22 course1: To reach the community, a special mailing could be sent to all residents.

04:08:18 Dalia Belliveau: My name is Dalia Belliveau, I submitted my letter to oppose. I have lived in Brooklyn for 43 years on RTE 169, near Lapsy Apple Orchard. There has been an increase amount of traffic and many people that used to walk 169 now walk on the back roads. One police officer is not sufficient. The roads will have to be widen. My entire concerns have been submitted.

RECEIVED
NOV 10 2022

8 Woodward Rd
Brooklyn, CT 06234
November 10, 2022

To: Brooklyn Planning and Zoning Commission, Michelle Sigfridson Chairperson
Re: ZRC 22-007 Revisions to Residential-Agricultural Zone to Allow Glamping
Public's Perception that Proposed Text Amendment Applied to Little Dipper Farm ONLY

Dear Commissioners,

The minutes of the November 2, 2022, Public Hearing jogged my memory that Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the people in the town may have misunderstood or not been informed at all, regarding the proposed text amendment - that it affected the entire town's R/A Zones (87% of the town) and not just The Little Dipper Farm.

Ms Sigfridson stated that publication of the Legal Notice specified the RA Zone and did not single out one property. If the public doesn't read the paper or doesn't attend the meeting, she didn't know how else to inform them. Ms Sigfridson also said that continuing the public hearing to November 15, would allow the public another opportunity to be heard.

I can easily understand why people might believe that LDF was the ONLY property involved. I counted 22 times that Little Dipper Farm was specifically named in the whole text change application packet. It would be perfectly understandable to read "Little Dipper Farm" a half a dozen times and infer that the change only affected LDF. The way Dr Poland wrote his introductory and justification letters does lead one to believe that LDF is the only property in contention. He never said it was the only one, but by referencing LDF so many times, it understandably could lead people to think this.

Informing the public is a challenge to be sure and I believe Mr Fitzgerald's concern is a valid one. In my opposition role, I have repeatedly encountered that people believed the text amendment pertained to The Little Dipper Farm only. When they were informed that it was for all RA Zones, their concern went way up.

When there is a Public Hearing for a **Special Permit**, the applicant must erect physical signs to inform the community of the Public Hearing. In the situation where **Zoning Regulation changes** are involved, the public's need to know is even more important because it impacts so many more citizens. Signs should also be required. This time though, in several locations about town. I think this would help.

I strongly suggest that this situation be taken seriously, and a solution found. It is important that all the town have an opportunity to understand and speak on matters that affect them.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline D Iglizzi

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NOV - 7 2022

November 2, 2022

Good Evening.

My name is Jacqueline Igliozi. I live in Brooklyn on the corner of Wolf Den and Woodward Roads.

I am asking you to REJECT the proposed text amendment.

I will be sharing with you how permitting glamp grounds in the Residential Agricultural Zone will impose financial burdens onto the town's taxpayers and to the town of Brooklyn overall.

I will also point out how approving this text amendment is in direct conflict with the statutory purposes of Brooklyn's zoning regulations.

We've heard tonight that glamp grounds will bring tourism dollars into Brooklyn. But let's be clear things aren't always what they seem. When it comes to the Town's budget, it depends on only 2 things, revenues, and expenses. Tourism dollars will directly contribute to the State's coffers through the collection of income and sales taxes. In the case of income taxes, it may not even be Connecticut that receives the lion's share. Out of state campground management companies will send their profits back to the state where their headquarters are located.

Brooklyn's revenues on the other hand are derived mainly from PROPERTY TAXES. The town does not collect income taxes or sales taxes. Therefore, in order to benefit from the commercial glamping industry, it is extremely important that the PROPERTY be appraised correctly.

Equally as important, is that Brooklyn knows the PUBLIC COSTS associated with glamp grounds, because in the end, if the costs outweigh the revenues, the budget will be negatively impacted, and we taxpayers will have to pay the difference. Therefore, thorough research must be done by the town prior to permitting such a major change. The Town must be certain that swapping farm lands for glamp grounds will produce a positive impact, immediately and in the future.

Another factor to be aware of is that imbedded in the proposed text amendment is the inclusion of up to 5 structures for staff. Just what are these structures? This needs to be answered, it really matters. Because if they are in fact, dwellings, then the Town is by default, permitting 5 new homes for each glamp ground it permits. As you know, homes require a great deal in community services.

Many of the people here tonight live in the Little Dipper Farm RA neighborhood, as do I, so I will be using my neighborhood as an example to discuss the following.

There are 28 homes surrounding the Little Dipper Farm. If the farm owners build just one Glamp ground on their property, the neighborhood's population will swell from 82 people to over 332! How I derived at this number is pretty simple. I just added in the 250 glampers indicated in the text amendment, to the existing 82 residents.

If I had included campground staff, delivery personnel, restaurant patrons, service workers, trail hikers, and other visitors to the farm, that number would be even higher! But just looking at the 332 total represents a "4 times" increase in the number of people dwelling in the area!

What does this “4 times” increase mean? It means “4 times” the traffic, “4 times” the noise, “4 times” the demand for water, “4 times” the amount of waste, and “4 times” the risks of pollution, trash, and fire!

Keep in mind that the text amendment would allow glamp grounds to be developed throughout all the RA Zones. A population swell such as this one will be experienced in all those neighborhoods as well.

How does inflating the TRAFFIC by “4 times” on our winding, narrow, country roads cost us money? There will be more accidents, more calls for police, fire, and rescues. All the Town’s taxpayers will end up paying for the increased demand for these public services.

And if fatalities occur as they have on Bush Hill, Wolf Den, and Day Streets, the roads may need to be widened and straightened. Who’ll pay this cost? Once again, it will be taxpayers.

Now I would like to talk about WATER. Glamp grounds are water hogs. They will require thousands of gallons of water for drinking, showering, flushing, and washing every single day!

As the vast majority of residents in the RA Zones do not have water piped in from public reservoirs, glamp grounds will use wells. They will draw their water from the same underground resources as the rest of us in the neighborhood. No one owns the water, it is a shared resource that extends beyond property lines. But because water is so vital to the operation of a glamp ground, the developers will find a way to provide plenty of water for themselves! They may drill multiple wells, store water in large holding tanks, and so forth, but will they consider their impact on the rest of the area’s residents need for water?

During this summer’s extreme drought, the state of Connecticut believed the low-water levels to be so important, that they issued conservation advisories especially in New London and Windham counties. By end Aug, 100% of tested wells in Windham County were below normal; 83.3% were below normal for 4 or more consecutive months. [2022-09-08_Drought_Conditions.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#)

We can’t allow commercial businesses to suck up all the water in our neighborhoods. When resident’s wells go dry, the town will have no choice but to consider the very expensive proposition of extending public water into the RA Zones and it will be Brooklyn taxpayers who pay for this.

Another concern is FIRE. Heat, drought, and people...they create the “perfect storm” conditions to spark a fire! Take 250 people living in wooded areas next to hayfields and now add camp fires, smoking, and outdoor cooking into the mix and the risk of fire increases dramatically. And so does the risk of a wildfire spreading to nearby homes.

Listen to this *Drought Conditions Report* issued by the State at the end of July. “Fire activity has picked up across the state...Since July 23rd, 7 new fires were reported, most of these fires are stubborn ground fires that take multiple days to extinguish. We have 2 of these fires currently smoldering, and have been burning for 5-6 days each. Wildfire starts and issues with extinguishing them are going to be problematic until we receive significant widespread wetting rain that penetrates deep into the soil. These numbers only account for fires that we have received reports on...”

[Drought-Conditions-Report-2022-08-04.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#)

This is a scary situation. I'm sure you can understand how drought conditions along with the increased fire risks from glamping, instills anxiety and anger in campground neighbors. Will our property values decline because of the increased risk of fire? Will our homeowner insurance rates rise?

These aren't the only costs associated with allowing commercial luxury campgrounds into our neighborhoods, but these are some of big ones. If Brooklyn is going to open this door, it needs to be prepared to deal with the consequences. The Town needs to be pro-active, not re-active.

Brooklyn must do the research, must perform its due diligence so its citizens don't have to carry the burden of higher taxes for the good of a private business.

Residential Agricultural is the descriptive name of our zone. I implore you to uphold the intent of the RA Zone, its regulations, and its boundaries. I implore you to keep large commercial enterprises out of farm and residential neighborhoods. And I implore you to uphold the "Statutory Purposes" documented in Brooklyn's Zoning Regulations to "*protect the public health, safety, ...and property values;*" to "*lessen congestion in the streets; secure safety from fire, panic, flood and other dangers;*" to "*promote health and the general welfare;*" to "*prevent the overcrowding of land; avoid undue concentration of population; and*" to "*facilitate the adequate provision for transportation, water, sewerage,... and other public requirements*".

In the best interests of the Town of Brooklyn and for all the reasons I have stated, I humbly ask that you REJECT the Proposed Glamping Text Amendment.

Thank you,

Jacqueline Igliazzi
8 Woodward Rd
Brooklyn

November 2, 2022

8 Woodward Rd
Brooklyn, CT 06234
November 7, 2022

To: Brooklyn Planning and Zoning Commission, Michelle Sigfridson Chairperson
Re: ZRC 22-007 Revisions to Residential-Agricultural Zone to Allow Glamping
Minutes of Public Hearing Nov. 2, 2022

RECEIVED
NOV - 7 2022

Dear Commissioners,

I was very disappointed reading the official minutes of the Public Hearing that was conducted on November 2, 2022, regarding ZRC 22-007. My statement was not correctly reflected in the minutes. Though a few points were identified, they all lacked the detail I specifically spoke about.

For example, it was not enough to state that I had a concern with "Staff structures" without including that by default, the Town would be allowing 5 new homes for each glamp ground it permits and that "...homes require a great deal in community services."

The minutes did not reflect that I spoke about revenues vs expenses; Property Taxes vs Income vs Sales Taxes and which one the Town directly benefits from; that appraising glamp grounds correctly was extremely important and needed to be done with research, care, and knowledge because their costs could outweigh their revenue.

Though "water" was a bullet in the minutes, it did not capture my concern with the potential for private wells to go dry.

Left out of the "4 times" concerns were that I used my neighborhood, the Little Dipper Neighborhood, for these numbers. Without this explanation, one is left confused as to where the numbers came from.

So, with the above in mind, I am attaching a copy of the prepared statement I used for my testimony on November 2, 2022. I request that it be published with the other ZRC 22-007 materials prior to approving the minutes, so my remarks will be correctly accounted for.

I would also like to state that overall, the minutes from this night's hearing felt slanted to me in favor of the proposed text amendment. Pages and pages of beautifully well outlined and bulleted information given by Donald Poland were provided in the minutes. Though Attorney Keith Ainsworth's were covered well, the format lacked the readability that was given to Mr. Poland's remarks. It seems that either Mr. Poland's remarks were provided to the minute taker or that more care was given to documenting his remarks. I see no problem with including a prepared document if it correctly reflects what was stated. However, if this was the case, I think the minutes should note it.

Also, the testimony given by others in the public, were very short and lacked detail. This is seen most obviously in the account of Mr. Berman's statement. The minutes recorded nothing of substance in what Mr. Berman's said and though his remarks were submitted for the record, they are nowhere to be found.

I must also mention that a person's testimony in favor of the applicant, did not reflect that she was reprimanded by the Chairperson for her threatening, bigoted remarks. Though personally, I wouldn't like to see those specific remarks in print, I think the warning should be recorded in the minutes.

I understand the difficulty in paraphrasing everything for the record, and I don't envy the minute taker's job, but it seems to me more detail was required. If someone looks at these minutes any time in the future, they should be able to understand not only what points were made, but why they were made.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Igliozzi

CONNECTICUT FEDERATION OF PLANNING AND ZONING AGENCIES QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2022

Volume XXVI, Issue 4

STATE SUPREME COURT FINDS SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS CAN HAVE TIME LIMITS

A special permit application to construct a large retail store was approved with the condition that completion of the proposed use be done within two years of the date of approval. Like most special exception applications, this one was accompanied by a site plan application. The planning and zoning commission later amended its zoning regulations and removed the two-year completion requirement and substituted instead a requirement that any completion period would comply with the Connecticut General Statutes. The Commission and its town planner interpreted this to mean that in the case of this application where a special permit application was accompanied by a site plan application, the time for completing the site plan under the general statutes would control.

After the now repealed two-year period had expired but before the site plan had expired, the applicant filed an application for an extension to the completion period for the site plan and special exception. The commission approved this application, and this decision was appealed to court. The appeal challenged the commission's decision to extend the completion period.

The issue before the court was whether a time limitation can be imposed on an approval of a special

exception and if it could, what time limit could be imposed. The appeal eventually made its way to our Connecticut Supreme Court which found that "Zoning agencies have authority under Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 8-2 to adopt a regulation under which a special exception permit would expire if construction for the proposed use is not completed within a specified period of time." Furthermore, the Court held that if this authority is exercised, the time limitation cannot conflict with the statutory deadline prescribed for an accompanying site plan.

Thus, a planning and zoning commission or zoning commission has the authority to adopt a regulation placing a time limit on a special exception permit for completing the construction of the proposed use that can equal or exceed the time limit for a site plan. The Supreme Court found that this rule does not conflict with the long-accepted rule that a special exception runs with the land because once construction of the proposed special exception use is completed, it would run with the land. *See International Investors v. Plan & Zoning Commission, 344 Conn. 46 (2022).*

APPEALS COURT EXPLAINS AUTO DEALER AND REPAIRERS APPROVAL PROCEDURE

The owner of a parcel of property located within a general manufacturing zone filed an application with the

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Fall 2022

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municipal land use office to use the property as an automotive repair facility and to sell automobiles. The municipal application form was filled out by the applicant with the assistance of town staff. The application stated that it was for a 'motor vehicle' use and referred the application to other municipal boards and offices in accordance with the variance requirements listed on the form.

Notice of the public hearing on the application stated that a hearing would be held on a motor vehicle approval. The Board held the duly noticed hearing after which it approved the application. The reasons for the decision indicated that the Board decided the application as if it was for a variance. An appeal by an abutting property owner followed. The appeal claimed in part that the decision violated the law as it incorporated an incorrect standard of law for the application.

In reaching its decision to sustain the appeal, the Connecticut Court of Appeals restated the law on a zoning board's role on a certificate of location application. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 14-54, the approval of the proposed location for an automobile dealer and repairers license by a municipal zoning board is a prerequisite to the issuance of a state license to deal in or repair motor vehicles. When a municipal zoning board reviews such an application, it acts as a special agent of the State. In this special capacity, it acts as the local agency for the State to determine

whether a certificate of approval should be issued. Because it is acting as an agent of the State, the board does not look to its zoning regulations to decide the application but instead must apply the correct standard as supplied by state law.

To illustrate this point, the Appellate Court stated that even if an automobile dealer or repairer business is a permitted use within a zone, the zoning board could still decide to deny a certificate of location application. The Appellate Court recognized that since the repeal of Connecticut General Statutes. 14-55, a clear statutory standard was no longer available. Instead, zoning boards are free to decide what factors should be considered in making a decision.

In this appeal, the court ruled that the zoning board of appeals applied the wrong the legal standard when it applied the requirements for a variance application to this application. *See One Elmcroft Starford LLC v. Zoning Board of Appeals, 213 Conn. App. 200 (2022).*

RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH INCLUDES FLYING RELIGIOUS FLAG ON CITY FLAGPOLE

When the city of Boston denied an application to fly a Christian flag from a flagpole located outside its City Hall, a lawsuit by the applicant followed. The City had a policy which permitted private entities to fly a flag on the flagpole. The permitting process was

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simple, and all applications were usually approved until the application for the Christian flag. The city based its denial on the premise that if a religious flag was flown on a city flagpole, this would be a violation of the U.S. Constitution's establishment clause. The U.S. Supreme Court found this concern to be misplaced and instead ruled that in denying the application to fly the Christian flag, the City had violated the applicant's First Amendment Right to free speech.

The court opined that it is not a violation of the establishment clause to treat religious speech or expression in the same manner as nonreligious speech. Thus, the city could have avoided this litigation if it treated the religious flag in the same manner as the numerous other flags it approved to fly on the City's flagpole. *See Shurtleff v. City of Boston, 596 U.S. 1 ___ (2022) No. 20-1800.*

U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS TAKES AIM AT LOCAL ZONING CONTROL IN CT

Hearings have been held by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights this year regarding zoning practices in Connecticut. This Commission is examining local zoning control and whether this control perpetuates racial segregation in our State. A review of the groups invited to testify can lead one to believe that the verdict has already been reached and now we are having the investigation. For example, the Commission speaks favorably of the Fair

Share Act, HB 5429, which failed to pass the state legislature this year. This law would have imposed state control over local zoning in regard to providing affordable housing. With election day fast approaching, now is the time to ask candidates where they stand on local control over zoning.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership Dues

Notices for this year's annual membership dues were mailed March 1, 2022. The Federation is a nonprofit organization which operates solely on the funds provided by its members. So that we can continue to offer the services you enjoy, please pay promptly.

Workshops

At the price of \$180.00 per session for each agency attending, our workshops are an affordable way for your board to 'stay legal'. Each workshop attendee will receive a booklet which sets forth the 'basics' as well as a booklet on good governance which covers conflict of interest as well as how to run a meeting and a public hearing.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Byrne is an attorney with an office in Farmington, Connecticut. A principal in the law firm of Byrne & Byrne LLC, he maintains a strong focus in the area of land use law and is available for consultation and representation in all land use matters both at the administrative and court levels.

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