

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room  
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT  
Monday, February 22, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.  
Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**

Members Present: Chair Rick Nassiff, Vice-Chair Vera Englert, Don Schofield, Tom Currier, Robert Powell (7:10), Larry Preston and Walter Tabor

Members Excused: Ernest Jay Starkel, Richard Napolitano

Staff Present: Town Planner Paula Stahl, Board Clerk Kelly McGuire

Others Present: Carmen Vance/First Selectman, Linda McDonald, Gary McDonald, Cindee Hodge, Ann Dunnack, Ed Morano, Thomas Cretella, Anthony Ortiz, Jeff Lynds, Raymond Covino, Judy Ortiz, Michael Porter, Scott Keegan, Glenn Keegan, Lawrence Switzer, Edward Pelletier and nine others.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** -The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES** -R. Nassiff seated Larry Preston as a voting member for Ernest Jay Starkel.
3. **ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA** - none
4. **APPROVAL OF PZC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF January 25, 2016**  
R. Nassiff MOVED to APPROVE the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2016 as written.  
V. Englert SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.
5. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS** – no comments.

**SUSPEND REGULAR MEETING**

R. Nassiff **OPENED the PUBLIC HEARING FOR: PZC-1516-07:** Special Permit Application by Walter Tabor for Roadside Stand (Winery) for tasting and sale of alcohol at 468 Route 87, Assessor's Map #30-38.

W. Tabor recused himself for this portion of the meeting.

W. Tabor presented details to Members for the proposed roadside stand and winery processing area. He explained that he and his wife have been planting grapes for many years. They currently have 7 acres of grapes. The grapes will need to be processed regardless of the outcome of the application. They will be building a processing area in the basement of the proposed building. The footprint of the building is dictated by the size they need for processing. This area will be used for washing, de-stemming, making wine, etc. The footprint is 30'x60' and will be located 730' back from the road. The portion of the building that will be used for winery sales would be limited to 400 square feet and will be separated from other areas of the building. He hopes to be

approved to sell produce in that space and eventually conduct wine tasting and sale of their wine. He further explained the lengthy process with getting state and USDA approval. The approval with PZC in Columbia is the first step. Members asked questions, such as: the other goods that may be sold on premises, is this considered with limited approval such as a package store, an explanation of the parking, hours of operation. W. Tabor answered all questions posed. The other goods they hope to sell would be bread and cheese as well as other products produced on the farm. He explained that a winery is not considered by the Connecticut Liquor Commission as a package store. He described the parking area to be 10 spaces for regular vehicles (regulations require only 4-6). The hours of operation would be 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In the summer they may extend the hours to 9:30 p.m.

P.Stahl confirmed that the state winery license limits the sale to the wine produced by the winery. She also explained that the applicant wants to sell to the public, and currently in the zoning regulations only under the 'Roadside Stand' regulation is that possible.

R. Nassiff opened comments from the public.

Dick Szedga said that W. Tabor and his wife are great neighbors. Said he grew up on a farm in Columbia and feels that it is important for PZC to encourage farm use. Also, said that he feels it is important to encourage a town business.

Ann Dunnack spoke and said she and the Conservation Agriculture Commission is 100% in favor of what applicant proposes. Said that the town surveys indicate people are in favor of Columbia's rural character and open space, and agriculture is key.

Michael Porter asked questions about the expected volume, the timeline and details about the production. Per W. Tabor, they hope to be selling in two years but everything takes time. The fruit develops over time, then needs to be seasoned; however, they hope to break ground for the building in March and be fully functioning by Fall 2016. He further explained that J. Valente, Wetlands Agent, has visited the property and has said there will be little to no impact with the rinsing in the processing area. The rinse water will go into the septic and not across the ground. They anticipate 10-20 visits per day by patrons.

Tom Cretella asks about plans for the driveway. Per W. Tabor, the entrance is limited by 2 large maple trees and they do not wish to cut them. There is currently a farm gate in place which will be removed. As necessary, he plans to add a better layer of gravel and he will install a small unlit sign.

Ray Covino feels this is great for the community. Said he believes that diversified farming is a value to town.

V. Englert asks if the grapes are organic. W. Tabor explains that grapes are unable to be grown organically, but that he uses the most benign chemicals possible.

Nancy Tabor/Applicant reiterated that the grapes are growing and they need to have a place to process them.

R. Powell remarks that the driveway should be a minimum of 12' wide since it will have public access. W. Tabor explains that he is trying not to impose on neighbors. R. Powell feels this should be addressed on this application and not wait until the building permit.

C. Vance asks about large trucks/transport vehicles that may need to travel on this driveway. Mr. Tabor stated that they are not planning to wholesale their wines, as least "not at this juncture".

T. Currier has researched the process and commended W. Tabor on this undertaking.

P. Stahl read a letter from Columbia resident, Mary E. Deptula, dated February 15, 2016/Received February 28, 2016. She states that she does not approve of the application submitted by Walter Tabor for the Roadside Stand/Sale of Alcoholic Beverages.

R. Nassiff MOVED to CLOSE the PUBLIC HEARING for **PZC-1516-07**. T. Currier SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

## **RESUME REGULAR MEETING (7:50 p.m.)**

### **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action):**

#### **6.1 PZC-1516-07: Special Permit Application by Walter Tabor for Roadside Stand (Winery) for tasting and sale of alcohol at 468 Route 87, Assessor's Map #30-38.**

R. Nassiff asked if members wanted to discuss the application or if they were ready to vote. There was discussion on the need to address the driveway.

R. Nassiff MOVED to APPROVE the Special Permit Application by Walter Tabor for wine tasting and sale at 468 Route 87, Columbia, CT, Assessor's Map #30-38 per the application and site plan submitted and statements made by the applicant, with parking and driveway modifications to be approved by town staff to meet Columbia Regulations. D. Schofield SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

### **7. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)**

R. Nassiff seated Walter Tabor as a voting member for Richard Napolitano.

#### **7.1 PZC-1516-08: Site Plan Application for Hometown Builders LLC for 117 Route 66 East, Columbia, CT, Assessor's Map #10-82**

Ed Pelletier/Datum Engineering, presented to Members. Scott and Glenn Keegan/Hometown Builders were also present. He explained that they have already been through Zoning Board of Appeals due to the hardship with the setbacks on the property. He again outlined the drainage plans to Members and explained that the septic system will be three times the size of a regular septic system because the hair salon will have 6 stations available. R. Nassiff asks about their plans for a sign. Per E. Pelletier, a sign has not been planned or permitted yet. At this time, he is only requesting approval of the location of the sign. E. Pelletier further explains that they still only have a verbal approval from DOT but nothing yet in writing. Until PZC approves this application, they can't make formal application to DOT. The applicant may need to modify the site plan based on the DOT approval. R. Nassiff asks about surface water flowing onto the highway. Per E. Pelletier, their plans reduce the water substantially. P. Stahl said that the detail for the retaining wall between the two buildings needs to be adjusted. Also, P. Stahl suggests the owner consider putting stairs in the retaining wall.

R. Nassiff MOVED to APPROVE the Site Plan Application for Hometown Builders LLC for 117 Route 66 East, Columbia, CT, Assessor's Map #10-82 for new commercial building per the application and site plan submitted, and statements made by the applicants, with the following condition: Any modification to the drainage or retaining wall is to be approved by town staff. W. Tabor SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

**7.2 Squire Subdivision:** Request for a 90 day extension to file the Final Plan with the Town Clerk.

R. Nassiff MOVED to APPROVE the 90 day extension to file the Final Plan for Squire Subdivision. T. Currier SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0. R. Powell asks that it be noted that this is the 2nd and last extension.

**8. REGULATION REVISIONS**

- 8.1** Rte 6 Corridor / Commercial Regulations – no discussion
- 8.2** Implementation of Columbia Lake ADHOC Committee recommendations – no discussion
- 8.3** Other zoning regulation revisions – no discussion

**9. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS**

**9.1 POCD - Initial review of Chapters 7,8,9,10 and 12 (Schedule future meetings for review)**

Chapter 7 was reviewed by P. Stahl and Members. They scheduled a special meeting to further discuss the POCD on February 29, 2016, in the Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room at 7:00 p.m.

- 10. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION** - none
- 11. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS** - none
- 12. ADJOURNMENT**

R. Nassiff MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:56 pm. D. Schofield SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly McGuire

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.