

The Stratford Board of Zoning Appeals held an Administrative Session, following a public hearing, on Tuesday, June 3, 2014, in the Council Chambers, Town Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Dempsey, Mr. Hyatt and Mr. Kelemen

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mr. Fredette (sitting for Ms. Brooks) and Mr. Grega (sitting for Ms. Collier)

OTHERS PRESENT: Gary Lorentson (Planning & Zoning Administrator).

- Chairman Dempsey called the administrative session to order at 8:05 p.m..

**PETITION 1
AMY BRACCO
254 FREEMAN AVENUE
VARIANCE OF SECTION 3.17**

- On motion by Mr. Fredette and seconded by Mr. Hyatt, Petition 1 was taken off the table.

- Owner seeks to install an above ground swimming pool in her yard. Because of the many large boulders and mature trees in the rear of the property, the only possible location for the pool is only 2 ft. to the sideyard instead of the required 10 ft. No one spoke for or against the petition.

- Discussion followed. The Board noted that the yard looks like a land mine with all the boulders on it and there is no other possible location to install the pool. MR. FREDETTE MOVED TO APPROVE PETITION 1 TO WAIVE THE SETBACK OF 10 FT. TO 2 FT. IN ORDER TO INSTALL AN ABOVE GROUND SWIMMING POOL ON PROPERTY LOCATED IN AN RS-4 DISTRICT. MR. HYATT SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED 5-0.

**PETITION 2
URSTADT BIDDLE PROPERTIES LLC
955 FERRY BLVD.
VARIANCE OF SECTION 16.6.5.2**

- On motion by Mr. Fredette and seconded by Mr. Grega, Petition 2 was taken off the table.

- Petitioner was represented by Attorney Benjamin Proto. Petitioner's Engineer also addressed the Board. Petitioner currently has a free-standing sign along I-95. Petitioner is now seeking to remove the top panel of the sign and replace it with a real boat to identify the shopping center as a marine-based retail outlet. This would raise the height of the current sign from 54.5 ft. to 59 ft. and increase the total size from 530 sq. ft. to 550 sq. ft. This petition was previously denied in November 2013 because the Board had concerns about the height and questioned the stability of the boat on top. Petitioner has tried to address these concerns. They have redesigned the structural support for the boat on top of the sign and are also re-enforcing the entire sign to make the structure more stable. In addition, the top of the boat will be covered to prevent the accumulation of ice and snow, and they are installing radiant heaters in the boat to melt any accumulation and there will be drain holes in the bottom of the boat. The sign will be able to withstand wind loads of 110 miles per hour. The BJ's building only has a wind tolerance of 90 miles per hour. Also, the base has been re-designed to prevent people from climbing the sign. The hardship is that the DOT has raised I-95, making it difficult to see the current sign. There is a new marina at The Dock and Petitioner wants to advertise this fact. Mr. Hyatt

questioned whether the Petitioner had considered Mr. Lorentson's alternative which was to paint a picture of a boat or logo on the top panel of the sign. Petitioner did not think this was a valid option because it wouldn't make the sign any more visible from I-95. No one spoke for the petition and only one person spoke against as he was opposed to any type of sign variance.

- MR. FREDETTE STATED THAT THE PETITIONER HAD DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE SIGN SAFER AND HE WAS IN FAVOR OF PROMOTING STRATFORD. MR. FREDETTE MOVED TO APPROVE PETITION 2 AND WAIVE THE HEIGHT FROM 10 FT. TO 59 FT. AND SIZE FROM 44 SQ. FT. TO 550 SQ. FT. IN ORDER TO EXPAND A FREE STANDING SIGN ON PROPERTY LOCATED IN A CAWF DISTRICT. MR. KELEMEN SECONDED THE MOTION AND ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY DOES NOT LIKE THIS SIGN, HE AGREES THAT THE PETITIONER HAS MADE IT STRUCTURALLY MORE SOUND AND THAT THE HARDSHIP IS THE EXPANSION AND RAISED HEIGHT OF I-95 WHICH IS BLOCKING THE VIEW OF THE OLD SIGN. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

**TOWN OF STRATFORD
200 CONNORS LANE
VARIANCE OF SECTION 3.14**

- On motion by Mr. Fredette and seconded by Mr. Hyatt, Petition 3 was taken off the table.

- Mr. Chad Esposito, the Parks Superintendent, addressed the Board. The Town is proposing to construct a new three lane driveway exit from Bunnell High School to deal with traffic safety issues. The new driveway would be located within the 50-foot setback of wetlands and will require the filing of 700 sq. ft. of wetlands. In mitigation, the Town intends to create 700 sq. feet of new wetlands. The Town would also remove the existing sidewalk and convert the existing driveway into 12 additional parking spaces. The existing wetlands are overgrown with invasive species and have little biological importance. There are no other alternatives for the location of the driveway that would resolve the traffic problems. Inland Wetlands has not ruled on the wetlands application yet.

Several members of the public spoke against the petition. One person stated that he did not think the State would allow a crosswalk on Connors Lane. Another issue was flooding experienced by neighbors since the Town replaced the football field with a turf field and changed the water table. Also, the necessity of these 12 additional parking spaces was questioned.

The Board discussed the petition. It was not against the new driveway but it was concerned about the flooding. Mr. Dempsey suggested that the Town add area drains. Mr. Fredette suggested eliminating the 12 parking spaces and instead digging up the asphalt and planting grass or shrubs. Mr. Hyatt suggested waiting for Inland Wetlands to act. MR. FREDETTE MOVED TO TABLE THIS PETITION. MR. GREGA SECONDED AND THE MOTION TO TABLE CARRIED 5-0.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 6, 2014 MEETING

- ON MOTION BY MR. FREDETTE AND SECONDED BY MR. GREGA, THE FOREGOING MINUTES WERE APPROVED 5-0.

5. C.A.M. SITE PLAN REVIEW – no business

6. MEMBERS CONCERNS

- Mr. Lorentson advised that the variances approved for the 5-lot subdivision on Grove Street have been appealed because the Board failed to state the hardship.

7. ADJOURNMENT

- On motion by Mr. Fredette and seconded by Mr. Grega, the Board voted to adjourn the administrative session at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail J. Nobili
Recording Secretary