

ZONING COMMISSION
NOANK FIRE DISTRICT
10 WARD AVE NOANK, CT 06340

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Date: December 20, 2022

A link to the recording of the meeting: https://1drv.ms/u/s!ApV_BVCbHuQwuXhuhkKedv7ZG-Br?e=hhzd8n

Call to Order, Roll Call: Chairman Rick Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. [Began at 1:58. Times shown correlate to audio recording.]

Members Present: Dana Oviatt, Beth Steele (Vice Chairman), Rick Smith, Blake Powell and Peter Drakos. Others: Janet Sutherland, Clerk.

Chairman's remarks: None.

A. Public Comment - Issues Not on the Agenda

[3:12] Paul Bates advocated for the Commission to more extensively utilize the human resources available to them within the Zoning Department and Executive Committee in Noank in lieu of hiring a Town Planner. Additionally, Bates requested that Chairman Smith consider creating a Handbook for future staff, Smith responded he has worked on one and is expanding with the assistance of the Clerk. Freedom of Information Act was added as a resource.

B. Public Hearing on Applications for Design Review - None

C. New Applications for Design Review - None

D. New Business -

1. Application for Home Occupation Certificate - Application of Corey John Williams at 60 Hillside Avenue for a Home Occupation Certificate Under Section 2.15 of the Noank Zoning Regulations to operate a guitar repair workshop.

[8:30] Corey Williams began his presentation and handed out images of the workshop at present. Williams has worked for two repair businesses, and in doing more repair work at home, he is planning on applying for business insurance requiring a HOC. He does not expect customers to visit his home workshop, no signage, no retail or pickup / drop-off.

Williams elaborated the workshop would use mainly hand tools to repair and restore acoustic guitars. Would like to eliminate one of two entry doors to create one large 36in door, add two windows and insulation, will not expand current footprint.

Smith clarified that Williams was to receive the Home Occupation Certificate and then apply for Zoning Permit for the remodeling, Williams affirmed.

[14:03] Commissioner Powell asked about additional parking, Williams replied there would be none.

[14:25] Commissioner Oviatt asked who is the typical clientele, Williams responded he has about half local clients and the rest is shipped in or met at the shop in Clinton. Oviatt asked if both electric and acoustic guitars would be worked on, Williams replied predominantly acoustic.

[15:27] Commissioner Steele asked for clarification on the Application which states no pickup / drop-off, Williams responded his intention was to prepare for the possibility but prefers not to. Steele asked Williams if current business in Clinton would be continued. Williams stated objective was to continue current work, including repairs needed in New London, and move towards making this workshop his primary place of business. Steele asked if Williams knew of any other similar HOCs in Noank Fire District, Williams knew of none. Steele then asked what level of noise would the business emit on a regular basis, Williams responded minimal noise as he largely works with hand tools and is very volume conscious. Steele asked of any previous noise complaints by neighbors, William responded he had none.

[19:40] Chairman Smith asked of potential parking issue where multiple customers could be present at once, Williams replied no as appointments are well planned and scheduled. Williams added he plans to avoid signage or advertising.

[21:12] Powell requested clarification on the no pickup / drop-off description on the HOC, which would be removed from application.

[23:04] Smith suggested Commission discuss one customer at a time permit condition.

[24:25] Powell asked if neighbors were aware of business and if they objected, Williams responded all have received notification.

[25:00] Commission begins discussion for approval with or without conditions.

Drakos questioned why limit the number of customers as it seems unnecessarily restrictive. Smith would allow for two, while Oviatt preferred one and referenced previous incidents.

Drakos proposed the Commission allow for no more than two customers at one time, Powell seconded, Steele made majority.

Motion to Approve with Modification (Drakos/Powell). Motion carried unanimously.

F. Old Business

1. Residential Renting Opportunities - Consideration of public comments from October 18, 2022 informal public information meeting and deliberation on enhancement of residential renting opportunities in Noank and potential ways to accomplish this goal. Development of Issues, determination of task leadership.

[30:15] Chairman Smith reminded the Commissioners that Oviatt had volunteered to lead research group into Residential Renting Opportunities in Noank. If nobody from the Commission volunteers to research the topic, easy small alterations could be made to the Noank Zoning Regulations. If data is collected and analyzed to provide draft options for new Regulations greater changes can be made.

Oviatt asked for clarification on what small alterations would entail, Smith responded this would be done without data analytics.

Steele recommended the Commission avoid extensive research and attempt to adjust current regulations, suggesting each member draft five alterations to achieve greater Long-Term Rental Opportunities. If this option does not work, then the Commission could move to a more expansive approach. Drakos and Powell agree, as does Oviatt.

[35:30] Powell questioned the objective of large scale data collection and the need. Smith referenced Zell Steever's historical narrative of LTRs from the October Meeting. Oviatt questioned how Commission would begin to change Noank Zoning Regulations without completing some research on other town's Regulations on Accessory Dwelling Units, Smith responded this was a starting point and research could still be done.

Smith thanked Oviatt for volunteering to be task leader, but position would not be needed. Smith asked Commissioners to prepare for February's Meeting up to five suggestions on ways to amend current Noank Zoning Regulations to enhance prospects for residential renting opportunities.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes - The minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 15, 2022 were approved without objection.
3. The ZEO report for November 2022 was received.

Motion to Adjourn carried unanimously at 7:45pm (Powell/Drakos).

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Sutherland
Clerk, Noank Zoning Commission