

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

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Date: December 19, 2023

Call to Order: Chair Beth Steele called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Members Present: Dana Oviatt, Blake Powell, Beth Steele, Rick Smith and Peter Drakos.

Others: Janet Sutherland, Clerk.

- A. Chairman's Remarks - Steele thanked Smith for all his work as Chair and on a great job done. Steele discussed commissioner conduct going forward. Steele noted there should be no email communication between commissioners outside of meetings, as any discussions should be held in front of the public at large.
- B. Public Comment - Issues Not on the Agenda - None
- C. Public Hearing on Applications for Design Review - None
- D. New Applications for Design Review -
 - 1. Receipt of Application of Chris Aldrich for a Certificate of Design Appropriateness Under Section 2.26 of the Noank Zoning Regulations at 216 Prospect Hill Road

Steele described the project to install a prefab one-car garage. There was no public interest. Commissioners then discussed the level of completeness. Oviatt first questioned whether the garage was allowed since there was already one on the property, and whether Zoning Enforcement Officer Bill Mulholland had confirmed the Regulations allowed this prior to submitting the application. Steele replied yes. Oviatt then commented the GIS map indicating all properties within a 200ft radius was needed, but it was shown this was included in the application.

Oviatt then commented he did not see the public Notice sign posted on the property. Clerk Sutherland commented the signed Notice was present as required, and this was confirmed by Aldrich. Oviatt commented the signs were not visible. Steele asked if photo evidence of the Notice had been provided. Sutherland replied it had not, but she had viewed the sign while driving past the subject property. Aldrich noted photo evidence of the Notice could be provided and emailed to the zoning account.

Motion (Smith/Drakos): I move that the Noank Zoning Commission find that the application of Chris Aldrich for a Certificate of Design Appropriateness to install a prefab one-car garage at 216 Prospect Hill Road, Noank, is complete; and that based on the potential impact on neighborhood architectural harmony and character, property values, historical integrity, and/or public health and safety, the appropriate level of review for the application is a Site Plan Review without a public hearing under Section 2.26.6.5; and that all specific submittal requirements that are not included in this application be waived because they would not aid the Commission in its determination of

the application's compliance with Section 2.26.

Motion to receive application carried unanimously, 5:0.

E. New Business -

1. Applicant's Presentation, Review and Action on Application of Chris Aldrich for a Certificate of Design Appropriateness Under Section 2.26 of the Noank Zoning Regulations at 216 Prospect Hill Road to install a prefab one-car garage.

Aldrich began his presentation indicating the prefab garage would be 14ft wide by 24ft long and 16ft high, with asphalt shingles and vinyl siding similar to neighboring structures. Aldrich noted he knocked on neighbors' doors and none had any issue with the proposed project. Aldrich displayed images documenting neighboring properties. A street view images of the subject property was shown with an additional image showing how the proposed garage would look on the property. Aldrich concluded that Groton's GIS map did not depict the extent of the driveway, but one is in place extending to the garage.

The commission began their review by questioning whether vinyl shingles or clapboard siding would be used, Aldrich replied clapboard. Mrs. Aldrich noted the garage was set back on the property and would not be easily visible from the street. Drakos questioned how the garage would be affixed to the ground, Aldrich replied it would simply be placed on a pad that will be pavement or gravel. Steele questioned if the garage would be bolted down, Aldrich replied this was not a necessity due to the weight. Steele asked if it was hurricane proof, Aldrich replied yes.

Oviatt asked if there would be any exterior lighting, Aldrich replied one security motion light pointed downwards. Mrs. Aldrich added the location and surrounding trees blocked potential light pollution. Powell questioned whether the garage would be used for one car, Aldrich replied it would be a storage shed for fishing gear.

Motion (Smith/Drakos): I move that the application of Chris Aldrich for a Certificate of Design Appropriateness to install a prefab one-car garage at 216 Prospect Hill Road, Noank be approved because it meets the criteria set forth in Section 2.26 of the Zoning Ordinance for the Noank Fire District.

Motion carried unanimously, 5:0.

Smith explained to the applicant their option to publish a Notice of Decision to avoid any potential appeals, and then discussed this with commissioners.

G. Old Business -

1. Residential Renting Opportunities - Discussion was deferred to the next meeting.
2. Consideration of ways to improve the process for Architectural Design Reviews. Commission discussed ways to increase awareness of upcoming applications:

- A. New signs - Smith suggested requiring the applicant to place bigger pricier 10" x 24" plastic yard signs with the Notice and signed by ZEO Mulholland.
- B. Public notice - Smith also suggested emailing new applications to the nfdzoning@gmail.com distribution list used for meeting notifications.
- C. Motion sequencing - Smith detailed an email from Stan White suggesting the applicant be required to discuss their application with neighbors.
- D. Other - Smith's final proposal was to require Certified Mailing a Notice to neighbors, but felt this was laborious to Zoning staff and would not reach a greater audience than the email list. Sutherland noted the onus was typically on the applicant to send Certified Mailing. Steele suggested this required excess work, and added that any enforcement would require a regulation change.

Steele agreed a larger sign would be better, and sending the application to the Noank list would be plenty notification. Drakos preferred to avoid making applications available virtually, but agreed with recommendation to discuss project with neighbors, which could be enforced by questioning the applicant during Design Review. Powell suggested a non-regulatory addition to the Design Review worksheet already being utilized by ZEO Mulholland. Oviatt suggested the onus be on the applicant to notify neighbors. Smith suggested the email achieves the same purpose of notifying neighbors and telling all who are interested. Steele noted if there was an appeal from a neighbor who was not notified, the email would not be enough of an argument. Smith stated the neighbor is responsible for finding out notification. Steele reiterated that Certified Mailing would be a burden on staff, Drakos disagreed. Smith suggested starting with larger notification sign, an email notification, and alerting neighbors be added to Design Review worksheet. All agreed.

H. Approval of Meeting Minutes -

Smith requested clarification on the commissions' decision to keep the option to allow ADUs 'as of right'. Powell requested clarification to the number of bedrooms allowed, should state a maximum of two bedrooms. Additionally, Powell suggested the Minutes state every ADU be 30% of the entire dwelling unit as opposed to 30% of the Personal Dwelling Unit (PDU).

Minutes were approved with amendments.

- I. ZEO Mulholland detailed the November 2023 ZEO Report. Report was accepted.

Motion to Adjourn carried unanimously at 7:39pm (Drakos/Powell).

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Sutherland
Zoning Clerk