

East Haddam Zoning Board of Appeals
River House – 7 Main Street, East Haddam, CT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 26, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Stuart Wood called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

2. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Chairman Stuart Wood, Joseph Daigle, Diane Quinn, Richard Fiala, William Smith

ABSENT: Laurie Alt

3. MINUTES

A) Special Meeting of October 23, 2014

Motion by Mr. Fiala to accept the minutes of the October 23, 2014 special meeting as presented. Motion seconded by Ms. Quinn, and passed by unanimous vote.

4. BILLS

Mr. Wood stated they can join the Federation of Regional Planning and Zoning agencies for an annual fee. Mr. Daigle noted they do offer training.

Mr. Wood stated there is a bill from Atty. Joe Broder for retainer services. He noted they have not used his services in approximately two years. At one time, they had more issues than recent years. Discussion ensued regarding past issues. It was noted that this bill covered the period from July, 2014 through December, 2014.

Mr. Wood suggested the Board consider this service and discuss it at the next meeting. They need to pay this particular bill because it is for time under which Attorney Broder was already retained; however, they need to think about the period beginning July, 2015.

Motion by Mr. Fiala to pay Attorney Broder for the bill covering the period of July 2014 through December 2014. Motion was seconded by Mr. Smith, and passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Daigle, seconded by Ms. Quinn to approve payment of the bill for the Federation of Regional Planning & Zoning Agencies. Motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Smith read the call for the following public hearing

Appeal 1066 – George Fellner, AIA, agent for Robert Knakal, 79 Honey Hill Road, requesting a variance for the number of accessory dwelling units allowed and an increase in the allowable square footage of the additional accessory dwelling unit, under Section 10.2 of the East Haddam Zoning Regulations. Assessor’s Map 4, Lot 38.

First date: March 26, 2015

Last date: April 30, 2015

Mr. George Fellner addressed the Board on behalf of the applicant. He explained that they were seeking a variance for a second accessory unit and total increase of 1,034 square feet.

Mr. Fellner submitted the green, certified receipt cards to the Board. He stated the site is almost 25 acres, accessed by a long driveway. He showed the house and the proposed location of the addition, which will be to the east of the house. The addition will be two phases. After the original approval, the property owner decided to add another addition as a caretaker’s unit.

Mr. Fellner indicated this addition will be three levels. The lowest level will have a cinema seating area and a mechanical room. The caretaker’s unit will be two levels. The lower level will have a kitchen and living area. The second level will have two bedrooms for the caretaker’s unit, as well as an office and library for the owner. The third level will have a loft space that cannot be accessed from the caretaker’s unit. Mr. Fellner added that the square footage for the loft is not calculated in the caretaker’s unit.

Mr. Fellner showed plans for the proposal, including architectural drawings. Mr. Fellner stated he met with Mr. Ventres, who informed him that he would need a special exception application approval for a pool house. This was accomplished in 2013. They now seek a variance for the extra addition. The caretaker’s portion is 1,034 square feet.

Mr. Fellner explained that the property owner lives in New York City, and he would like to have 24-hour security with a full-time caretaker for oversight of the property. He believed due to the lot size and the secluded nature of the property, the design is harmonious with the property.

Mr. Fellner stated that Mr. Ventres was unable to be present for tonight’s meeting, but he had prepared and submitted a letter to the Board.

Mr. Daigle asked if the applicant would object to a stipulation that the lot size could not be reduced from the current 26 acres. Mr. Fellner stated this would not be an issue for this property owner.

Mr. Daigle asked if the neighbors could see the house. Mr. Fellner stated the neighbors can see the house, but the house is not visible from the street.

Mr. Wood noted for the record that the applicant was the only person in the room this evening. No one from the public was present to raise any issues this evening.

Mr. Daigle stated his only concern would be subdividing that property. Mr. Fellner stated this particular client likes his privacy, and would not want to subdivide this property.

Ms. Quinn asked who the neighbors are. Mr. Fellner noted that Roland Matthews, Thomas, Hardu, Saunders, etc. He stated they received back eight of ten green certified receipt cards from the neighbors.

Mr. Daigle questioned how close the closest neighbor was. Mr. Fellner stated from one corner of the house, it is 141 feet to the property line of Cameron Beard. Mr. Fellner stated that Mr. Beard has an office upstairs from Mr. Fellner, and Mr. Beard came to Mr. Fellner's office this afternoon to review the plan. Mr. Fellner reported that Mr. Beard had no issues with the application.

Mr. Smith asked if Saunders was sent a notice. Mr. Fellner stated he received a list from the town. He added if that name is incorrect, the site plan would not be accurate.

Mr. Fiala asked if there would be a requirement for additional septic system. Mr. Fellner stated the tank itself was already designed for additional capacity. The additional bedrooms would require a larger leaching field. There is ample property for the additional leaching area. Mr. Fellner stated he was not an engineer, but he spoke with Mr. Mike Bennett, the engineer, who stated this would not be an issue. Mr. Ventres had informed him that he would just need it before he received the building permit.

Mr. Wood again noted that there are no members of the public here this evening, other than the applicant.

Motion by Mr. Daigle to close the public hearing for Appeal 1066 – George Fellner, AIA, agent for Robert Knakal, 79 Honey Hill Road, requesting a variance for the number of accessory dwelling units allowed and an increase in the allowable square footage of the additional accessory dwelling unit, under Section 10.2 of the East Haddam Zoning Regulations. Motion seconded by Ms. Quinn, and carried by unanimous vote.

There was no further discussion on this appeal.

Motion by Mr. Daigle to approve Appeal 1066 – George Fellner, AIA, agent for Robert Knakal, 79 Honey Hill Road, requesting a variance for the number of accessory dwelling units allowed and an increase in the allowable square footage of the additional accessory dwelling unit, under Section 10.2 of the East Haddam Zoning Regulations, with the stipulation that the property cannot be further subdivided, and finding the hardship to be the strict adherence to the zoning laws with this particular large piece of property was not warranted. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. All members of the Board voted affirmatively, and the motion passed.

Mr. Wood explained that the legal notice will be published in the paper within 15 days. There is then a 15-day appeal period. The applicant will also receive a certified letter of the action. Mr. Fellner was asked to please file this letter on the land records at the Town Clerk's office.

The Board discussed the agenda, and noted that it should be in the following order:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Read legal notices/calls for public hearings
- 3) Minutes
- 4) Bills
- 5) Adjournment

Mr. Wood stated the meetings should end by 10:00 p.m. Otherwise, they should be continued to the next meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Daigle to adjourn at 7:55, seconded by Ms. Quinn. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pattavina