

TOWN OF FARMINGTON
PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 9, 2024

Present for the hybrid meeting were Chair Halstead, Commissioners Afshar, Bandle, Canto, St. Germain, Sanford and Alternate Commissioners Polsky and Zimmermann. Town Planner Rutherford, Assistant Town Planner Daigle and Clerk Michaud were also present. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present in the Council Chambers were all Commission members, Town Planner Rutherford, Assistant Town Planner Daigle and Clerk Michaud. Alternate Commissioner Zimmermann was present online. Alternate Commissioner Tucci was absent.

NEW BUSINESS

Bulwark LLC – Lots 8120 & 8122 Colt Highway

Accept application for special permit for blasting associated with development of Lots 8120 & 8122 Colt Highway and schedule public hearing (recommend hearing date of October 7, 2024).

Upon a motion made and seconded (St. Germain/Bandle) it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the Bulwark LLC application for special permit for blasting associated with development of Lots 8120 & 8122 Colt Highway and schedule public hearing for October 7, 2024.

PUBLIC HEARING

Kathleen M. Braga – 37 and 9484 Prattling Pond Road

Application for special permit for clear cutting and restoration in Ridgeline Protection Area for properties located at 37 and 9484 Prattling Pond Road, R80 zone. Ms. Braga explained they did some cutting to keep their tree company workers busy during a slow time and that because their deed stated they can maintain this area; they mistakenly conducted the maintenance without knowing about the protected ridgeline regulations. Once they were made aware of the regulations, they stopped all work and began working with the Town to come up with a plan to correct the situation. Photos of the existing condition of the area showing regrowth were provided. Town Planner Rutherford and Assistant Town Planner Daigle used online mapping (NearMap) to show aerial mapping of the site in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 as compared to 2024. The maps showed very little difference with the number of mature trees. Ms. Braga's written proposal included planting a total of 30-40 bare root trees in the designated areas as pictured on the attached aerial photo from the Town of Farmington's GIS mapping site indicated with a large white X as was included with the application. The Town has requested a mix of hardwood and evergreen trees, and due to the conditions and location where the planting will occur, we are planning to plant more than the suggested number to ensure the desired outcome on the ridgeline. We expect that there will be trees that do not succeed due to the conditions. There is limited soil in this area and access is difficult for digging the holes for planting. Bragas will be purchasing the largest bare root trees that are available and will plant in the current soil and install additional topsoil where possible. They propose a mixture of Maple trees, Oak trees, Cedar trees and Mountain Laurel.

Cate Grady-Benson, Executive Director of the Farmington Land Trust (“FLT”), stated they appreciate the Bragas working with the FLT regarding the encroachment, and they would like to be included in the restoration process moving forward. Correspondence received from the FLT prior to the meeting was shared on the presentation screen while Ms. Grady-Benson addressed the Commission; documentation included photos of the vegetation removal, aerial photos, and the FLT’s concern with the work in the area.

During discussions it was suggested that stump sprouts and other saplings discovered in the field be included in the overall number of restoration plantings.

Francie Brown Holmes, President of the Farmington Land Trust, spoke and re-iterated the importance of a FLT Steward being present to review the flagging of the stump sprouts and planting activity on 9484 Prattling Pond Rd.

No other public comment was received in favor or opposition to the application.

The public hearing closed at 8:44 p.m.

Upon a motion made and seconded (St. Germain/Sanford) it was

VOTED: 5 in favor to 1 opposed (Afshar) to approve the Kathleen M. Braga application for special permit for clear cutting and restoration in Ridgeline Protection Area for properties located at 37 and 9484 Prattling Pond Road, R80 zone as presented and on file in the Planning Office, with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall work with staff and the FLT to determine the location and mix of bareroot and container trees to be replanted; 10-20% shall be container.
2. Planting shall be completed this fall no later than November 15, 2024; and
3. A report on the health and condition of plantings shall be submitted to the Planning Office annually for the next three years. The report shall be submitted by November 1st of each year for 2025, 2026 and 2027. Overall plant survival rate expected is 50%.

Kathleen M. Braga – 37 Prattling Pond Road

Application for special permit for Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit for property located at 37 Prattling Pond Road, R80 zone. Ms. Braga stated she would like to convert an existing barn into a one-bedroom Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit. The barn is located northeast of the home and is approximately 200 feet from the ridgeline. The Commissioners asked some general clarifying questions.

There was no public comment in favor or in opposition to the application.

The public hearing closed at 9:03 p.m.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Bandle/Afshar) it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Kathleen M. Braga application for special permit for Detached

Accessory Dwelling Unit for property located at 37 Prattling Pond Road, R80 zone, as presented and on file in the Planning Office with the following conditions:

1. The owner of record must reside in either the principal dwelling unit, or the accessory dwelling unit, for the purposes of this section, the owner of record is defined as: A person who possesses an estate for life or a minimum of 50 percent fee simple ownership interest, who occupies either the principal or accessory unit for at least six (6) months of the calendar year.
2. No ADU permitted under this regulation shall be rented or leased for a period of less than six (6) months.
3. The principal dwelling and accessory unit shall remain under common ownership.
4. An application to establish an accessory apartment must be submitted to the health authority for the town of Farmington for review and approval when the premise is served by an on-site sewage disposal or private water system.

PLANNER'S REPORT

838 Farmington Avenue

Town Planner Rutherford provided an update on the progress at 838 Farmington Avenue. Starbucks is now open. Other businesses in the plaza have remained open. After a meeting on site she discussed with the property owner removing trees from the planted islands/rain gardens. There are four trees that will be planted elsewhere on site, possibly along the frontage with a new planting scheme for the frontage. The property owner is still hoping to pave this fall, although it may be spring at this point. The Commission has no objection to the moving of the four trees from the landscape islands to elsewhere on the property.

231 Farmington Avenue

Town Planner Rutherford stated owner Frank Cathcart – at 231 Farmington Avenue has a medical office tenant (chiropractor) moving to a larger space (add'l 439 sf of medical office which was formally regular office); last permit approval included 5 spaces on adjacent Red Cross property – Red Cross parking is currently at capacity and 231 Farmington is as well. Technically the add'l 439 sf of medical office space requires one more parking space. Mr. Cathcart indicated there is room along a driveway to stripe in a space. He also confirmed the parking is generally only 30% to 40% full. There has been a shift in parking requirements post-covid and there is no anticipated conflict with parking. The Commission agreed formal permitting with TPZ is not required for this small shift in use and it is not necessary to stripe in one additional parking space.

MINUTES

July 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made and seconded (Sanford/Bandle) it was unanimously
VOTED: To approve the July 22, 2024 Town Plan & Zoning Commission meeting minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

SJM