

**TOWN OF BOZRAH
BOZRAH TOWN HALL, 1 RIVER ROAD
BOZRAH, CONNECTICUT 06334**

BOZRAH PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

AGENDA

Thursday, March 11, 2021
Zoom meeting, 7:00 p.m.

See bottom of agenda for participation instructions

The Bozrah Planning & Zoning Commission will hold its regular meeting on Thursday, March 11, 2021 via Zoom teleconference/videoconference, at 7:00 p.m.

1. Review and approval minutes:
 - a. February 11, 2021 regular meeting.
 - b. February 25, 2021 Affordable Housing Plan public workshop.
2. Review correspondence pertaining to agenda items.
3. Hear the report of the Zoning Enforcement Officer.
4. Old Business:
 - a. #01-00-21. David J. Gesiak, LLC. 216 Norwich, Ave. Lebanon, CT: Seven-lot subdivision, southeast corner of Bozrah Street and South Road (Map, 14, Lot 046).
5. New Business:
 - a. #03-00-21. Jennifer Weigand-Watkinson, LLC. 356 Salem Turnpike, Bozrah CT: Home occupation: Private dance instruction in home office.
 - b. Informal Discussion regarding Change of Use: Debra White-Palmer, 410 Salem. Events Planning
6. Affordable Housing Plan discussion and next steps.
7. Public comment period.
8. Review general correspondence.
9. Update on projects throughout town.
10. Such other business as the commission may vote to hear.

Stephen Seder, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

Join Zoom Meeting

Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89914684533>

Call-in: +1 (929) 205-6099

Meeting ID: 899 1468 4533

**REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF BOZRAH
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
February 11, 2021**

Chairman Steve Seder called the regular meeting of the Town of Bozrah Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:02 PM, on Thursday, February 11, 2021. The meeting was held via Zoom video/teleconference.

Members present: Stephen Seder (Chairman), Scott Barber (Vice Chairman), Nancy Taylor, Manny Misarski, Steve Coit (alt.).

Members absent: Steve Gural, Seymour Adelman (alt.), Frank Driscoll (alt.).

Others present: Glenn Pianka (Board of Selectmen), Katey DeCarli, P.E. (ZEO/WEO/CHA), Sam Alexander, AICP (Town Planner/SCCOG), Brandon Handfield, P.E. (Yantic River Consultants), David Gesiak (Applicant), Ray Barber (Resident), Jack Santo (Resident).

Chairman Steve Seder called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Mr. Seder appointed Steve Coit to sit in place of Steve Gural.

1. Review and approve the minutes of the December 10, 2020 regular meeting:

Manny Misarski made a motion to accept the December 10 minutes as presented. Scott Barber seconded the motion.

VOTE UNANIMOUS – MOTION APPROVED

2. Review correspondence pertaining to agenda items:

Sam Alexander (Town Planner) noted that the Commission received a staff memorandum pertaining to the application #01-00-2. Sam Alexander also stated that the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission has not yet ruled on the application.

3. Hear the report of the Zoning Enforcement Officer:

Katey DeCarli, P.E. (ZEO/WEO) ongoing zoning enforcement issues in town, and Commissioners were able to ask questions.

Ms. DeCarli reviewed the status of the Town's on-going legal action regarding abandoned camp trailers at Houghton Road and Route 2. Ms. DeCarli mentioned that the owner of 117 Lake Road may appear before the Commission for a pre-application discussion regarding a campground Special Permit application.

Commissioners asked about the status of a draft Short-term Rental Ordinance. This will be sent again to Commissioners. Glenn Pianka (Board of Selectmen) stated that the draft ordinance will be brought up again at the next Board meeting with the intent to move forward toward a Town Meeting.

4. New Business:

#01-00-21. David J. Gesiak, LLC. 216 Norwich, Ave. Lebanon, CT: Seven-lot subdivision, southeast corner of Bozrah Street and South Road (Map, 14, Lot 046).

Brandon Handfield, P.E. (Yantic River Consultants) overviewed the project for the Commission. The proposed subdivision is for seven (7) lots on 35.5 acres of land. The lot is zoned RU-1. The entire subject parcel is undeveloped and largely wooded; there is a former farm field on one of the proposed lots. The lot has not been subdivided since the adoption of subdivision regulations. There are three wetland areas: a pit containing wetlands on lot 2, a stream in steep cut on lot 7, and a centrally located wetland system in a low point on lots 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Homes are shown on each lot in flat areas near the road frontage. Adequate buildable area is provided and shown, with all proposed lots shown as being in compliance with the zoning regulations for RU-1. Limits of clearing on the flatter areas near the road, stone walls run in the rear of the clearing limit on a number of properties.

Mr. Handfield is proposing dedication of a strip of land fronting lots 4, 5, 6, and 7, to be deeded to the Town to bring the width of the town right-of-way of South Road up to 50 feet.

The plans have been referred to Uncas Health District for determination of well and septic system adequacy. Driveways fronting on Bozrah Street will need to be referred to CT Department of Transportation (CT DOT) District 2 prior to lot development.

The Commissioners had an opportunity to ask questions of Mr. Handfield. Steve Seder asked about a driveway right of access for lot 1. There is a deeded easement in favor of the subject parcel, over a neighboring property, which may run with lot 1, but it is not proposed to be used in the subdivision plan. Brandon Handfield went over extant woods roads on the parcel.

Mr. Handfield mentioned that two lots are proposed to be over ten (10) acres, so that agriculture may be allowed on those lots. Mr. Handfield also noted that a fee-in-lieu of open space is proposed.

Scott Barber asked about the right-of-way land dedication on South Road. Mr. Handfield explained the purpose. Mr. Barber stated that he believe the developer should pay for any improvements. Mr. Handfield noted that his client is proposing to improve the shoulder. Mr. Barber stated he was concerned about traffic safety in and around the intersection of South Road and Bozrah Street. Mr. Handfield answered that he will be working with CT DOT District 2 to make sure that driveways meet the site line requirements for the 85th percentile speed; he does not intend to do a detailed traffic study. He stated the lots will produce a conservative estimate of 40 cars a day, fewer four at a peak hour period. He believed the impact to the South Road and Bozrah Street intersection to be negligible. Mr. Barber stressed the importance of looking at the impact to the intersection.

Scott Barber asked about having the Town Engineer review the right-of-way dedication. Sam Alexander stated that he wanted to get through the first meeting prior to that review. Mr. Barber asked about the fee-in-lieu of open space. Mr. Alexander stated that the Commission's past practice is to require \$1,800 per new lot, for a total of \$10,800.

Scott Barber asked about property boundary markers; he noticed that at least one corner there were no pins proposed. Mr. Handfield responded that new lot lines are proposed to be monumented or marked with pins. One pin was missing on the plans (at lots 1 and 7). He is open to the Commission's interpretation of marking external property boundaries. Mr. Barber stated that it would be beneficial to mark all boundaries.

Scott Barber asked about the schedule. There is no public hearing required; however, the Commission may hold one. Mr. Barber expressed concern for neighbors over potential use of the deeded access in favor of lot 1. The town does not allow shared driveways currently. Mr. Handfield explained that there is no benefit to use the deeded access, and a new driveway is proposed to front on the road. Steve Seder stated that the deeded access pre-exists the application. Mr. Handfield explained that lot 1 could not be subdivided further per the zoning regulations.

Steve Coit stated that the subdivision plan is well done. Steve Seder and Scott Barber echoed the statement. Nancy Taylor expressed that the South Road, Bozrah Street intersection is dangerous and emphasized importance of sight line distances. Ms. Taylor requested a closer look at the land dedication along South Road. Mr. Taylor expressed that the open space fees may have changed. There was discussion on the most recent convention for open space fees, the Commission asked the Town Planner to look into it.

Steve Seder stated, in regards to Bozrah Street sight lines, that the property does not reach the intersection. Mr. Barber expressed that the CT DOT District 2 will need to look at the sight line distances. Mr. Seder stated that the Commission may want to discuss with CT DOT the safety issue at a later point. Mr. Handfield located every driveway to provide a 500-foot sight line. If CT DOT does not provide feedback prior to a decision, they will certainly be involved in permitting any individual driveway prior to lot development.

Manny Misarksi stated that the subdivision plan is well done. Mr. Seder stated that the Commission will move forward following a decision from the Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission. Glenn Pianka stated that the Board of Selectmen will also be involved in the decision to accept the land dedication on South Road. Glenn Pianka expressed that he felt the stone wall should be reused in the area of South Road.

5. Affordable Housing Plan discussion and next steps:

Sam Alexander began a presentation overviewing results from the Affordable Housing Plan survey received to date. Mr. Alexander reviewed the draft plan sections that were provided to the Commission to-date.

Mr. Alexander also discussed next steps in the process for the Affordable Housing Plan. A public workshop will be held on February 25th at 6:30pm, over Zoom. He will issue a press release to the Norwich Bulletin and advertise the meeting in This Week in Bozrah.

Steve Seder asked about the number of affordable housing units the State expect the Town to have. Sam Alexander explained that the Town does not need to produce a certain number of affordable housing units. Sam Alexander explained the impact of CGS Section 8-30g and the Town's status under that law. Mr. Alexander stated that he believed the State's goals for affordable housing will ultimately have a greater impact on local control of development, so it is important for the Commission to show it is doing due diligence in addressing affordable housing.

6. Public comment period:

Jack Santo (resident) stated that he believe the applicant for #01-00-21 was proposing to reconstructing the stone wall on South Road after moving it. Mr. Santo asked about access to open space. It was explained to him that no open space was proposed. Mr. Santo stated that he believed sight lines would be adequate. Mr. Santo spoke about the history of traffic safety at the Bozrah Street, South Road intersection. He believes the intersection is ok, but the only solution to any safety issues is to drop the grade of the road. Mr. Barber reiterated that CT DOT should look at the intersection. Mr. Santo explained that CT DOT should install an on-demand traffic light to replace the blinking light.

Steve Seder stated that Steve Gural has not been attending meetings. Mr. Gural agreed to become and alternate, elevating Steve Coit to regular member. Action by the Board of Selectmen is required.

7. Review general correspondence:

Notices from abutting towns were received.

8. Such other business as the Commission may vote to hear:

There was none. Scott Barber made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Taylor seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Samuel Alexander
Town Planner/SCCOG

**PUBLIC WORKSHOP – AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN
TOWN OF BOZRAH
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
February 25, 2021**

Chairman Steve Seder called to order a public workshop of the Town of Bozrah Planning and Zoning Commission at 6:32 PM, on Thursday, February 25, 2021. The meeting was held via Zoom video/teleconference.

Members present: Stephen Seder (Chairman), Nancy Taylor, Steve Coit (alt.).

Others present: Glenn Pianka (Board of Selectmen), Rob Ladd (resident), Sarah Orr (resident), Jeanne Goulart (resident), Sam Alexander, AICP (Town Planner/SCCOG), Justin LaFountain, CZEO (SCCOG), Carly Holzschuh, AICP (SCCOG).

1. Opening Remarks:

Chairman Steve Seder called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. Steve Seder explained the purpose of the workshop, which is to gain input from the public into an Affordable Housing Plan, which the Planning & Zoning Commission is undertaking in compliance with CGS 8-30j.

2. Purpose of the Plan and Planning Process:

Sam Alexander (Consulting Town Planner/SCCOG) began a PowerPoint presentation (attached). Sam Alexander reviewed the intent of the plan and the process for writing and adopting it.

3. Data Overview:

Sam Alexander reviewed relevant Census and housing data that applies to Bozrah and New London County. Sam Alexander also reviewed relevant sections of the Plan of Conservation and Development and zoning regulations. Finally, Sam Alexander reviewed preliminary results of a survey (<http://tiny.cc/BozrahAHP>) for the Affordable Housing Plan.

4. Moderated Discussion:

There was a discussion amongst attendees about the types of ways that Bozrah could grow, consistent with its own growth principals outlined in the Plan of Conservation and Development, as well as actions that a town can undertake to encourage housing affordability. Highlights of the discussion include:

- Allowing accessory dwelling units to be occupied by non-family. Accessory dwelling units maintain the “rural character” of single-family zoning districts.
- Lots of older residents have left Bozrah when downsizing.
- Smaller-scale rental housing consistent with what already exists in Fitchville, with a preference for architectural consistency.
- Salem Turnpike is the only area of town where a larger development would be feasible because of the presence of sewer.

- Salem Turnpike is a far distance from the fire department, so service calls would be an issue. The Town is experiencing this with the senior housing development.
- Potential beneficiaries of affordable housing include seniors looking to downsize, and younger residents wishing to remain in town.
- The Town should seek to maintain low density in most areas.
- The zoning regulations could require that a number of units in new multi-family development be set aside and deed-restricted at rents affordable to low- and moderate-income people.
- Income-restricted units can still be taxed at “highest and best use”.
- The State cannot mandate that a municipality undertake construction or authorization of new affordable housing units. Most municipalities in the State, however, are subject to CGS 8-30g, which allows developers of affordable housing a legal avenue to avoid zoning regulations that could prohibit their development. This law is not employed often in eastern Connecticut and very rarely in areas lacking sewer.
- People often fear municipal service and educational cost increases due to new residents. Some new residents could be volunteer fire fighters. School enrollment is trending downward.

5. Next Steps:

The Planning & Zoning Commission will continue to work on the plan. The Commission will be looking to May for a hopeful public hearing date, with adopting anticipated in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35

Respectfully submitted,
Samuel Alexander
Town Planner/SCCOG