

**CITY OF TORRINGTON
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
June 10, 2009**

Present: Richard Calkins, Chairman
Paul Summers, Vice Chairman
Doris Murphy, Member and Inland Wetlands Liaison
Greg Perosino, Member
Greg Mele, Member
Christine Mele, Alternate
Donna Greco, Alternate
Jim Bobinski, Alternate

Also Present: Martin Connor, AICP, City Planner

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Richard Calkins called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., Sullivan Senior Center, Shuffleboard Room, 88 East Albert Street, Torrington, CT

2. **Attendance/Announcement by Chairman:**

Chairman Calkins announced present and serving on the Commission will be Paul Summers, Doris Murphy, Greg Perosino, Greg Mele, Christine Mele, Donna Greco, Jim Bobinski and Richard Calkins. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor.

3. **Minutes for Approval:**

a. 5/27/09

MOTION by Mr. Mele to approve the 5/27/09 minutes, seconded by Ms. Greco, motion carried with abstentions from Mr. Bobinski, Mr. Summers, Mr. Perosino and Ms. Murphy.

4. **Old Business:**

none

5. **New Business:**

a. Site Plan 943
Applicant: Maria Kasimis
Location: 1143 New Litchfield Street (R6 zone)
Proposal: Change of use to hair salon/retail (former retail tile shop)

Maria Kasimis appeared before the Commission and briefly explained her proposal.

Mr. Connor reviewed his memo to the Commission recommending approval.

MOTION by Mr. Mele to APPROVE Site Plan 943

Applicant: Maria Kasimis

Location: 1143 New Litchfield Street (R6 zone)

Proposal: Change of use to hair salon (former retail tile shop)

with the following conditions:

1. The applicant and/or property owner shall apply for a sewer discharge permit and provide an estimate of the projected water discharge, number of salon chairs, pedicure chairs and operating days per year.
2. A permit from the Torrington Area Health District shall be obtained prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy from the Building Department.

MOTION seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

Announcements:

Mr. Calkins asked for an update on the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Mele noted there is a meeting on Tuesday, June 23, and they will review the Economic Section of the Plan for Development and get that rewritten. Mr. Calkins inquired if there has been any discussion with Winsted regarding development of the Route 800 corridor, Mr. Mele responded no.

At 7:15 p.m. the Commission took a recess.

6. Public Hearings Scheduled for June 10, 2009, 7:30 p.m., Sullivan Senior Center, Shuffleboard Room, 88 East Albert Street, Torrington, CT:

a. Special Exception 09-224

Applicant: Patricia Cahill

Location: 135 Hayden Hill Road

Proposal: Reduce side yard setback for addition to 19.5' (25' required in R25 zone)

Chairman Calkins opened the public hearing at 7:30 p.m. and stated serving on the Commission this evening will be Commissioners Doris Murphy, Paul Summers, Christine Mele, Jim Bobinski, Greg Perosino, Greg Mele, Donna Greco and Richard Calkins. Also in attendance is City Planner Martin Connor.

Mr. Mele read the legal notice which was published in the Republican American.

Patricia Cahill appeared before the Commission and verified the public hearing sign was properly posted. Ms. Cahill has already turned in her neighborhood notification receipts. She explained her proposal for the addition to have everything on one level. At one time her property was zoned R15. Ms. Cahill's builder, Bob DeMauro, was also present.

Mr. Connor reviewed his memo dated June 8, 2009 to the Commission.

At 7:36 p.m. Chairman Calkins declared the public hearing closed.

MOTION by Mr. Mele to APPROVE Special Exception 09-224

Applicant: Patricia Cahill

Location: 135 Hayden Hill Road

Proposal: Reduce side yard setback for addition to 19.5' (25' required in R25 zone)

with the following condition:

1. Per Assistant City Engineer, Edward H. Scoville, Jr., P.E.L.S., in an e-mail memo to the City Planner dated 5/1/09, all road drains and drainage pipes for the addition shall be connected to City catch basins or underground recharge systems or rain gardens. All discharge locations shall be located such that water will not be discharged onto City streets or adjacent properties.

MOTION seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

b. Special Exception 09-225 and Site Plan 942

Applicant: Optiwind

Location: 725 Klug Hill Road

Proposal: Wind Turbine

At 7:38 p.m. Chairman Calkins opened the public hearing and stated serving on the Commission this evening will be Commissioners Doris Murphy, Paul Summers, Christine Mele, Jim Bobinski, Greg Perosino, Greg Mele, Donna Greco and Richard Calkins. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor.

Commissioner Greg Mele read the legal notice which was published in the Republican American.

Mr. Calkins outlined the guidelines for public hearing procedures. (#600)

David Hurwitt of Optiwind, 59 Field Street, Torrington, appeared before the Commission and verified the public hearing sign was properly posted, and the neighborhood notification receipts were turned in.

Butch Klug, owner of Klug Farm (property location owner) appeared before the Commission and provided information on this proposal, they are trying to survive, reduce their electric rates, etc.

David Hurwitt stated this application meets all the requirements for a Special Exception approval, there is no impact to neighboring property values, it is responsibly positioned on the farm to minimize visibility. A binder of information was provided to the Commission. Mr. Hurwitt described their headquarters location, the number of people employed and their education.

Mr. Hurwitt provided details on wind turbines in general, and specific details regarding the wind turbine Optiwind is proposing. (#1450) Mr. Hurwitt referred to a map and discussed nearby properties, and the visibility or non-visibility of the balloon flown recently. Mr. Hurwitt answered questions from Commission members.

Arthur Oles, Real Estate Appraiser in Torrington appeared on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Oles noted the Klug Family has conveyed the development rights to the State of Connecticut Agricultural Incentive Program in perpetuity for a large portion of his property. Mr. Oles has studied the area (and provided details) and past studies of utility facilities show there is little or no impact on property values from these facilities, often in neighborhoods of houses with

values of \$250,000 to \$400,000 plus. (#2000) This tower will be located on a 200 acre perpetually restricted farm, nearly 1800 feet from Allen Road.

Mr. Connor reviewed his memo dated June 3, 2009 to the Commission.

Gerry Zordan of 232 Klug Hill Road appeared in favor of the proposal. His property is directly across the street from the subject property. He is in favor for several reasons, one of which is we need to achieve energy independence, and if this is a starting point, we should take advantage of it. Optiwind is in town, and if more are built, it means more jobs in town. Mr. Oles stating there will be no devaluation of Mr. Zordan's property is a positive thing, but even that is no where as important as achieving energy independence. Mr. Zordan owns 340 acres directly across from the subject property.

John Czapor of 592 Allen Road appeared, his property is surrounded by the Klug Farm. He approves of this application.

Jean Cronauer, Director of the Northwest Conservation District, appeared to support this application. It doesn't get much better than this application, we have a local start-up business, and the last of one of two dairy farmers in town trying to stay afloat with clean renewable wind energy. Ms. Cronauer admires Mr. Klug, and this is not the first time he has been a leader, in previous years he stepped forward and preserved his farmland through a Connecticut preservation program and now he is trying to embrace another forward thinking concept through the wind tower. Optiwind wind turbine has been described as a silo, and she cannot think of a better place for a silo than a farm. Ms. Cronauer urged the Commission to approve the application, this is the perfect opportunity to put Torrington on the map as a leader and to support a struggling dairy farmer, to support alternative energy, and to support a local start-up business.

Bruce Deming of 480 University Drive appeared in favor of the proposal. From his place, he can see the towers on Highland Avenue and he is not sure if he will see this turbine or not, but as the towers on Highland Avenue, he does not even notice them any longer. He can also see the cell tower at Wright Farm and it's just something that becomes part of the landscape and you get used to it.

Addo Bonetti of 142 Homestead Road appeared, and he agreed with every word Mr. Zordan said, we've got to find another source of energy. We cannot be beholden to other countries overseas. He is very much in favor of this application.

Marie Havens, 337 Oxbow Drive, appeared to support alternatives for energy, for cleaner and more reasonable energy and hopefully farming in our future.

Karl Gangloff of University Drive appeared and he has traveled many areas in the country that have wind turbines, and many are associated with dairy today and one of the reasons dairy is competitive in Wisconsin is the farmers are able to lease lands to wind farms and get \$1,000 a month per turbine or more. The turbines are out west as well. He appreciates the beauty of nature, but they need to be disrupted at times by things such as wind towers. He has lived next to the tower that has the blinking light on it for 20 years, no one has ever said anything bad about the tower. We have heard from experts there will be no impact on property values, and he believes that.

Mike Bakunis of 559 Allen Road appeared in favor of this tower, for all reasons previously stated. We have all grown up with eyesores of poles and wires, and it's time for us to move on.

Teresa Brown-Stellar of 805 Allen Road appeared in favor of the proposal, Mr. Klug has been a good neighbor, this is not a housing development, there will be no increase in traffic. (Portions inaudible) She gives Mr. Klug much credit for advancing the thinking of a traditional farmer and she agrees wind power is part of the future.

Mary Fisher of 334 Westside Lane, in the winter they can see the huge star on the silo, and in the winter they might be able to see in that direction and it will be a reminder to them of the progress. The wind turbine will be one way to appreciate the rest of the nature and views. She hopes she can still hear the cows moo.

Chris Zigmore, 75 Butler Street, appeared, and historically in this area was built the first school in Torrington, the first log house, and the first meeting place, may this be the first place for a wind turbine.

Butch Klug stated they are hoping power lines will be improved up Klug Hill Road, etc., as at least once a month power is out. CL&P is proposing to put new lines up. There will be some benefit to the neighbors as well.

Mr. Calkins read letters in support of the application from the Torrington Conservation Commission, for the record, Mr. Klug is a member of the Conservation Commission and he had recused himself during discussions of this turbine. Letter signed by Kevin Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Conservation Commission.

There was also an editorial in the Register Citizen stating there is no good reason to deny them.

Martin Connor received an e-mail from JoAnn Ryan, President of the Northwest Chamber of Commerce in support of this application. The Chamber of Commerce supports the efforts of Mr. Klug and Optiwind. Additional technical and engineering jobs bodes well for the economy of Northwest Connecticut.

Mr. Calkins read a letter of support from Rose Ponte, Economic Development Director, in support of the application. 17 high paying full time jobs have been created. The once vacant Torrington Company is starting to be revitalized, and Optiwind was the first business to lease space in the building. Optiwind makes an effort to purchase supply from Connecticut and local suppliers whenever possible. Optiwind represents clean, high-tech energy which will benefit the Torrington economy. This will allow the Klug Farm to reduce their fixed expenses, farmers are having a difficult time keeping their farms operational, and this will allow Klug Farm to obtain free, clean and green energy.

Cathy Reis of 773 Allen Road appeared in opposition, she is across the street from Mr. Klug. She stated noises can be heard from the machinery, animals and even outdoor family conversations. Ms. Reis said she could not see the balloon because there were too many trees, but that the balloon could be most visible from her property. Noise can be heard from her property as well. This application should be rejected as the 200 foot turbine is not compatible, it does not protect property values and it does not enhance the beauty of the community.

Michael Bewlis of 454 Westside Lane appeared in opposition, he will be able to see the turbine from his deck, especially in the winter. The photos of what this will look like are not aesthetically pleasing. He is concerned the land set aside for farmland will be used for all wind farm. He is not excited about looking at this thing out there, not looking like farm equipment.

Kathy Krause who lives in Colebrook, CT appeared in opposition. Ms. Krause stated this is not a good thing as far as the research she has done. There is a decibel sound associated with this operation, increasing migraine headaches and other public health problems. She is

familiar with this subject as there is a wind farm being proposed in Colebrook. This may not be viable or not, it is still being tested. Public safety may be an issue as they are being put into neighborhoods close to homes. It is questionable as to if this is the way we want our renewable energy sources to go. Such sources must be researched and be safe. This may not be the safe way to go.

Ed Nickerson of 495 Westside Lane appeared in opposition. Mr. Klug allows hunters on his property, there are pheasants running around, there are guns being shot. Is this turbine bullet-proof?

Mr. Calkins noted hunting issues are not part of this application. This application is for a wind turbine, and Optiwind has probably not considered someone shooting at their tower. Mr. Hurwitt noted the tower will be maintained on an annual inspection schedule.

Mr. Klug outlined the rules and guidelines for hunting. (Tape #2, #520)

Mr. Hurwitt made closing comments, and this application meets all the specifications of the Torrington Zoning Regulations. A detailed breakdown has been submitted by Optiwind. This is an important matter for the Klug Family and Klug Farm, they will be a good neighbor in the community, and this is good for Torrington and the environment.

Ms. Murphy inquired about noise, and Mr. Calkins responded noise is regulated by the Torrington Area Health District. Mr. Hurwitt provided details on evaluating noise. These turbines do not have gears or large blades, the only sound that will be heard is as the wind picks up, the fans pick up and it is a high frequency sound, which is the same frequency as the wind itself, and it is similar in tone to a conventional house fan. It is a white noise that goes up and down to the sound of the breeze. Further details given (#640) Mr. Hurwitt stated they are completely confident they will be well under the limits of Torrington Area Health District.

At 9:12 p.m. Chairman Calkins declared the meeting closed, a decision is forthcoming within the 65 days prescribed by the Connecticut General Statutes.

7. **Public Hearings Scheduled for June 24, 2009, 7:30 p.m., Sullivan Senior Center, Main Room, 88 East Albert Street, Torrington, CT:**

- a. Special Exception 09-226
 - Applicant: Barbara Platt
 - Location: 30 Talbot Street
 - Proposal: Reduce side yard setback to 5.8'

Passed until 6/24/09.

8. **Adjournment:**

MOTION to adjourn by Mr. Perosino, seconded by Mr. Summers, unanimously carried at 9:13 p.m.