TOWN OF VERNON
Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC)
Tuesday, September 1, 2026 7 p.m.
30 Park Place Vernon CT 06066
1st Floor - Community Room

RECEIVED
VERNON TOWN CLERK
26 SEP 16 PM 2:52

REGULAR MEETING APPROVED MINUTES

1. **Call to Order & Roll Call by Robin Lockwood, Chairman**
   a. Chairwoman Robin Lockwood called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.
   b. Members present were Mark Hervieux, Carl Bard, Joseph Miller, Mike Baum, Eva Perrina, Wil Nicholson, Susan Reudgen and Jeff Spencer.
   c. Mark Hervieux was seated for Eva Perrina because he attended hearings on the PZ2026-09.
   d. No members were absent.
   e. Also present were Town Planner Ashley Stephens and David Owens, recording secretary.

2. **Administrative Actions/Requests**

   2.1 **Amendment/Adoption of Agenda** - Additional business to be considered under agenda item #6 "Other Business" requires a Commission vote.
   a. Nicholson moved and Hervieux seconded adoption of the agenda. Unanimous.

   2.2 **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**
   - August 18, 2026

   a. Nicholson moved and Miller seconded adoption of the minutes. Unanimous. Bard, Reudgen and Perrina abstained.

3. **New Application(s) for receipt, if any:**
   a. There were none.

4. **Public Hearing(s) and Action on Applications:**

   4.1 **(CONTINUED) PZ2026-09 – 1189 HARTFORD TPKE** - An application of Dana Steele, JR Russo, on behalf of Vishvakarman, LLC, for Site Plan and Special Permits §30-4.1.C(13)(b) (*Structure within 200' of a residential building)* and §30-4.1.C (15) (*Drive-up Service Window*) for a 3,157 sq ft. building addition with drive-thru for restaurant and retail grocery, parking expansion, landscaping, lighting and stormwater improvements. The property is located in the Commercial (C) zone. [Map #42 Block #0072 Lot #0010C].

   The hearing continued. Details below.

   4.2 **PZ-2026-10- 95 Hartford Turnpike-** An application of Dorian Reiser, Kahan, Kerensky, Capossela, LLP on behalf of Sub Peak of Connecticut, Inc. seeking a 1 lot re-subdivision. The property is located in the Commercial (C) zone. [Map #01-Block #0158 Lot # 00095].

   The hearing was opened and immediately recessed to Sept. 15 as the application is not ready for public hearing. Bard moved and Miller seconded to open the hearing. Unanimous.

Public hearing on PZ2026-09:
a. The public hearing resumed at 7:02 p.m.

b. Dana Steele, a professional engineer representing the applicant, described revisions made to the plan since the last hearing. They include expanding buffers to 20 feet, reduction of the size of the building and shift it to the east, planning to add 16 white pine trees and four maple trees for the buffer on the west side of the property, removal of invasive vegetation and a leaning maple tree from the existing buffer on the west side of the property, adding white pines on the north side of the property in the buffer, planting red cedars in the eastern buffer, placing the gas meter on the west side of the building, having dumpster pad doors open toward the east, moving the transformer to the northwest corner of the building, and reducing the size of the outdoor eating area.

c. Steele said the primary use of the structure is as a restaurant and retail space with some food to be prepared for sale elsewhere.

d. Reudgen asked about snow storage on the site. Steele said there is less snow storage available and excess snow would have to be removed.

e. Baum asked about the timing of refuse trucks. Steele said they would come during the day during slower business periods.

f. Resident Jennifer Roy of 28 White St. encouraged the commission to specify hours of operation, including dumpster pickup. She also said she thinks the revised plan is better and less intrusive on homes in the neighborhood. She also asked about the height of trees that would be planted and when snow would be collected for trucking off site.

g. Steele said plantings are 6 to 8 feet. He also said existing taller trees on the site could be transplanted to the buffer, although there is a risk they would not survive a move.

h. Owner Dil Bandari said there would be no early morning or late-night deliveries.

i. Hervieux said he would vote against the application. He cited the applicant's non-compliance with previous permits, including sign violations such as a Keno flag, and a shed on the site that was not on the previously approved site plan and is on a sidewalk. Hervieux shared with commission members previous violation notices and current photos of the site.

j. Baum said the Keno signs did not seem to be egregious violation.

k. Steele said the shed was not initially shown on the site plan that is part of the current application because there was a miscommunication. He said he thought it was going to be removed, and added the applicant would remove it if the commission desired.

l. Bandari said the town told him it was OK to move the shed to its current location and told him the Keno signs could not be by the road.

m. The chair asked about fencing material for the dumpster enclosure and the drive-through speaker. Steele said the fencing would be vinyl and the speaker would not exceed 15 decibels above ambient noise levels.

n. The chair said she favored leaving some of the larger trees in the buffer and shared a photo of the buffer with colleagues. Steele said some of the taller trees could be left in the buffer. Removing invasives would give the white pines a better chance, Steele said.

o. Neighbor Devyn Clements of 1183 Hartford Turnpike, the abutter to the west, said the trees and buffer are a wall of protection between her property and the business and were important to her. The buffer also distinguishes the neighborhood from the business. Some of the existing vegetation is taller than 40 feet and shields her upstairs windows from the site.

p. There was discussion about how to accommodate Clements' request in the buffer.

q. Hervieux said the shed should be removed from the site. Reudgen noted that it is not in good shape. Steele said he thinks the shed is permitted on the site.

r. There was a brief back and forth about compliance with land use rules.

s. Roy reiterated her request for specific permitted hours of operation at the business. Steele agreed, adding deliveries and departures would be during business hours.

t. Hervieux suggested including snow removal to hours of operation.

u. There was discussion about the shed. Baum and Nicholson favored allowing it to remain. Hervieux, Bard, Miller and Spencer said it should go.

v. At 8:01 p.m. Bard moved and Miller seconded to close the public hearing. Unanimous.

Discussion of application PZ2026-09:

a. Reudgen noted that the violation letters presented by Hervieux had been resolved. Hervieux responded that violations currently exist on the property.

b. Bard moved to deny the application. He said it is not compatible with the neighborhood, and he is not confident any stipulations the commission sets will he followed. He said the application reminded him of previous applications the commission rejected because of potential disruption to nearby homes. He cited Dunkin' Donuts on Route 30 and Stop & Shop on Route 83 near the site of the current Aldi.

c. Nearby residences are owed some consideration, Bard said.

d. A functional business exists on the site. Is it necessary to expand it and put neighbors at risk. He said the answer is no.

e. Miller seconded Bard's motion.

f. Baum disagreed and noted there is a functioning business on the site and the applicant has gone above and beyond to address neighbors' concerns.

g. Bard said the issue before the commission is the applicant's site plan.

h. The motion failed. Bard, Hervieux and Miller voted yes. Nicholson, Reudgen, Lockwood and Baum voted no.

i. Reudgen moved to approve the application with the following motion:

> I move the Planning and Zoning Commission approve PZ2026-09 for a site plan and special permit §30-4.1.C(13)(b) (Structure within 200' of a residential building) and §30-4.1.C (15) (Drive-up Service Window) for a 2,900 square foot addition building addition with drive-thru and menu board for restaurant and retail grocery, parking expansion, landscaping, lighting and stormwater improvements at 1189 Hartford Turnpike because we find the request is consistent with the special permit requirements of §30-13, because we have confirmed all safeguards will be taken to ensure that the use will not affect the surrounding neighborhood, with the following conditions: A letter from an engineer to be submitted with the building permit to state that the roof can handle the mechanicals that will be moved to the roof instead of being on the ground, to meet any engineering comments that have now been satisfied, an updated photometric plan that there be no deliveries or shipments except during the hours of operation from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. including dumpster pickup, and that the owner and/or their representative meet with the abutter and with staff to ensure that the trees are satisfactory. The speaker sound should not be more than 15 decibels.

j. Nicholson seconded the motion.

k. The motion passed 4-3. Reudgen, Nicholson, Baum and Lockwood voted yes. Miller, Bard and Hervieux voted no.

5. **8-24 Referrals**

a. There were none.

6. **New Business/Discussion/Correspondence**

- Letter dated July 29, 2026 Manchester Planning and Zoning – *Accessory ATMS in conjunction with banks.*

a. There was discussion about the lack of preparedness of some applicants who appear before the commission. Bard said suggested a list of expectations be assembled for applicants. People now come in unprepared. Applicants need to make a presentation and explain how the application complies with the town's regulations. The commission, in some cases, has to pull information out of applicants. Other commissioners agreed.

7. **Public Comments Received**

a. There were none.

8. **Adjournment**

a. Reudgen moved and Nicholson seconded adjourning the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Unanimous.



David Owens
Recording secretary