

**Town of Chaplin, Connecticut
Zoning Board of Appeals**

Public Hearing Minutes of May 26, 2021

These unapproved Zoning Board of Appeals meeting minutes are forwarded to the Chaplin Town Clerk in a draft format. These minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting, voted upon and noted in the meeting minutes.

Chair Susan Peifer opened the Public Hearing at 7:02 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Peifer-Chairman, Lisa Courcier- Vice-chairman, Rosalie Gifford, Alternate Victor Boomer, Alternate Brendan Kane.

OTHERS PRESENT: Administrative Assistant Sue Krodel, Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott.

PUBLIC PRESENT: Applicant Mr. Jigar Patel, Architect Mr. Stuart Peaslee.

Chair S. Peifer read the Legal Notice that was posted in the Chronicle, at the Town Hall and on the town website. A site walk was held at 169 Willimantic Rd, Chaplin on May 9, 2021 from 11am – 11:50am and attended by S. Peifer, L. Courcier and R. Gifford.

SUBJECT OF HEARING

Application by Sureshbhui Patel, Chaplin Package Store, 169 Willimantic Rd. Chaplin, CT 06235 for a variance seeking relief from CZR 6.1 and 5.9C regarding altering a nonconforming building and front yard setback requirements on Lynch Rd.

Applicant Jigar Patel presented reasons for an addition to the Chaplin Package Store. The store is running out of space indoors with crowded aisles that are not wide enough. The two coolers need to be expanded to offer a bigger selection for beers, seltzers and ready to drink beverages that are in high demand due to bars being shut down during the pandemic. Expanding the business will help it to grow with competition nearby within 5 miles (two package stores with a gas station and one package store in a plaza). The addition will provide room to carry more products and include an extension of the register for safety (store was robbed twice within 5 days during the pandemic).

Written Comments:

- An email was received from Joe Pinto who supports the proposed addition to the Chaplin Package Store and would like to see them expand and continue to be a successful business in town.

Comments from the Public: None

Comments from the Board:

- L. Courcier asked about the discrepancy in the blueprint on the size for the bump out to Lynch Rd. that measures about 13.5 ft. Mr. Peaslee responded that the plan is looking at a feasibility study and the dimensions are flexible.
- S. Peifer asked why the plan wants to continue with a dangerous setback when the addition could be shifted over and be within the 25 ft. setback. Mr. Peaslee responded that the intent is to not grossly change the look of the building and keep the ridgeline and front and rear pitch the same for ascetic appeal. It would also help maintain visual control inside the building.

- S. Peifer expressed concerns regarding safety with a door at the rear of the building that is very close to the road and a driveway directly opposite from the rear driveway exit of the building. Mr. Patel responded that there is no public access to the rear of the building that has two doors - one with a handicap ramp for deliveries and one for employees.
- S. Peifer asked if the paved surface in the back will be relocated. Mr. Patel responded that it can be paved if the town requires.
- B. Kane asked to clarify that the addition is for an existing building with setback distance that doesn't meet zoning regulations and is grandfathered in.
- L. Courcier asked about keeping the roof line and adding a pillar for open space. Mr. Peaslee responded that a barrier could be built for protection.

Comments from the Architect:

- Mr. Peaslee commented that the project is in the feasibility stage and trying to work with anticipated cost for construction and zoning regulations. He asked if the footprint of the building as installed by the previous owner and done without regard for safety would be considered a hardship. S. Peifer responded that it would not be a hardship of the land, the property is quite level, as it would be continuing with the same issue of the building that predates zoning. No hardship was seen on the site walk such as a huge boulder or cliff.
- Mr. Peaslee asked the Board to consider the variance for a very unique situation that would be a benefit to the community and help this effort to promote the activity.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathleen Scott, Recording Clerk
28 May 2021