

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ken Fortier (Vice-Chair), Helen Weingart, Randy Godaire, Dave Garceau (online), Pete Fiasconaro, Eric Beer, Alternate Dan Pearce, Alternate Peter Haines.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Doug Dubitsky (Chair), Alternate Bill Ireland.

**ALTERNATES SEATED:** Seat Dan Pearce for Doug Dubitsky.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) Jay Gigliotti, First Selectman Juan Roman, Selectman Joe Pinto and Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES 01.13.22 REGULAR MEETING:**

**Motion to approve by D. Garceau, seconded by R. Godaire. All in favor, motion carried.**

**CITIZENS HAVING NEW BUSINESS:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**SP22-163-64-66 Willimantic Road- Mehak Realty, LLC- Special Permit Application for Gasoline filling station and convenience store per section 5.3.B.m:** Public Hearing continued until March 10, 2022.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Preliminary Discussion – Charles River Laboratories:**

ZEO J. Gigliotti presented intended use description by Charles River Laboratories for potential reuse of the old Kawasaki building on Route 6. The Business District regulations do not list the use of laboratory facilities or provide a mechanism for approval of this type of business (a regulation change may be necessary).

Executive Director of Avian Operations Debra Tosta presented intended use for the building – looking for additional space similar to the Storrs facility at 67 Baxter Rd. for reducing avian pathogens to protect the food chain and poultry. This would require an increase to the regulatory needs through the FDA and USDA. Eggs would be the only product on site (no animals or animal studies). The lab space air would be HEPA filtered coming in and out. All waste would be autoclaved and disinfected, treated as medical waste and disposed offsite. Dish soap is the only item in the kitchen to clean glassware that would be dried and autoclaved with very little going into the septic system. Employee staff is between 20-30 people with someone always on site. Would like to keep the lab local with many employees living in the area that work at the lab (there is another lab in Willimantic). Looking for a special permit or permission to use this facility that would be great for the town. Real Estate Broker Dave Mitcham (representing the owner) spoke about the zoning regulations not specifically addressing a lab and that the building is for general business use within the zone.

K. Fortier asked about the following: will the building be fitted like a hospital (the building will have modular space within the building, no exterior renovations, no changes to the site, and have 89 parking spaces); what kind of jobs (entry level jobs that are trainable and don't require a college degree). E. Beer asked about the following: are there protocols for pathogen escape with any health concerns (none of the poultry virus will crossover to humans, all air in the lab is HEPA filtered coming in and out); is anything created that tampers with mother nature (no genetically modified work is done).

J. Gigliotti asked for direction from the Commission to facilitate the process and help the applicant move forward with their project. The Commission was asked if they feel this use should be allowed in the Business District Zone. If so, he recommends the applicant work with their council and submit a regulation change to the Business District that would allow the PZC to approve their use and could include as many provisions deemed necessary.

P. Fiasconaro expressed concerns with a regulation change to allow use for a laboratory may open up future use that is vulnerable to more waste. E. Beer is hesitant to allow pharmaceutical manufacturing in town and prefers having a special permit. P. Haines and D. Garceau suggested allowing the laboratory by a special permit. H. Weingart supports the idea of the staff advising the applicant to submit a regulation change. P. Fiasconaro asked if any other towns support this in the Aquifer Protection District (Jay will check). Debra Tosta reported that regulations require everything being done at the building be submitted to the USDA and FDA and that the Storrs lab has been on site for 65 years in a residential area.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**REPORT OF THE ZONING OFFICER:**

ZEO J. Gigliotti presented monthly report that is available at the Town Hall. Items requiring direction or action are as follows:

- 1 permit was issued for new single-family residence on South Bear Hill Rd.
- The Commission was presented with updated copies of the POCD (E. Beer asked for bound hard copies that will be available for the next meeting).

P. Fiasconaro asked for an update on the bright lighting at the old Zlotnick's gas station. The canopy lights were replaced with non-recessed lighting (Building official issued permit not knowing they needed to be recessed). The site plan required lights to be recessed so they shined down (looking for evidence to prove they are non-compliant).

**ITEMS PRO RE NATA:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion to adjourn (9:13 PM) by E. Beer, seconded by D. Pearce. All in favor, motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott