

**CHAPLIN  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
Public Hearing Minutes  
Chaplin Town Hall, 7:00 P.M.  
September 8, 2016**

**Call to order at 7:05 p.m.**

**Members present:** Chairman Doug Dubitsky, Vice-Chairman Peter Fiasconaro, Eric Beer, Randy Godaire, Alan Burdick, Helen Weingart

**Absent:** Dave Garceau

**Recused:** Chairman Dubitsky announced that he would recuse himself from the proceedings, although he had no conflicts.

**Alternates Seated:** Brandon Cameron for Chairman Dubitsky, Bill Ireland for Dave Garceau

**Alternate Present:** Kenneth Fortier

**Also present:** Jay Gigliotti, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Elizabeth Marsden, Recording Clerk

**Open Public Hearing**

- A. Special Permit Application SP16-059-Darrell Chaloult (applicant) 108 England Road, Assessor's Map 53-29 – Special Permit Application under zoning regulations section 5.2.B.10. Application for proposed establishment of 501C3 non-profit facility to provide assistance to veterans. No proposed changes to the existing property or structure.

Vice-Chairman Fiasconaro explained the public hearing protocol and conditions for approval and read the public hearing announcement, which appeared in the Willimantic Chronicle on Saturday, August 27, 2016 and Saturday, September 3, 2016

CHAPLIN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING THURSDAY, September 8, 2016. PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:00 P.M. REGULAR MEETING TO FOLLOW Chaplin Town Hall, 495 Phoenixville Road, Chaplin, CT Special Permit Application- #SP16-059-108 England Road- Darrell Chaloult-Applicant and Property Owner- Assessor's Map 53-29- Special Permit Application under zoning regulations section 5.2.B.10-Application for proposed establishment of 501(c)(3) non-profit facility to provide assistance to veterans- No proposed changes to the existing property or structures. Property is located on the North side of England Road, approx. 2,650 feet east of Phoenixville Road (Route 198). Entire Property is within the RAR Zoning District Application materials and plans for the

proposal are available for review in the Town Chaplin Planning & Zoning Department, Town Hall, 495 Phoenixville Road. Respectfully submitted, Doug Dubitsky, Chairman

**Testimony:** Darrell Chaloult, Applicant, presented his application. He distributed a handout to the Commission entitled “Veterans Base Camp Community Training Center” which is the name of the venture for which he seeks a permit. He bought the property over a year ago, and decided the best use would be to help veterans. President Obama in 2014 proposed funding for a venture between communities and Veterans Affairs to help veterans re-establish themselves after release from the service, with chosen employment. Mr. Chaloult hopes to open a line of communication with the VA and help veterans identify VA programs for which they qualify. He also described other programs his non-profit organization would perform, such as entrepreneurial ventures and other employment opportunities, and job training.

Mr. Chaloult spoke at length about his ideas for the program, and his associate John Cianci, 96 England Road, elaborated on the financial benefits of these programs, and he will be working on site with the veterans.

Further elaboration about the program according to Mr. Chaloult: he described how veterans will come in to the program with a 2-week assessment of needs/skills; veterans will have to eat, sleep, etc at certain times of the day as they do in the military. Zero tolerance drugs/alcohol program. Veterans will have to “abandon their vehicles” during their stay in the program. Potential accomplishments include allowing veterans to decompress, find camaraderie, “keys to access resources” that are available to them.

Applicant said the facility will be used as a home/military style camp, 25 veterans coming and going, 6 employees (graduates of the course), the non-profit will fund it through grants and donations and have a business that makes a profit, to pay for room and board, books, etc. The veterans will be required to pay a percentage using any income they are earning. Applicant spoke about how veterans with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder have a lot of anger, trust issues, he spoke about locking up their prescription medications and dispensing it to them on a schedule. He did then mention “it won’t be the place” for Post-Traumatic Stress (“PTSD”) Patients.

He said he has spoken to state police and various fire departments and how they may come and collaborate with the program.

### **Commission Members Questions/Comments:**

Brandon Cameron asked if this facility will be open year-round. Applicant said he is not planning on using all the cabins during the winter, depending on how things go.

Eric Beer mentioned hunting and the local shooting club – any issues with PTSD and gunfire? Fin Fur and Feather does re-enactments with a lot of gunfire. Applicant says he would be lying if he said there would be no issue, but then said it won’t be an issue because PTSD disability won’t be served by their group. Beer said that he hoped they

would be screening for level of PTSD and Applicant said discharge papers will show what level the veteran is at.

Ken Fortier asked who oversees the organization. Applicant said they are a privately funded nonprofit – they oversee themselves. They work with the VA but they have their own rules. He is a marine. Believes that the veterans need this unity and it is very important to veterans.

Eric Beer asked about health inspections, serving food, Applicant said eastern health district and local zoning regulations apply. The VA will not come and check on them.

Ken Fortier asked how will veterans find the program. Applicant answered job fairs and lots of materials to hand out. They have a marketing plan.

Eric Beer wondered whether there will be signage. Applicant says there will be a “6 by military style parked out front” Will fly flags of different branches of the military.

Allen Burdick asked if there will be background checks done on participating individuals. Applicant said there will be a disclosure form “under penalty of whatever credence you want to put on it” which will give them the right to check driver’s licenses, criminal records, etc and he thinks a lot of their clients will be personal referrals. He thinks that people will “rise to the occasion.” They will not accept people with DUI convictions.

#### **Town Officials Questions/Comments:**

Cesar Beltran, Board of Finance asked if the organization will pay taxes. Applicant says it will be the same as the “autism people” (the previous non-profit at the same site, the Eden Institute).

Ken Fortier asked if it was a pilot program, Cesar Beltran added that he works at Eastern and they have an active veterans center. Bill Ireland said the Applicant did not answer the question about paying taxes, Applicant said hopefully his organization would be in the same “tax” range as the other nonprofits. It is really a “donation” and not a tax to the town. Irene Schein Board of Selectman, asked how long will someone be in the program, Applicant said the basic program will be 2 weeks to 3 months. They will then be able to move on to something the program connects them with. The ones who would want to stay and work within the program can stay longer.

#### **Citizens Questions/Comments:**

Bev Young, 93 England Road, has heard people target shooting in her neighborhood.

Paul Tetreault, 78 England Road, said he supports Applicant and has no problem with the facility being opened.

Juan Sanchez, 88 England Road, supports what Applicant wants to do, the only thing he wants to say is in the past the Eden Institute was there and he had noise problems when they used to have late events and allowed ATVs. He is immediately adjacent.

Cesar Beltran, 28 Chaplin Street, he came from a military family, he supports Applicant. The Obama program local program would be first in the country, would be good for town.

Diane Sanchez, 88 England Road, members of her family have PTSD and she supports Applicant but her biggest concern is her home. Applicant stated he would have muster and flag raising but not bugles and will be considerate of neighbors. Ms. Sanchez said it was awful with the Eden Institute and she lives in Chaplin for the quiet. She wants to stay in Chaplin. Applicant responded that he would like to see 25 guys singing cadence jogging down England Road.

Brendan Kane, 76 England Road – it is nonprofit vs. for-profit, is this going to change zoning? Applicant started expounding ... Vice Chairman Fiasconaro said the question will be discussed at the regular zoning meeting. Mr. Kane also asked how this works in terms of transition? If the issue is they are moving people from military to community? Applicant says he wants them to be integrated into the community, “whatever its needs are.” Kane then said he works at Uconn and he has veterans in his family, has been working with veterans’ groups on campus and that it might be a social re-integration to collaborate with Applicant’s efforts.

Mike Rubera 120 England Rd, supports Applicant completely.

Juan Sanchez, 88 England Road, made additional comments about hearing guns.

Kimberly Congdon, 68 England Road, supports Applicant.

Shane Congdon, 68 England Road supports Applicant.

Doug Dubitsky, 125 North Bear Hill Rd, asked who will be operating the facility on site and Applicant indicated John Cianci. Mr. Dubitsky asked what experience does John have, John Cianci responded, retired from military police, national guard engine manager, accountant background, presently taking courses for running a nonprofit, as a veteran knows what is involved. Spoke about calling 911 if there is a serious problem. Mr. Dubitsky said his question was that Mr. Cianci is going to be assessing and helping transition people into new situations; what experience does Mr. Cianci have there. Cianci said they will identify what resources there are.... Applicant interrupted and said John Cianci used to be maintenance supervisor at Cumberland Farms. Says he (Applicant) has been self-employed since age 25... doesn’t have an answer for Mr. Dubitsky today. Dubitsky said Applicant won’t have 100 percent disabled, but if he has lesser disabled vets, do they have anyone who is experienced working with lesser disabled vets? Applicant says Norwich Veterans.... not being an attorney he doesn’t have information. Dubitsky asked if they have anyone experienced with doing background checks?

Applicant replied at length but recording clerk was unable to discern a definitive answer to the question.

Kevin (no last name given), affiliated with Eastern CT State University Veterans Center, says he is going to work with Applicant and he supports Applicant and that this area has a lack of services.

Mr. Dubitsky asked if the two of them were already working together. Applicant explained again why he is doing this but did not specifically answer the question. Mr. Dubitsky said he assumes that they will have relationships in place before they start.

Applicant said there will be no live-in staff. He mentioned someone who couldn't be at the public hearing but who has "lots of experience" and she is on board.

Mr. Dubitsky asked if there would be any overnight staff. Applicant stated there will be a "Fire watch" senior person in charge. Mr. Dubitsky asked whether the clients will be alone at the facility overnight. Applicant said they can house 41 people if necessary. At this time they are considering having six paid positions. Recording clerk was unable to discern a direct answer to the question.

Mike Rubera, 120 England Rd, started to direct comments to Mr. Dubitsky and Vice-Chairman Fiasconero told him this wasn't the venue to do that.

Bill Ireland, Commission member, said he thought John Ciasco will be living there and Mr. Ciasco said he will live next door. Brendan Kane, 76 England Rd, wants to follow up, "if this is going to work in the community, it has to work," and they need to have people who will be trained....he asked if Applicant has an organizational structure and will that be publicly available. Applicant says they are serious about it being successful, and it has to be successful in Chaplin. He plans on the program being a template. He would love to have Mr. Dubitsky as volunteer legal counsel.

**Motion** to close public hearing by A. Burdick, seconded by E. Beer, A. Burdick rescinded and seconded by E. Beer.

Jay Gigliotti, Zoning Enforcement Official, said he has nothing to add right now, there are no changes to the site, traffic, etc. CT General Statutes states that 65 days from close of this public hearing, the Zoning Commission is required to make a decision.

**Motion** to close public hearing, A. Burdick, seconded by E. Beer, all members voted in favor, **motion** carried. Hearing closed at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Marsden, Recording Clerk