



Town of Seymour
Planning & Zoning Commission
Public Hearing Continuance Minutes-August 13, 2026
C/O Town Clerk, Lianna McMurray
1 First St., Seymour, CT 06483
(Subject to Revisions)

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 8/17/26
TIME: 3:50 PM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Attendees

Members Present: R.E. Peck; J. Nezeliski; K. Stanis; M. Malberti; J. Lombardo (alternate)

Members Absent: B. Sirowich

Others Present: M. Marganski, CZEO; J. Baldwin, Director of Building and Code Compliance; Attorney J. Marini, Town Land Use Counsel; B. Nesteriak Town Engineer; Seymour First Selectwoman Annmarie Drugonis; ± 35 members of the public.

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Peck called the Public Hearing Continuance to order at 6:00pm and led those assembled in pledge.

2. Roll Call (seat alternate as necessary)

Motion to sit alternate J. Lombardo

Made by Niezeliski, seconded by Stanis.

Vote: Aye: R.E. Peck, Niezeliski, Stanis, Malberti; Nay: None; Abstain: None

Motion carried. Alternate J. Lombardo to be part of the board.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Re: Application No: PZC-26-7 Text Amendment Section 3.0 Definitions; Section 8.0 Table Permitted Uses; Creation New Text Language Farming & Agritourism

M. Marganski, CZEO, read legal notice into the record.

5. Public Comment

Vice Chairman Peck addressed those assembled and thanked the public for its continued participation. He reminded attendees that the public hearing concerned the proposed Farming and Agritourism text amendments and not any particular farm, individual, or entity. He requested that those who had not previously spoken be given the opportunity to comment first and asked speakers to limit their comments to approximately three minutes.



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First Selectwoman Annmarie Drugonis, 111 Middle Benham Road, addressed the Commission regarding the proposed regulations. First Selectwoman Drugonis stated that the Town's existing farming and agritourism regulations are outdated and encouraged the Commission to finalize clear regulations that support local farms and agritourism while establishing reasonable standards for matters such as parking, noise, hours, acreage and events.

First Selectwoman Drugonis also addressed information and rumors circulating regarding local farm properties and clarified that the Town has no interest in acquiring the properties discussed. She stated that an illustration previously circulated depicting agritourism uses was an AI-generated visualization and was not a Town proposal, development plan or recommendation. She encouraged the Commission to close the hearing when appropriate and proceed with workshops and revisions to the proposed regulations.

Vice Chairman Peck responded that the Commission had developed the proposed regulations within the timeframe requested and that the purpose of the public hearing process was to receive and consider public input. He stated that additional meetings would be scheduled as necessary.

Vice Chairman Peck invited those wishing to speak in favor of the proposed text amendment to address the Commission.

Bill Purcell, President of the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the proposed amendment. Mr. Purcell discussed the economic importance of agriculture and agritourism and referenced *Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities*. He encouraged the Commission to develop regulations appropriate for Seymour that support agriculture as part of the Town's future economic and land-use planning.

Attorney John Sponheimer spoke regarding recommendations submitted to the Commission for consideration. Attorney Sponheimer discussed adopting Right-to-Farm provisions, utilizing the State definition of agritourism, establishing a 50-foot setback for agritourism activities, providing a one-time permit for lower-impact agritourism activities, and utilizing a special permit process for larger or higher-impact events. He also encouraged the Commission to consider provisions protecting existing farms that may not meet proposed minimum acreage requirements.



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Beth Carson- 49 North Mead Farm Road, stated that she supports local farms, businesses and agritourism but encouraged the Commission to take sufficient time to develop comprehensive regulations. Ms. Carson discussed distinguishing among different types and intensities of agritourism activities and considering appropriate standards for permits, fees, health and safety requirements, insurance, enforcement and frequency of events. She suggested that lower-impact activities could require less regulatory oversight while larger events may warrant additional permitting and review.

Vera McCarren- 57 Maple Street, spoke in support of protecting existing farms and stated that she believed a 50-foot setback was reasonable. Ms. McCarren suggested that permit fees could vary based upon the size and intensity of the proposed agritourism activity and encouraged the Commission to consider smaller-scale and micro-farming operations when developing the regulations.

Heather Dokla-174 South Benham Road, spoke in support of agritourism and asked the Commission to distinguish between activities associated with an agritourism business and ordinary private residential activities occurring on a property that is also a working farm. She provided examples involving private parties, food trucks, family gatherings and use of a barn for personal purposes. Ms. Dokla also encouraged the Commission to consider protections for existing farms that may not satisfy any newly established minimum acreage requirement.

Joshua Warren Newtown/Sandy Hook spoke in support of reducing regulatory burdens on farms. Mr. Warren referenced Connecticut statutes concerning agriculture and zoning and stated that modern farms rely upon diversification and direct engagement with the public. He encouraged the Commission to avoid acreage requirements and other restrictions that could unnecessarily limit smaller agricultural operations.

Kim Warner-174 South Benham Road, Red Clover Farms, discussed materials submitted to the Commission proposing separate standards for lower- and higher-impact agritourism activities. Ms. Warner suggested a one-time permit for lower-impact activities such as pick-your-own operations, educational workshops, farm tours and similar activities, with a special permit process available for larger events. She also discussed the difficulty of measuring agricultural activity based upon a percentage of farm revenue and explained that agritourism may provide supplemental income that supports continued agricultural operations.

Robert Koskelowski- 130 Pearl Street, encouraged the Commission to consider the effects of agritourism activities on abutting property owners when establishing standards such as acreage and setbacks. He also discussed enforcement of existing and future regulations and emphasized the importance of public safety and review by appropriate Town departments and agencies.



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Jeff Baryla- 129 South Main Street, identified himself as an advisor to the Seymour Conservation Commission and spoke in favor of updating the Town's farming regulations. He encouraged the Commission to consider agricultural zoning and open-space zoning as part of broader future zoning discussions.

Vice Chairman Peck called three times for additional speakers in favor of the proposed amendment and then invited those wishing to speak in opposition.

Joshua Warren returned to clarify that while he generally supported agritourism, he opposed provisions he believed would create unnecessary regulatory burdens. He specifically encouraged the Commission to consider smaller setbacks, minimal permitting fees and streamlined approval procedures and referenced agricultural regulations adopted by other Connecticut municipalities.

Vice Chairman Peck called three times for additional speakers in opposition.

Brad [last name unintelligible], Ansonia, addressed the Commission and urged caution when developing the regulations. He referenced his experience with a zoning matter in Ansonia and questioned differences in the treatment of established land uses under municipal zoning regulations.

Following public comment, **Vice Chairman Peck** entertained a motion to close the public hearing.

6. Disposition of Public Hearing:

Motion to close the Public Hearing.

Made by Niezelski, seconded by Lombardo.

Vote: Aye: R.E. Peck, Niezelski, Stanis, Malberti, Lombardo; Nay: None;

Abstain: None

Motion carried, public hearing closed at 6:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

L. Rajvong
Clerk, Planning & Zoning Commission

Public Hearing Continuance Minutes-
Planning & Zoning
Clerked by: L. Rajvong
Meeting Date: 08/13/2026