

**CITY OF TORRINGTON  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
August 17, 2022**

Present: Greg Mele, Chair  
Greg Perosino, Vice Chair  
Jim Bobinski, Member  
Starley Arias, Alternate  
Diane Carroll, Alternate

Also Present: Jeremy Leifert, AICP; City Planner  
Val Ferro, Good earth Advisors, LLC

**1. Call to Order:**

Chair Greg Mele called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom on line.

**2. Attendance/Announcement:**

Mr. Mele announced present and serving this evening are Commissioners Greg Perosino, Jim Bobinski, Starley Arias, Diane Carroll and Greg Mele. Also present Jeremy Leifert, City Planner and consultant Val Ferro, Good Earth Advisors, LLC

**3. New Business:**

- a. Agritourism – Special Events  
Discussion  
Val Ferro, Good Earth Advisors, LLC

Mr. Leifert provided background information on Agritourism regulations. These will be geared towards large land owners to reduce development pressure, and preservation of large tracts of land and farms. Val Ferro of Good Earth Advisors has been meeting with Mayor Elinor Carbone and Economic Development Director Rista Malanca regarding Agritourism use in City of Torrington.

Ms. Val Ferro spoke and reviewed some of her meetings with Mayor Carbone, working on Brownfield revitalizations, and special events uses that are a possibility in Torrington. Ms. Ferro presented a slide show with highlights to consider. Agritourism equals a Special Events Permit, to sustain the rural character of the town, and not necessarily on farmland. Farming is part of Torrington’s heritage, long before manufacturing. Farmland owners are seeking other ways to utilize their lands without subdividing or development. It doesn’t have to be a farm, this is a method to preserve the rural areas of town. Weddings and special events are very popular uses.

Ms. Ferro reviewed which other towns in the area have adopted such plans and regulations.

Mr. Mele inquired about a minimum size of property. Ms. Ferro responded that is a matter for consideration, and also any wetlands on properties need to be considered. Mr. Mele noted a few concerns for a smaller sized property. Ms. Ferro noted there are a fair number of thresholds to be met in order to lead up to a special permit. Parking, health, sanitary, water, traffic, emergency response, first aid, fire marshal, building and other permits will be needed. Ms. Carroll noted various sites currently being used for weddings.

Mr. Leifert stated such properties being used need to be rural, and remain an accessory use to the property, and not the development of a new permanent commercial use.

Mr. Mele asked questions regarding special event permits in conjunction with a bed and breakfast use, and other uses. Mr. Leifert emphasized this special events use is intended to be accessory to the current use on a property, and not a continuous commercial use. Mr. Leifert said this special events use is not intended to replace ordinary and customary use of a property, such as a one time graduation party or a one time wedding.

Parking requirements and space for sanitary services were noted by Mr. Perosino. Mr. Bobinski inquired about the construction of a building for such useage, and Mr. Leifert stated the agritourism needs to be accessory/temporary to another use on the property.

Referring to the slide presentation, Ms. Ferro reviewed various considerations that must be part of any such approvals. Various scenarios were discussed by Commission members. Mr. Leifert stated there are four major considerations:

1. Number of people.
2. Size of property
3. Event type
4. Length of the event

Mr. Leifert reviewed the Special Exception and Site Plan approval process.

Multi-departmental sign-offs on any venue event are critical per Mr. Mele. He noted the necessity for building permits, fire marshal sign off, traffic and parking considerations, first aid and emergency response capability.

Mr. Leifert will prepare a draft regulation for the Commission's review at a future Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.

#### **4. Adjournment:**

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to adjourn at 6:43 p.m., seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.