

Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
Monday, June 8, 2026
7:00 p.m.
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers – Town Hall
Town Hall – 45 South Main Street
MINUTES

Chairman Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Roll Call: Present: James Fitzsimmons, Chair; Jeffrey Kohan, Vice Chair; David Leonardo, Secretary; James Seichter, Regular Member; Joseph Sanders, Alternate; Richard Benham, Alternate; Casey Camire, Alternate; and Kevin Pagini, Town Planner.

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that Commissioner Sanders will be voting in place of Commissioner Venoit.

Consideration of Minutes – May 11, 2026, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve the Minutes of Monday, May 11, 2026, Meeting of the Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission as submitted.

Commissioner Leonardo: Second

Vote: Kohan – yes; Leonardo – yes; Seichter – yes; Sanders – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. Special Permit (excavation and fill) – Quest Diagnostics – 3 Sterling Dr. #404-26
(Continued from 05/11/2026)**

Commissioner Leonardo noted the new correspondence included photos.

Hannah Greisbach, Project Engineer, Langan Engineering, presented. She explained that they fixed the notifications and submitted photos of the signs.

Commissioner Seichter asked about the hours of operation and where the excavated material will go. Ms. Griesbach replied that the hours will be the standard 7 am to 3 pm. Regarding the impacted soil will go to a landfill, as it's just pesticide-impacted. The contractor will find the best option for disposal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Fitzsimmons called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to close the public hearing for application #404-26 Special Permit (excavation and fill) – Quest Diagnostics – 3 Sterling Drive.

Commissioner Leonardo: second

Vote: Kohan – yes; Leonardo – yes; Seichter – yes; Sanders – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve application #404-26, Special Permit for fill and excavation at 3 Sterling Drive for a Special Permit request for Fill and Excavation to remediate approximately 500 cubic yards of soil at 3 Sterling Drive on plans entitled “Site Plan – Quest Diagnostics Special Permit for Excavation and Filling of Land – 3 Sterling Drive” dated March 23, 2026, subject to the following conditions of approval:

- 1. Comments from Manny Rigor, Wallingford Electric Division, dated May 7, 2026**
- 2. Comments from Tom Flannery, Senior Engineer, Water and Sewer Division, dated May 7, 2026**
- 3. Erosion and sediment control bond in the amount of \$2,500.00**
- 4. Six (6) copies of final plans forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Office.**

Commissioner Leonardo: second

Vote: Kohan – yes; Leonardo – yes; Seichter – yes; Sanders – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

The application is approved.

2. Special Permit Revision – Wal-Mart Inc./844 North Colony Road #405-26

Commissioner Leonardo read the legal notice and noted the correspondence. Application #405-26 – Special Permit request for Walmart Inc. to add an 8,046± sq. ft. addition to an existing retail store and re-configuration of an existing parking area at 844 North Colony Rd – RF-40 (Route 5) District.

Correspondence included an Interoffice Memorandum to Kevin Pagini, Town Planner, from Tom Flannery, Senior Engineer, Water and Sewer Division, dated May 15, 2026, and an email from Alison Kapushinski, Town Engineer, to Kevin Pagini, Town Planner, dated June 4, 2026.

Luke DiStefano, Bohler, LLC, West Hartford, CT, explained that due to the growth of online ordering, they intend to convert one portion of the current garden center area on the Northeast corner. Once enclosed, it will be approximately 8,000 sq. ft. This will increase the building’s square footage. In the space, employees will store commonly purchased online products. If this moves forward, they will increase the online ordering parking spaces from 23 to 55. This should cut the wait time for customers in half. The changes are minimal. There will be no driveway change. The modification is to a portion of the building. The total net loss will be one parking space. They will still meet the 4 spaces per 1000 square feet. He added that striping modifications and signage will be upgraded. These are identified in the plans. He noted that there will be sign modifications totaling an additional 35 feet for wayfinding signs on the building. This includes 4 or 5 new signs.

Commissioner Seichter asked about the 8,000 sq. ft. expansion. Mr. DiStefano replied that Walmart doesn't count the greenhouse as floor area. The result will be a small reduction in building coverage.

Commissioner Sanders asked about pedestrian safety and noted that the traffic light on the east is way too short. He suggested a traffic study to look at the timing. Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that since this is a minor modification to an existing traffic generator, this was not sent to the Police Department, though the Town Engineer saw the plans. Mr. Pagini added that the Town Engineer had no concerns, but he can ask for comments.

Commissioner Leonardo asked if they expected customer volume to increase. Mr. DiStefano replied that there has generally been no change in the number of people using the store, but they do see less pedestrian traffic. The vehicular traffic is the same.

Commissioner Camire asked what triggered the special permit. Mr. Pagini replied that this is a revision to an existing special permit. Commissioner Camire asked for clarification of the changes to traffic arrows for the illegal left-hand turn. Mr. DiStefano replied that he will make sure the illegal left turn is corrected. Commissioner Fitzsimmons noted that there was a zoning violation that had been corrected.

Commissioner Kohan asked if this would affect the storage area on the other side of the driveway. Mr. DiStefano replied that there are no other changes planned. Commissioner Kohan asked about pest control due to food storage. Mr. DiStefano replied that he didn't know. That would be an Operation and Maintenance issue, but he can get the information. Commissioner Kohan suggested adding it as a condition of approval. He stated that pesticides impact wildlife, and eagles have been spotted in the area. Mr. DiStefano agreed to the condition.

Mr. Pagini asked that they double-check the handicapped parking spaces when they do the restriping.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted there are two issues. First, he confirmed that there are no objections to the condition on pesticides. Regarding the traffic light, he asked Mr. Pagini to address it with the Town Engineer. Chairman Fitzsimmons called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to close the public hearing for application #405-26 Special Permit Revision – Wal-Mart, Inc. – 844 North Colony Road.

**Commissioner Leonardo: second
Vote: Unanimous**

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve application #405-26 for 844 North Colony Road for a Special Permit revision and site plan approval request for Wal-Mart Inc. to construct an 8,046 sq. ft. addition to an existing retail store and to re-configure a portion of the existing parking area on plans entitled “Wal-Mart – Overall Site Plan” dated 4/9/26, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Comments from Tom Flannery, Senior Engineer, Water and Sewer Division, dated May 15, 2026**
- 2. Comments from the Fire Marshal’s office dated June 5, 2026**
- 3. That all currently existing striping and markings in the parking area are checked for compliance with the current zoning regulations, and that written confirmation of this compliance is submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department prior to a building permit being issued.**
- 4. Erosion and sediment control bond in the amount of \$5,500.00.**
- 5. Six (6) copies of final plans forwarded to the Planning and Zoning office.**
- 6. Information on pesticide use and rodent control to be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Office.**

Commissioner Leonardo: Second

Vote: Kohan – yes; Leonardo – yes; Seichter – yes; Sanders – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

The application is approved.

3. Text Amendment for Housing Compliance with Public Act 25-01. #902-26

Commissioner Leonardo read the legal notice and the correspondence into the record. Application #902-26 Text Amendment for Housing Compliance with Public Act 25-01. Full text is available in the Planning and Zoning Office. Correspondence included the draft wording, letter to Kevin Pagini, Town Planner from Eliza LoPresti, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments dated June 1, 2026; email to Kevin Pagini, Town Planner from Alison Kapushinski, Town Engineer, dated June 4, 2026; and Staff Referral Report to Planning & Zoning from Emely Ricci Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, dated June 5, 2026.

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that this has already been discussed, so no summary is required. He invited questions on the proposed amendment.

Commissioner Seichter asked about Middle Housing, Section 6.38.B, and the striking of ‘as of right’ to be replaced by ‘summary review’. Mr. Pagini replied that the State replaced ‘as of right’ with ‘summary review’. It means site plan approval, but the public health and safety will not be substantially impacted. It’s essentially the same thing. He noted that the other change is that we can’t require a special permit or variances. He explained that the text amendment was reviewed by the Corporation Counsel and the Assistant Town Attorney.

Commissioner Camire asked if 'as of right' included language around public health and safety. Mr. Pagini replied no, it was added by the State. Commissioner Camire noted that 'summary review' is slightly more restrictive and/or empowering for the Commission if we determine there are public health and safety considerations. He asked why basement or cellar dwelling units were not permitted. Mr. Pagini explained that it is the fully enclosed basement apartments that are not allowed, and the Fire Marshal supports that. This is for a multi-family conversion. He added that the Commission can modify it to allow for walkouts.

Commissioner Kohan suggested reviewing the definitions to see if they appear in other parts of the regulations and need to be changed. He noted that the South Central Regional Council of Governments Regional Planner is going to take group 7 or 8 town applications for this text amendment as one discussion item. He believed that most towns are making similar changes.

Commissioner Seichter referred to Section 6.38.D, which eliminated the minimum lot size for the applicable zoning district for new construction only. Mr. Pagini explained that Atty. Small agreed to get rid of this limitation for new construction. This was discussed at the workshop.

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that these amendments are to comply with Public Act 25-01. It eliminates the need for the downtown apartment overlay district, multi-family conversions, and middle housing will now allow for housing conversions in all areas. This also limits the need for a special permit for multi-family housing in all of the commercial and mixed-use zones and adds middle housing to the CLB, YLB, DD40, RF40, and T-30 zoning districts, subject to summary review. The full amendment is available in the Planning and Zoning office.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Fitzsimmons called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to close the public hearing for application #901-26, Compliance with Special Act 25-01, a Zoning Text Amendment to Sections §2.2; §6.11; and §4.1.B.3.a.

Commissioner Leonardo: Second

Vote: Unanimous

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve Compliance with Special Act application #902-26 a Zoning Text Amendment to Sections §2.2; §6.38; §4.4(A); §4.4(B); §4.5: §4.11; §4.16; §4.22 and deletion of §4.7 and §6.22 to be in compliance with CT Public Act 25-01 on language dated May 12, 2026 because of the need to comply with the special act.

Commissioner Leonardo: Second

Vote: Kohan – yes; Leonardo – yes; Seichter – yes; Sanders – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

The application is approved.

It was noted that walkout basements will be workshopped.

Commissioner Seichter thanked Mr. Pagini for his work on this amendment.

4. Text Amendment Request for F&M Bank, LLC to expand the allowable uses within the Town Center district. #503-26

Commissioner Leonardo read the legal notice and the correspondence into the record. Application #503-26 Text Amendment to expand the allowable uses within the Town Center district. The Amendment is specifically seeking to alter Section 4.26.A.4 to allow law offices and other related office uses currently not allowed on the ground level in the TC (Town Center) District. Correspondence included an email from Alison Kapushinski, Town Engineer to Kevin Pagini, Town Planner dated June 4, 2026; letter from Don Crouch, Economic Development Office to the Planning and Zoning Commission dated June 5, 2026; letter to the Town of Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission from Liz Davis, Wallingford Center, Inc. dated June 4, 2026, and minutes of the October 2, 2017 Special Meeting.

Chris McGuire, member of F&M Bank, LLC, 2 North Main Street, and John McGuire, member of F&M Bank, LLC, presented.

Mr. Chris McGuire read their request, including: 'F&M Bank respectfully submits this request for the Commission to amend Wallingford Zoning Regulation §4.26.A.4 to expand the definition of permissible first-floor, street-facing office uses within the Uptown Wallingford Business District. Specifically, we ask that the regulation be updated to allow banks and financial institutions, law offices and legal services, insurance agencies and related insurance operations, accounting firms, medical offices, and other professional office uses that have long been part of Wallingford's commercial landscape. The current regulation was adopted in 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically reshaped the commercial office market. ... According to 2024 commercial real-estate data, Wallingford's office vacancy rate is approximately 23.66%, reflecting a significant oversupply of unused space and a clear need for regulatory flexibility to attract new tenants.' He asked why the regulation was changed and what the impact on the town has been.

Mr. John McGuire distributed a letter from realtor H. Pearce that reinforces this request.

Chairman Fitzsimmons referred to the minutes of the Special Meeting on October 2, 2017, and explained that the Commission was looking to help make downtown more walkable. He agreed that the reality after COVID is different. He also noted that two letters were received asking for action on this application to be delayed.

Commissioner Seichter agreed that the intent was to encourage retail and make the area more walkable. He noted that some of what the applicants are asking for is already allowed.

Mr. John McGuire stated that uptown has always been more of a financial district due to the need to access records at Town Hall. He added that retail has gone online.

Commissioner Camire clarified that they are requesting language be stricken from 4, 6B, 6 & 7. He asked if insurance agencies are considered financial institutions. Chairman Fitzsimmons said yes, they are. Commissioner Camire asked what they meant by general business office. Mr. Chris McGuire replied that they would categorize legal offices as professional offices. Commissioner Camire asked what other professional office uses would be. Mr. John McGuire suggested listing what we don't want instead. Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that in Connecticut, zoning is permissive, so we have to say what's allowed. If it's not listed, it's not allowed. Commissioner Camire stated that they have given a compelling argument for why these businesses should be allowed. We need to acknowledge that the retail environment has changed. He noted that the Town has been trying to increase the nightlife in the area and wondered how this might impact that.

Mr. Chris McGuire acknowledged the letters that were received and stated that they are interested in being collaborative in determining who to bring into the space.

Commissioner Leonardo stated that he would like to hear from Wallingford Center, Inc., and the EDC. He agrees that the business world has changed. We also need to entice these properties to be revitalized. There are a lot of different sides to this discussion. He suggested making them special permits so we would have more control.

Commissioner Benham asked about parking capacity, as it is always a problem. Mr. John McGuire explained how they have access to the municipal lot, so there is plenty of parking. Commissioner Benham asked if parking was restricted to the business. Mr. John McGuire replied no.

Commissioner Kohan asked how long their property has been vacant. Mr. Chris McGuire replied 2 years ago. Mr. John McGuire explained what they have done to market the building. Only a law firm was interested, but they are not allowed. Commissioner Kohan stated that Town Center is one of our most valuable assets. He is interested in hearing from Wallingford Center, Inc., and the EDC. He agrees that this is a change that should be allowed. He asked about the size of the building. Mr. Chris McGuire replied approximately 20,000 sq. ft.

Commissioner Seichter stated that he would like to defer and see what the concerns are. He stated that he was not sure he would want some of the proposed uses on the first floor, street-facing. He warned that we need to be aware of unintended consequences. He asked if they had the vacancy rate for the first floor in the Downtown area. Mr. Chris McGuire said that he understands that it is generally 20% statewide, but he does not have the number for Wallingford. Commissioner Seichter stated that he is uncertain whether we need more office space.

Commissioner Sanders stated that the regulation that was crafted in 2017 was well thought out. He agrees that a lot of office space needs to be rethought, and moving to a place where mixed use is possible needs to be considered. He noted that more Town Hall records are going online, so the need for those businesses to be downtown may be changing. This needs to be done thoughtfully.

Mr. Pagini stated that they came in initially for a minor change to 4.26.B. 4, asking to change the wording to banks, financial institutions, and law offices. They then came back with the expanded language affecting 4.26.B 6 and 7. He added that there were 5 or 6 workshops in 2017. It was clear the Commission wanted a walkable retail environment. We need to think this through since we can't dictate what goes into the office spaces.

Chairman Fitzsimmons stated that he'd like to hear back from Wallingford Center, Inc. and the EDC at the July meeting. He suggested that the McGuires reach out to them to discuss any issues. He agreed that downtown has changed. He noted that the regulations were already modified in 2020 to allow a wellness center. That could be done again. He is generally supportive of this request, but will defer acting on the application.

Mr. John McGuire asked the Commission to think about the owners of the buildings and remember that these types of businesses are allowed nearby.

Mr. Chris McGuire thanked the Commission and pledged to work collaboratively.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to continue the public hearing for application #503-26, Text Amendment request for F&M Bank, LLC, to expand the allowable uses within the Town Center District to the July meeting.

Commissioner Leonardo: Second

Vote: Unanimous

OTHER BUSINESS

5. Request for extension of Special Permit and Site Plan approval for 1117 Northrop Road #402-21

Commissioner Leonardo noted the correspondence for the record. An email from Dennis Ceneviva, Esq., Ceneviva Law Firm to Kevin Pagini, Town Planner, dated May 12, 2026. Commissioner Leonardo noted the written request from the owner/applicant for an extension of its approval for another five (5) year period.

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that the approval is due to expire in August.

Hearing no further discussion or public comment, Chairman Fitzsimmons called for a motion on the application.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve application #402-2, a request for extension of special permit and site plan approval for 1117 Northrop Road for another 5 years.

Commissioner Leonardo: Second
Vote: Unanimous

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

6. Discussion on updates/remarks

Mr. Pagini gave an overview of the report.

- For the POCD, the draft plan is available on the Wallingford2036.com website, as it is too big to send by email. Comments made at the recent joint steering committee and zoning commission have been added to the draft plan.
- A workshop is scheduled for July 6th to discuss sidewalks, Mr. Farrell's letter, Mr. Orsini's letter, and driveways in Fairmont Farms.
- Mr. Pagini reported that he had a meeting with GKN Aerospace, and they are starting their parking lot expansion project.
- There is potential for a multi-family housing development.
- He attended a SCRCOG workshop on potential for shared services. The report is available for comment.
- The recent Rt. 5/Yale Avenue intersection study meeting covered the next steps. The recording is available. Comments are encouraged.

7. Administrative Approvals – noted as approved

- a. **720 North Main St. Ext/Gopalan #309-26**
- b. **950 Yale Ave/Foraker & Belanger #310-26**
- c. **562 South Main St/Paulino #311-26**
- d. **1122 Old North Colony Rd/Backes Realty Assoc. #701-26**
- e. **180 Cheshire Road/The Farms C.C. #210-26**
- f. **220 North Colony Rd, Unit F/Bellemare #312-26**

8. ZBA May Decisions – no comment

9. ZBA Notice of June 15, 2026 – no comment

Commissioner Seichter asked for clarification of continuing education credit for reading the CT Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies Quarterly newsletter.

ADJOURNMENT

**Commissioner Kohan: Motion to Adjourn the Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission
for Monday, June 8, 2026, at 8:50 pm.**

**Commissioner Leonardo: Second
Vote: Unanimous**

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary