

Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
Monday, February 9, 2026
7:00 p.m.
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers – Town Hall
Town Hall – 45 South Main Street
MINUTES

Vice Chair Venoit called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Roll Call: Present: J.P. Venoit, Vice Chair; James Fitzsimmons, Regular Member; Jeffrey Kohan, Regular Member; David Leonardo, Regular Member; Joseph Sanders, Alternate; Casey Camire, Alternate; Cheryl DeGenova, Alternate; and Kevin Pagini, Town Planner.

Consideration of Minutes –January 12, 2026, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Fitzsimmons: Motion to approve the Minutes of Monday, January 12, 2026, Meeting of the Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission as submitted.

Commissioner Kohan: Second

Vote: Unanimous to approve. Commissioner Venoit abstained.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Vice Chair Venoit called for nominations for the position of Chair.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to nominate Jim Fitzsimmons as Chair. He has served as chair in the past, and his experience is invaluable.

Commissioner Leonardo: Second

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Chairman Fitzsimmons asked for nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Leonardo: Motion to nominate Jeff Kohan as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons: Second

Vote: Unanimous to approve

Chairman Fitzsimmons asked for nominations for Secretary.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to nominate Dave Leonardo as Secretary. He has served on this Commission in the past.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons: Second

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Text Amendment to amend the definition of yard, front in Section 2.2, amending diagram 2.3.B and the removal of section 4.6.E. – CB Commercial District (Continued from 1/12/26) #904-25

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that Commissioner Leonardo has reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and will be participating in this application discussion, and that Commissioner Sanders will vote in place of Commissioner Allinson tonight.

Commissioner Leonardo read the legal notice and noted the correspondence. Application 501-26 – Text Amendment request to amend the definition of yard, front in Section 2.2, and the removal of Section 4.6.E. – CB Commercial District, and amending diagram 2.3.B. Correspondence included Amended Diagrams received January 13, 2026, and Memorandum from Kevin Pagini, Town Planner to the Planning and Zoning Commission, dated January 13, 2026.

Mr. Pagini explained that he and the Land Use Specialist reviewed public comments from last month's meeting and drafted a memorandum to clarify that the side yard will decrease the setback, sometimes substantially. He thinks it's a good idea, and the Law Department concurs. The diagram shows that the front yard will now be a side yard in those instances. Accessory structure regulations were included for information. The photos of the corner lot with a 30 ft setback on both front yards will change to 12 ft. The building pictured is non-conforming as it is too close to the property line. That yard would change substantially. Any structure would still need to be in the allowed building envelope without a variance.

Commissioner Sanders thanked Mr. Pagini for addressing the questions he brought up.

Commissioner Kohan confirmed the comments and research done by staff. He supports this. It does clarify the issues that were brought up. He hopes there are no other unintended consequences.

Chairman Fitzsimmons stated that he is in favor because, over the years, applicants were burdened with two front yards. The intent is to clarify and clean up the regulation. He thanked the staff for the additional work.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rob Blanchard, 39 Curtis Avenue, asked if this would also change the number of front yards for a through lot. The wording that was struck says any property that has two street lines would have front yards on both streets. A through lot would also have two front yards. Mr. Pagini replied that it would replace one of the yards. Mr. Blanchard noted that there was no example in the diagrams. This matters due to the setbacks. There is nothing in the regulations to say what that former front yard is. Mr. Pagini noted that they included a reference to unique circumstances. Mr. Blanchard noted that ancillary regulations need to reference the new regulation on Front Yard. He suggested a discussion on where setbacks are measured from for side yards. Mr. Pagini stated that no other measurements are changing.

This is just to change the front yard definition. Mr. Blanchard stated that there are inconsistencies. Mr. Pagini replied that there are no inconsistencies.

Chairman Fitzsimmons clarified that this changes the definition for a corner lot to avoid the need for a variance due to two front yard setbacks. The exhibits are a tool to help with measurement. In the event of unique circumstances, the Town Planner and/or the Land Use Specialist shall determine which yard is the front yard.

Mr. Blanchard asked how other towns do it. Mr. Pagini replied that some have two front yards, some don't, and some have an average. It was established that this was an overburdensome regulation by the Law Department, applicants, and the public. Mr. Blanchard stated that there are inconsistencies. He had submitted photos of what a shed in that location might look like. The R6 zone has a 6 ft setback for the side yard. That means that a primary building can be put 6 ft from the property line. A primary building can be placed on the corner of the lot. You've eliminated the rear yard setback because there's no rear yard. The problem now is the primary building. He noted that Choate wanted to build the Administration building closer to the road, but was denied. There are ways to build in exceptions. For example, you can eliminate 2nd story with exceptions. Accessory or primary buildings will almost always be in someone's front yard. He doesn't think this is the best way to handle this regulation. We need to make sure development is appropriate for the neighborhood.

Mr. Pagini clarified that the Land Use Specialist has always interpreted corner lots as side yard, not rear yard. There has never been a rear yard on a corner lot.

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

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to close the public hearing for application #904-25 – Section 2.2 Amendments and deletion of Section 4.6.E.

Commissioner Leonardo: second

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

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve application #904-25 Section 2.2 Amendments and deletion of Section 4.6.E. for a Zoning Text Amendment to Section 2.2 definition of *Yard, Front* to eliminate corner lots being required to have two front yards and deletion of Section 4.6.E. on language dated January 6, 2026, because of the overall improvement to understanding of front yards in certain districts.

Commissioner Leonardo: second

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

The amendment is effective.

2. Text Amendment/Cerrito – Section 4.9.B 19-Museums and Art Galleries #501-26

Commissioner Leonardo read the legal notice and noted the correspondence. Application 904-26 – Text Amendment request for Cerrito’s Auto to add Museums and Art Galleries as an allowed use to Section 4.9.B.19 – Industrial Expansion (IX) District. Correspondence included an inspection report from the Wallingford Fire Marshal dated January 27, 2026, and a letter from the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments to Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission received February 2, 2026.

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that since Commissioner Venoit had to leave, Commissioner Camire will vote in his place.

Chris Cerrito, 180 Pond Hill Road, explained that this would be a low-impact museum use, which will remain fully taxable. The purpose is to celebrate the history of Wallingford and display classic cars.

Commissioner Kohan stated that this will be a fantastic addition for Wallingford, and he supports it. He asked what the operating hours would be. Mr. Cerrito replied that it needs to be determined. He won’t be open at night but expects weekends to be the busiest times. This will have less impact than other permitted uses in this area. Commissioner Kohan noted an inconsistency in the memo from the Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments and asked why there is nothing from SCROG. Mr. Pagini replied that he believes that is a typo and is willing to ask for a corrected version. He added that this is the only organization he received a response from.

Commissioner Leonardo asked if there would be any auto body work or car sales at the site. Mr. Cerrito replied no. He stated that he supports this.

Commissioner Camire stated that this is a good use of the industrial space.

Mr. Pagini stated that he fully supports this.

Chairman Fitzsimmons agreed that this is an appropriate application.

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

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to close the public hearing for application #501-26 – Section 4.9.B.19 – Museums and Art Galleries

Commissioner Leonardo: second
Vote: Unanimous

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve application #501-26 Section 4.9.B.19 – Museums and Art Galleries for a Zoning Text Amendment to Section 4.9.B.19 to add Museums and Art

Galleries as an allowed use in the IX (Industrial Expansion District) on language dated January 12, 2026 because this is a very appropriate use for the zone and would add tremendously to the vitality of Wallingford.

Commissioner Leonard: Second

Vote: Kohan – yes; Camire – yes; Leonard – yes; Sanders – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

The application is approved.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

3. Administrative Approvals – noted as approved

Mr. Pagini explained the Administrative Approval process. Commission members can ask questions or request that one of these applications be added to a meeting. He noted that the notice goes to the applicable Departments as well. They are listed here to clarify that they are approved.

- a. **9 South Branford Rd/Farrell #RA-26-01**
- b. **524 South Cherry St/BYK USA #227-25**
- c. **850 South Colony Rd/Dominguez #301-26**

4. Discussion on the newly signed Housing Bill

Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that the bill was signed into law last month. He suggested a Workshop to discuss it and gather input from the Regional Planning Board, CT Association of Town Planners, and the Town Attorney. He proposed the last Monday in March (March 30th), possibly in room 315. He also suggested a joint meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning and Zoning Commission with the Town Attorney.

5. Annual Report and Zoning Enforcement Report

Chairman Fitzsimmons stated that the report was shared two months ago and needs a vote to approve it.

Commissioner Kohan stated that overall, it is very good. He asked if the Aquifer Protection Agency met last year and if the Agency should be mentioned. He also asked about the mention of long-standing zoning violations and asked if more information on them could be added to the report. He can include these requests in the motion.

Commissioner Sanders asked if listing the addresses of the properties in violation would shame people into resolving the issues and suggested asking for legal guidance. The report is not incomplete, but we could make the locations part of the record.

Commissioner Leonardo asked at what point the Commission should be notified of legal action. Mr. Pagini replied that it is up to the Commission for tracking and notification.

Chairman Fitzsimmons agreed with all the comments. He suggested a quarterly update and a look at the legal issue. The Commission should be notified when there is legal action. He asked Commission members if they were ready to approve the report or send it back for revision.

Commissioner Kohan stated that he is okay with approving leaving it up to the Town Planner to amend the report. Consensus was to amend the report.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to approve the Annual Report and Zoning Enforcement Report with revisions based on the comments of the Commission pertaining to the Aquifer Protection Agency, as well as zoning violations and legal referrals, with the amendment at the discretion of the Town Planner.

Commissioner Leonardo: second
Vote: Unanimous

6. POCD Update

Mr. Pagini gave an update from the recent Steering Committee meeting, which included public feedback and comments from Department heads. The Consultant is outlining a plan per land use district. The survey flyer was sent out in Electric bills, school email lists, and Park and Rec's email list. They expect to close out the survey in mid-March. They met with department heads and the mayor on infrastructure and priorities. The existing conditions analysis is close to done. The draft plan is aligning well with State grant opportunities, as well as what Wallingford wants to see.

Chairman Fitzsimmons welcomed Commission member participation and encouraged them to complete the survey.

Commissioner Sanders noted that there is a recording of the meeting held at the Senior Center.

Chairman Fitzsimmons stated that the Implementation Committee met and that the meeting was also videotaped and transcribed. The Consultant will present to this Commission, and we will present to Council. He asked Mr. Pagini to keep this item on the agenda. He noted that the results so far indicate that housing is a big issue. He noted that there are currently over two dozen approved projects that have not yet started, including housing and warehousing.

Commissioner Kohan asked about the role of the Consultant. The Consultant is compiling the report, but will he contribute input as to things Wallingford could be doing or should be doing? Mr. Pagini replied that he has been sharing what other towns are doing and making suggestions. They will give example recommendations and identify funding opportunities. He has recommended that we put our

zoning regulations on ECode360. Commissioner Kohan stated that he reviewed the State's expectations and it's quite extensive. Section 8-23 gets into numerous items that the State is looking for. Mr. Pagini replied that the Consultant mentioned that Section as well as the State Plan of Conservation and Development, so there is an effort to align with them. Mr. Pagini stated that they will include SCROG's regional studies as well.

Commissioner Camire stated that HB8002 is a big change, and we need to take full advantage of it. He wants to be involved.

- 7. **ZBA January Decisions** – no comment
- 8. **ZBA Notice of February Meeting** – no comment

Chairman Fitzsimmons reminded Commission members of the upcoming CT Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies conference, which will focus on HB8002.

Chairman Fitzsimmons reported that Commissioner Allinson resigned today due to his acceptance of a position with the Town. He served on the Commission for six years. Chairman Fitzsimmons thanked him for his service.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to Adjourn the Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission for Monday, February 9, 2026, at 8:05 pm.

Commissioner Leonardo: Second
Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary