

TOWN OF EAST LYME
ZONING COMMISSION
September 2nd, 2021
PUBLIC & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

- Matthew Walker, Chairman
- Norm Peck
- Terence Donovan
- Bill Dwyer
- Anne Thurlow
- James Liska, Alternate (Sat as a Regular Member)

Absent:

- Kimberly Kalajainen
- George McPherson, Alternate
- Denise Markovitz, Alternate

FILED
 Sept 13 2021 AT 8:35 AM/PM
 (Signature)
 EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present:

- Bill Mulholland, Zoning Official
- Rose Ann Hardy, Ex-Officio

Mr. Walker called the Zoning Commission meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Walker led the Pledge.

Mr. Walker sat Mr. Liska as a Regular Member for the evening.

Public Delegations

There were none.

Public Hearing

1. Application of Harvest Christian Fellowship of Niantic, Inc., for a Special Permit for a church/religious institution on the subject property. Said parcel is located at N Bride Brook Rd, East Lyme Assessor's Map 24.0, Lot 76.

Mr. Walker noted the legal ad has been run for this item.

Mr. Donovan read Mr. Mulholland's memorandum dated September 2nd, 2021 into the record.

Joe Wren of Indigo Land Design in Old Saybrook, CT, came forward representing the Applicant. Mr. Wren said they're applying for a special permit for a church in a RU 40

residential zone, and noted they posted the sign as required on August 17th, which was more than 15 days prior to the hearing date, and submitted photos via email to the Town.

Mr. Wren introduced Pastor Randall Hyde of 17 Middle Street in Waterford, CT. Mr. Hyde said some of the following:

- This project is like a dream.
- 17 years ago, he stood before a group of individuals, just asking for permission to rent out a building.
- They started off in the Connecticut Yankee hotel which is now Stop and Shop, moved to Niantic cinema, Pennsylvania Avenue, the Chesterfield Firehouse, where he tried to preach as the horns were going off, followed by 5 Freedom Way.
- The church was started in 1994, and all of our services occur outside of the buildings and in the community.
- They believe that they're not to hold things to ourselves, but to go out and minister to and encourage people.
- Only worship will occur on the church grounds.
- Prior to Covid they have had engagements at Bride Brook Rehab Facility, at harvest festivals, at various schools, and the food pantry.
- They've also operated nonprofit Christian bookstores, free on Pennsylvania Avenue.
- They have partnered with Care & Share during Thanksgiving blessing.
- For Celebrate East Lyme they gave away up to 5,000 free bottles of water.
- They have an ecumenical Easter sunrise service.
- They are involved in the National Day of Prayer down at the Town green.
- They support groups that battle depression, rejection and loneliness.
- They've held depression conferences at Waterford High School, had spots on the radio, to encourage people not to give up, which the church has paid for.
- They have monthly merit marriage seminar classes because people are hurting nowadays and marriages are struggling.
- They have biblical counseling as well as other counseling they're involved in.
- His goal isn't to build a big building but to reach people.
- He's struggled with hurting himself and God is still healing him, which is what Harvest Christian Fellowship is all about.
- They go down into New York City in the roughest places of the city, and he teaches his groups how to talk to and care for people.
- They support homeless ministries, unwed mothers, and financially support Samaritan's Purse.
- They have mobilized during disasters and support organizations that fight against sex trafficking.
- It's hard to meet in a storage unit since people won't go to storage units.
- Their goal is to help people, so they're asking for a place to worship.

Scott Long of 34 Legendary Road, a church elder, came forward and said some of the following:

- He wants to provide a basic outline of how they use the property on a weekly basis.
- On Sundays, they do a service from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., which includes the Sunday School for Adults, worship service, and the certain sermon itself; they generally see about 22 cars, 58 people including children.
- The first Sunday of every month is Communion Sunday and they also have potluck and the number of people extends to around 130.
- Mondays, they do not have anything and have not had anything regularly scheduled in the 11 years that he has been there.
- Tuesdays they go from approximately 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- There are men's Bible studies, women's Bible studies on different Tuesdays.
- Those average 13 cars, and about 17 people.
- Currently nothing is scheduled for Wednesdays.
- Thursdays they meet 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for 3 different events that meet at the same time.
- This typically results in 14 cars and 33 people.
- On Fridays we have our support group and we usually have about 16 cars and 29 people who show up for this.
- On the first Saturday of each month, we do a men's breakfast from 8:30 a.m. till about 10:30 a.m., which results in about 10 cars and 12 people.
- Anytime we have food at the property, it's all potluck so everybody brings a dish.
- They sometimes cook out on the grill, so no cooking is actually done inside the church.
- Vacation Bible School would happen during a few days, in, each summer.
- They have never rented out their church, or the space for any functions, including weddings, and we have no plans to start.

Mr. Wren went through the existing site location, site plan, and the proposed conditions including lighting, landscaping, stormwater, and zoning data.

Mr. Wren made some of the following remarks:

- The site is an existing 21.7 acre residential lot.
- It's a remnant lot leftover from the Nathan Hale Hill Farms subdivision that was done nearly 20 years ago.
- They provided an A2 survey map that shows the entire boundary.
- This plan was already approved by Inland Wetlands.
- They also have health approval for the septic system.
- Before the intersection of Woodrow Drive there is a cul-de-sac and it has 6 houses on it.
- There is frontage at the end of the cul-de-sac here, which is not in wetlands so it's the preferred access point to the property.
- The property slopes up to the north and water flows downhill.
- The wetlands along with their utility easements dictated the placement of the church.
- Their stormwater management areas are downhill parking and roof.
- All of the impervious area drains to the stormwater management area and was reviewed and approved by the Town Engineer.

- They have lighting up the driveway and some wall mounted fixtures.
- The work they're doing doesn't include the removal of any significant trees, it's just overgrown brush out in the middle of the field.
- They have a planting legend on the site plan and there are 77 Total trees that they're adding.
- Around the foundation of the building we added 32 shrubs and grasses, high flowering hydrangeas, and dwarf grasses around the foundation for stormwater.
- There are two stormwater management areas and the secondary one is once they get to a point on the access drive they can get water to flow uphill.
- If this portion of the access drive gets too low to get it into the primary basin, all of that flow is directed into the secondary.
- The parking lot has 72 spaces.
- The church is physically in use for 19 hours a week.

Mr. Walker asked if there is a contingency plan for more parking if the church grows and Mr. Wren explained that there is more parking than is required for the zoning regulations so there is some already built in; since there are wetlands on the east and west side, if they expand at all they'll have to go through the wetlands approval process and then come back before zoning for a modification of their special permit, so there's multiple layers of review.

David Solomon from SLR in New Haven came forward and discussed his traffic report and made some of the following remarks:

- The scope of their study was fairly generic.
- They looked at existing conditions and evaluated what's being proposed in terms of the amount of traffic it's going to generate, when it will generate, and what type of impact that will or will not have on the surrounding traffic.
- The focus of their study was the intersection of North Bride Brook and Woodrow Drive.
- There were no crashes reported through the Connecticut repository for traffic accidents in the last 3 years, so there are no obvious safety issues that were identified at that intersection.
- They did a series of counts- they counted the intersection itself, they did an automatic traffic recorder count on North Bride Brook to see what the traffic patterns were, the variations in traffic, and the speed of traffic on that road.
- They also counted the existing facility where the church operates today to get a feel for what the travel patterns are for the Sunday services.
- They looked at speed in terms of the 85th percentile- 42 mph and a 25 mph speed limit.
- They determined the road has a level A service and the site line meets the posted speed limit.

Mr. Wren reviewed the architecture of the building and noted its 2 story residential scale and 8,500 square footage. He stated that the architect is named Don Islander who's from Ohio and asked that he read his brief statement into the record:

"The building is designed to be harmonious with the neighborhood. The residential scale is about that of a two story house, the massing has been broken up with the two shorter wings on each side of the auditorium, and is in the middle of building materials. Typically residential exterior wall materials are siding with a wind scope stone. The roof will be three dimensional architectural shingles; dormers have been added to account to accent the residential character."

Ms. Thurlow asked if there will be any bells or chimes and Mr. Hyde and Mr. Long said there will not be.

Mr. Mulholland observed that there are no internal concerns with this application.

The Commission took a short break at 8:43 p.m. and reconvened at 8:50 p.m.

Mr. Walker called for Public Comment-

1. Greg Saber of 8 Legendary Road said the following:
 - It's an honor to speak on behalf of their church and their congregation who cannot be here due to covid and space restrictions.
 - Harvest Christian Fellowship is a place where you have family, fellowship, and healing.
 - They often refer to their church as a hospital.
 - The world is a hurting place; we've all been hurt by it. And we've hurt others unintentionally.
 - And God wants us to really heal us as he works with us and Harvest Christian Fellowship provides that.
 - It gives us a place to come and talk through these things and, and really work through them.
 - It provides freedom to be who God made you to be.
 - People are often scared that they will be accepted and Harvest Christian Fellowship welcomes all people into their doors.
 - Harvest Christian Fellowship is family and fellowship, there's so much confusion and fear in the world right now, and people need to remember that they're not alone.
2. Tim Wilbur of 4 Woodrow Drive came forward to speak in favor of the application (see attached comments.)
3. Yi Su of 6 Woodrow Drive detailed how she's concerned about safety issues, the impact on the quality of her life, loss of privacy, and the impact on her home value. She explained that the entrance to the proposed church is right next to her driveway and there's no buffer zone. Ms. Yi thinks snow will be dumped into her yard and said they will be impacted the most by this church. She added that there is only one access for emergencies and this puts everyone in danger.
4. Steven Xie 6 Woodrow Drive said he's concerned about headlights shining through their windows as well as an increase in crime. He said he doesn't think this project meets the

criteria of section 25 of the zoning regulations. Mr. Xie said the turn is very sharp and that he is also concerned about the large number of people that will come to the church all hours of the day, almost everyday.

5. Jason Erban of 1 Woodrow Drive said he's been a professional fireman for 26 years and looking at this building, looking at the occupancy, and Looking at the kinds of egress, and it just doesn't add up for him. He understands that it meets the code but there's a lot of elephants in the room here. Mr. Erban said the fact that it's an entrepreneur building and the large square feet with no sprinkler bothers him. He added that the secondary water source is far away and the difficulty in trying to make a three point turn in a fire truck here is not ideal.
6. Steven Wolf of 19 Nathan Hale Drive said he has a variety of concerns and discussed how section 25 of the building code details maintaining proportions between building height, length, while being consistent with the prevailing architecture and nothing looks like this church in this area; the building is over 1,000 square feet and essentially a commercial business. He said church attendance is down and if they default on their loan the church will remain empty because no one will move into a building of that size.
7. Doug McDermott of 2 Woodrow Drive said their wetlands plan will put even more water into his yard . He explained how he's lived there for 17 years and not once has he left his home and been behind another car and this will obviously change. Mr. McDermott detailed how access to the property would make more sense through the wetlands despite being more expensive. He said there are plenty of other more appropriate buildings in Town for this church to occupy.
8. Mary Ann Milner of 1 Applewood Common discussed her concerns about the increase in traffic and how this project will significantly change the landscape of their neighborhood. She also discussed how the huge deforestation of our wildlife would have a huge impact on our Town.
9. Anne Hickman of 256 North Bride Brook expressed her concern for the increase in traffic and the danger to all the pedestrians in the neighborhood who have no sidewalks to transverse. She said she agrees with all the other comments and thinks they should look at another way to access the property.
10. Jon Wrubel of 8 Nathan Hale Drive said he's concerned about safety and security given how often this property will be accessed. He said he's also concerned about the growth of the plants and aesthetics of the building. Mr. Wrubel said he wants to know how long it will take for the selected trees to grow so that he doesn't see this commercial building.
11. Mike Jenkins of 2 Applewood Common said she agrees with everything that's been said and thinks this project is totally out of place in a residential area. The one thing she wants to add, is that the town POCD designates this area as important piece of land that

should be saved for environmental reasons; Bright Brook comes through that area, and to risk all of the effects it would have on our water supply, and on the possibility of damaging the environment is something that also needs to be taken into account.

12. Janice Ginsberg said she doesn't think this is the best location and will have an impact on quality of life for the neighbors. She thinks it will impact the environment and traffic; North Bride Brook is a narrow road, the traffic on there is dangerous, cars do not obey the speed limits, they do not stop at the stop signs, and this will just increase that sort of problem

After a 2 minute break Mr. Wren presented his rebuttal to the public comments:

- Regarding 6 Woodrow Drive they're the closest to the entrance, closest to the actual activity.
- If you look on that map you'll see on their property to the rear of the church property and the wetlands are not going to be cleared.
- The wooded buffer to the rear of their property is going to remain.
- There is no clearing proposed within the 100 foot buffer of that inland wetland which takes you almost up to their front property line.
- There's some brush and there's some low areas but there's nothing happening in that area, other than planting tall Cypress trees which they utilize since they grow very large in diameter and very tall and grow at a very quick rate.
- They do a sawtooth pattern and that protects the privacy and any visual and path from more angles.
- This is a large piece of land and could be any other type of development, other than the single church, it could be several homes or more multi unit houses.
- As far as safety and the maintenance of the power lines, the paving of this driveway actually improves dramatically, the access that they have to that transmission.
- The church was asked to leave the first section of the gravel road in place, off of the paved driveway; it's now going to be paved so there will be closer access for their machinery to get up there and for them to maintain those power lines.
- The hydrant is shown to be relocated on the plan that was discussed with the town.
- As far as snow removal, someone coming to clear snow on the site is going to put the blade down so they will actually be pushing snow into the site instead of out of the site.
- A lot was mentioned about the quality of life, safety, and hours and days of operation.
- It's important to reiterate that those groups meeting during the week are very small groups, are focus groups, and those focus groups are a group of members and they don't double and triple over time.
- The congregation of the church right now is about 100 Total people, and it took them 27 years to get to 100 people.

- He's not saying that it's going to take 27 more years to get to 200 people, but the growth rate is very slow.
- The photometric plan shows no light spilling for trespass over the property line.
- As for noise, there will be no excessive noise and we do have a noise ordinance in Town.
- An increase in crime was mentioned two or three times.
- He's not sure how it's going to attract outside people, you could drive by and you're and never know this church is here.
- There's not a sign pointing people to make them aware it's there.
- This building will meet all codes building codes safety codes fire codes, otherwise it can't get a permit to construct the church.
- Whether there's a sprinkler or not will be up to our Town Staff to determine.
- It's up to the Fire Marshal to determine if access is sufficient.
- They feel they have adequate turning with that T shaped portion along the front of the parking area.
- The builder of the church says this is pretty much the smallest church model that they build.
- Compared to other churches, this is a very small building.
- There's no view easements over this property, there's no rights to any view over this property.
- This building will not be a daycare, the nursery will be an accessory use when church is in service.
- As for the church helping the homeless, they do public outreach and aren't busing people to the church to aid them.
- He doesn't believe that the Wetlands Commission or the Town Engineer overlooked drainage.
- A thorough drainage report that was done by his firm, and there was a very thorough review completed by the Town Engineer at the time.

Mr. Wren again detailed the drainage plan.

Mr Wren further shared the following:

- Not accessing the property through the wetlands is less expensive, but it's also much less damaging to the environment.
- There was some discussion of property tax burden of services, and any church in Town or religious institution is protected by State law, and doesn't pay property taxes.
- As far as devastating the area they're actually increasing the buffers to the current inland wetlands.
- They're not proposing any permanent work inside those buffers, we're actually letting them grow back.
- The best thing for a wetland is a buffer to filter runoff as it goes toward the wetland area; there's no direct discharge of stormwater into the area.

- The traffic study that shows the posted speed limits 25-85% of the people are going 42 or lower.
- The other 15% of those people are going higher.
- The road is very wide and was recently resurfaced.
- The church looked long and hard at several different sites around town, and it just wasn't working for various reasons.
- The church found this site, purchased it, and paid off the land.
- Some financial concerns were brought up by the public, and they paid off the land they own outright.
- They took a chance on a 21 acre lot.
- Any property owner around there either collectively or individually could have purchased that at that time.
- The Town also could have purchased it if they wanted to remain as open space.
- The total footprint is a little less than four acres.
- The other 17.7 acres of this land will not be touched and there are no plans to do so.
- This is probably one of the best neighbors you can have as far as development goes.
- It's going to be developed, the question is what is it going to be.
- For 21 acres, a developer most likely wouldn't just have one house there.
- He wants it on the record that the church will be in use for 19 hours a week.

Pastor Hyde made the following remarks:

- In regards to the public comments, he understands it's their neighborhood and he wants to emphasize that he's not trying to hurt anybody.
- Something to remember is the nation struggling.
- If he was where they're at, it'd be tough and he understands what they're saying.
- People are struggling and he could have gone to Waterford or to New London to pastor, and found buildings there, but he was called here.
- This is why he's stayed for 27 years.
- The congregation isn't going to grow dramatically here, down south is where the churches grow.
- Statistically the churches are in decline, they're having financial problems but his church is not.
- He's called here but it has a cost, it costs them, and it costs him.
- He's not saying it's easy for them but something to consider is that he stayed for a reason.
- And he's going to stay even if this is shot down. He's going to stay, he's going to build a church, and keep reaching people.

Yi Su of 6 Woodrow Drive returned to speak and said that this project impacts her family and herself most of all. She said she didn't hear anything from the Applicant that addressed her concerns. Ms. Su detailed the tight turns the increased traffic will need to make and the poor visibility.

She discussed how the water will directly come to and impact her home, and how the Wetland Committee snuck on this approval by cancelling the meeting at the last minute without notice and rescheduling.

Jason Erban said he would like to know if the traffic study that they did on Sundays was done in Summer months when there's an increase in traffic. Mr. Solomon responded that the traffic counts were taken in October, and pointed out this road has a service level of A and that there is not a traffic volume situation here; if traffic volumes were to double on Woodrow and double on North Bridebrook, they will still have acceptable levels of service.

Mr. Wolf how the increase in traffic from the new development on Bride Brook is taken into account if the study was done in 2019. Mr. Solomon explained that the base counts were taken in May of 2019, and then they grow a certain percentage each year to get to the development year of the church, and then they add the traffic that is estimated for the developments that aren't built yet, and add that traffic on top of it.

Mr. Wolf discussed how the church will have both a nursery and classrooms which is more of a commercial enterprise in a residential neighborhood. Mr. Long responded that people don't pay them to take care of their children; they're family orientated and want families to come to their church. He explained that this space allows parishioners who have young children the ability to attend church, and allows nursing mothers to have a comfortable location.

Mr. Long further explained that the classrooms are a space for young children to be presented church material in a manner more understandable to them and are not classrooms like in a school setting.

Mr. Peck asked if the Applicant will consider putting some trees along that strip that parallels the driveway at 6 Woodrow so they may better preserve their privacy. Mr. Wren said depending on the width of the strip, he doesn't believe that the church would have a problem doing that in between the driveways.

Mr. Peck asked if the Applicant would consider a gate and Mr. Wren said if the Commission would like them to, they will.

Mr. Peck suggested asking Mr. Erban to put his remarks in writing so they may submit them to the Fire Marshal for comment.

Mr. Mulholland cautioned that any fire concerns are not the purview of this Commission.

Mr. Peck said when listening to the logistics of a parking lot and maneuvering fire trucks, and so forth, there were a couple of points that vary, and he would like to hear the opinion of the Fire Marshal. Mr. Donovan said he agrees with Mr. Peck.

Mr. Walker said he trusts our Fire Marshal at the same time he recognizes that this gentleman has 27 years of experience, and wouldn't be averse to doing so. He added that he thinks ultimately, we're going to get the right answer and the right outcome.

Mr. Wren said they can't get a building permit and build it without the Fire Marshal reviewing it, and any issues have to be worked out before they can begin.

Mr. Liska said this is not necessarily outside our purview, since they're discussing the safety of the community.

Mr. Wren said at the end of the day, the church has waited 8 years and wants it to be safe for the community and themselves as well, so waiting one more month to continue the hearing next is not a problem.

MOTION (1)

Mr. Donovan moved to continue the Public Hearing of Harvest Christian Fellowship of Niantic, Inc., for a Special Permit for a church/religious institution on the subject property.

Mr. Liska seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Regular Meeting

- 1. Application of Harvest Christian Fellowship of Niantic, Inc., for a Special Permit for a church/religious institution on the subject property. Said parcel is located at N Bride Brook Rd, East Lyme Assessor's Map 24.0, Lot 76.**

This item has been continued until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

- 2. Approval of Minutes of August 5th, 2021.**

MOTION (2)

Ms. Thurlow moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of August 5th, 2021 as presented.

Mr. Donovan seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-1.

Mr. Walker abstained from the vote due to his absence from the August 5th, 2021 meeting. Mr. Liska noted he was not seated at that meeting but was in attendance.

Old Business-

There was none.

1. Any business on the floor, if any by the majority vote of the Commission.

Mr. Walker said he's seen hundreds of Dollar Generals with all the traveling he does, and that the Dollar General we have in Flanders that has been under some scrutiny and criticism from people in this Town, is probably one of the nicest Dollar General's he's seen in the tri state area.

Mr. Wren noted that his firm did that particular Dollar General and that they were guided by Mr. Mulholland.

2. Zoning Official

Mr. Mulholland had nothing to report.

3. Comments from Ex-Officio

Mr. Walker said Ms. Hardy left the meeting around 9:45 p.m.

4. Comments from Zoning Board Liaison to Planning Commission

- a. Donovan -August 10th, 2021,
- c. Kalajainen - September 14th, 2021

Mr. Donovan said they basically just discussed their zoning referrals.

5. Comments from Chairman

Mr. Walker had nothing to report.

Adjournment

MOTION (3)

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn the Zoning Commission Meeting at 10:50 p.m.

Ms. Thurlow seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Stevens,
Recording Secretary

September 2, 2021

Good evening,

My name is Timothy Wilbur. My wife Arlene Wilbur is also in attendance this evening. We live at 4 Woodrow Drive and have resided at this address for the past 30 years being fortunate enough to have raised our 3 children in this town and at this location. In this 30 years we have seen changes to this street, some positive.....some not.

We wish to take this opportunity to address this Commission in support of Pastor Randy Hyde, the leadership and congregation of Harvest Christian Fellowship in their journey through the process of seeking approval and construction of a permanent home for their Church.

Since the construction of our home 30 years ago the parcel in question has always been vacant land but when it has been utilized it has been exclusively farm related and crop growing, even to the extent of the digging of a man-made pond on the property for crop irrigation. The full parcel was at one point divided and sold for the development of the Nathan Hale neighborhood. With the exception of the sale of one additional lot in 2002 for the construction at 6 Woodrow Drive it has remained vacant for our entire time at this residence.

We believe the approval and construction of the Church by Harvest Christian Fellowship on this parcel of land would have a positive effect on our street and surrounding neighborhood.

It is unrealistic to believe that this parcel will remain undeveloped as East Lyme is undergoing its share of development, evidenced by the recent clearing of land for the proposed subdivision on North Bridebrook Rd. and multiple single construction lots throughout the town. (The normal course of development) No parcel is safe from development but we can certainly wish for the best possible scenario. Harvest Christian Fellowship has been the owner of this property since its purchase from Webster and Lisa Scott in 2013. with the intentions of someday building their permanent home. [While I profess to not be an expert, I have attempted to be as informed as possible and I have perused the zoning regulations....I could not find that Churches, or any types of houses of worship, are not specifically denied in any of the residential, rural, commercial or light industrial areas (in fact I had a difficult time finding where it is even specifically addressed)]

The purchase of this property by Harvest Christian Fellowship, we feel, was the best of many different scenarios. As I understand, this Church would require an entrance/exit driveway at the end of the cul-de-sac on Woodrow Drive which would be desirable as opposed to other options in which the property may be utilized for a housing subdivision, alpha apartments and/or affordable housing which would change the zoning approval dynamic significantly requiring less stringent zoning approval to have the entire street extended.

[This would increase the traffic on our 6 home street 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with no predictable slow times. Harvest Christian Fellowships' impact would be minimal as far as traffic, vehicular and pedestrian, is concerned compared to the other less desirable options. I believe that a check of the church's monthly schedule will bear that out.]- already addressed by Church

Harvest Christian Fellowship is not a new entity to our community... they have been a valued part of our town for over 25 years conducting their calling and providing their comfort....offering their services/programs from basically a commercial unit in an industrial park since 2004. It's time they deserve a permanent home in our community and I believe they have found a perfect spot. I certainly do not stand here to debate your regulations or to presume to know all the zoning rules and regulations which may or may not apply. Rather to just show our support for this application.

Pastor Hyde is making the effort to take the concerns of our neighborhood into consideration and is, and has been, available to listen to issues, answer questions to the best of his ability, defer to the engineers questions he can not answer and even has taken the opportunity to learn the history of the property.

The impact would be minimal, and in cases, beneficial with their consideration of the needs and desires of the surrounding property and homeowners and I am sure that any issues regarding zoning compliance, should they arise, would be quickly addressed. They have made a significant time and financial investment in this property to make it not only acceptable to the surrounding neighborhood but retaining functionality for themselves.

I believe they will be an excellent, and valuable, neighbor and welcome them wholeheartedly believing this will only make our neighborhood better. We would encourage the Commission to look favorably on this application and approve Harvest Christian Fellowship, at this juncture, to join our neighborhood.

Let's remember, this area was once farmland and there was no Woodrow Drive at all. None of the 6 homes would be here without the approval to build them....this is all Harvest Christian Fellowship is asking....the opportunity to build a home for their Congregation.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Timothy Wilbur

Arlene Wilbur

4 Woodrow Drive,

East Lyme, CT 06333