

**EAST LYME ZONING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING I  
Thursday, FEBRUARY 15th, 2007  
MINUTES**

The East Lyme Zoning Commission held a Public Hearing on the Application of Gabriele's Karate Inc., for a Special Permit (indoor recreation) to operate a Karate School at property identified in the Application as 324 Flanders Road, Niantic, CT on February 15, 2007 at Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT. Chairman Nickerson opened the Public Hearing and called it to order at 7:37 PM.

**PRESENT:** Mark Nickerson, Chairman, Pamela Byrnes, Marc Salerno,  
Norm Peck, William Dwyer, Alternate, Joe Barry, Alternate

**ALSO PRESENT:** William Mulholland, Zoning Official  
Rose Ann Hardy, Ex-Officio, Board of Selectmen

**ABSENT:** Rosanna Carabelas, Secretary, Ed Gada, Bob Bulmer, Alternate

**PANEL:** Mark Nickerson, Chairman, Pamela Byrnes, Marc Salerno,  
William Dwyer, Alternate, Joe Barry, Alternate

FILED IN EAST LYME TOWN  
CLERK'S OFFICE  
Feb 20 20 07 at 11:40 AM PM  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

**Pledge of Allegiance**  
The Pledge was observed.

**Public Hearing I**

- 1. Application of Gabriele's Karate Inc., for a Special Permit (indoor recreation) to operate a Karate School at property identified in the Application as 324 Flanders Rd., Niantic, CT**

Chairman Nickerson noted that he had seated Alternates William Dwyer and Joe Barry, at the table for this Public Hearing.

Mr. Peck recused himself from this Public Hearing and seated himself in the audience.

Mr. Nickerson asked that Ms. Byrnes read the correspondence into the record.  
Ms. Byrnes read the following correspondence into the record:

- ◆ Letter dated 2/15/07 to EL Zoning Commission from William Mulholland, Zoning Official, – Re: Application of Jason Gabriele of Gabriele's Karate for a special permit to operate a Karate School - finding that the application is compliant however the parking criteria falls under 'uses not specified' allowing the Zoning Commission to set the parking requirement for this use prior to any decision.

Mr. Nickerson noted that the legal ad had run in the New London Day.

Mr. Nickerson called for the applicant to present his case.

Jason Gabriele, 774 Long Hill Road, Groton, CT said that he is the owner of Gabriele's Karate Inc. He passed out a floor plan of the former Brooks space that would now be occupied by The Shack, Verizon and the Karate School (2800 sq. ft.) dated 1/16/07. This was entered into the record as Exhibit A. He said that he currently operates two other Karate studios – one in Groton and one in Waterford. This one will take in about 200 members total. It will have five classes – typically 45 minutes each and he will start with one instructor. Most classes run starting at 4 PM, although he does run one class from 10 AM to 11AM. While they otherwise do not have classes during the daytime, they are open for other business. Typical class hours are from 4 PM to 8:30 PM Monday thru Friday and 9 AM – 12 Noon on Saturdays. The class average is 10 to

12 students and the studio operates with two employees. With respect to the parking spaces he said that in Groton they had based the calculation per 250 sq. ft. as that is a retail area, and came up with 20 parking spots. In Waterford they did not as he owns the real estate and building there and they used 220 sq. ft. as the figure. He said that he did 32 parking spots there as he owns the building and chose to maximize parking there.

Ms. Bymes asked if he has found that he is closer in usage to the 20 spots or the 32 spots.

Mr. Gabriele said that they tend more towards the 20 spots as both Groton and Waterford have back to back training classes with 10-12 students per class and here they will not have a facility that will allow for two classes at the same time. He added that most parents drop off their kids and do errands and then come back and pick them up.

Ms. Bymes asked about exhibitions.

Mr. Gabriele said that testings run Friday nights at 7:15 PM and that tournaments are held in Waterford as that is their largest facility.

Mr. Dwyer asked what it is that they have to decide about the parking spaces.

Mr. Nickerson and Ms. Bymes explained that there are only 16 parking spaces left for that entire shopping center and that they have to determine how many will be allotted to the Karate School and if they have enough to allot to them.

Ms. Bymes asked how young the youngest kids are that attend the classes.

Mr. Gabriele said that they start at 4 years old.

Mr. Barry asked Mr. Gabriele about talking with the karate guy who runs a studio in the center across the street from the Brooks Plaza. He said that he is concerned about having two karate studios across the street from each other and that they are also looking at two pharmacies across the street from each other and having the same type of things near each other.

Mr. Nickerson said that is nothing that they control.

Mr. Gabriele said that the most successful Burger Kings' and McDonald's are across the street from each other.

Mr. Nickerson asked about the back entrance and suggested that if possible that the instructors utilize it and park in the rear.

Mr. Gabriele said that he could have them do that as it would be open for them to enter.

Mr. Salerno asked for a breakdown of adult and children's classes.

Mr. Gabriele said that there are three (3) children's classes (up to age 17) and two (2) adult classes. He said that the strongest adult class is the kickboxing program.

Mr. Barry asked about a dressing area and if they would have one and if it would block the back emergency exit.

Mr. Gabriele said that there would not be a dressing area and that they do not encourage the students to change there. They encourage them to come dressed to go to class as they have found that changing areas create problems with children arguing or being picked on. There also are no showers in the bathrooms.

Mr. Barry said that he thought that they should have changing areas so that the students do not have to wear sandals and light clothing to the classes during the colder seasons.

Mr. Nickerson asked about signage.

Mr. Mulholland said that they will have to submit to his office their signage and that the space would have to be divided up. He added that they had discussed some of this earlier so they were aware of the type that would be allowed since signage can be an issue for certain businesses.

Mr. Nickerson called for anyone from the public who wished to speak in favor of this application -

Hearing no one -

Mr. Nickerson called for anyone from the public who wished to speak against or neutrally on this application -

Hearing no one -

Mr. Nickerson asked if the Commission members had other comments –  
Hearing none –  
Mr. Nickerson called for a motion to close this Public Hearing.

**\*\*MOTION (1)**

**Ms. Byrnes moved that this Public Hearing be closed.**

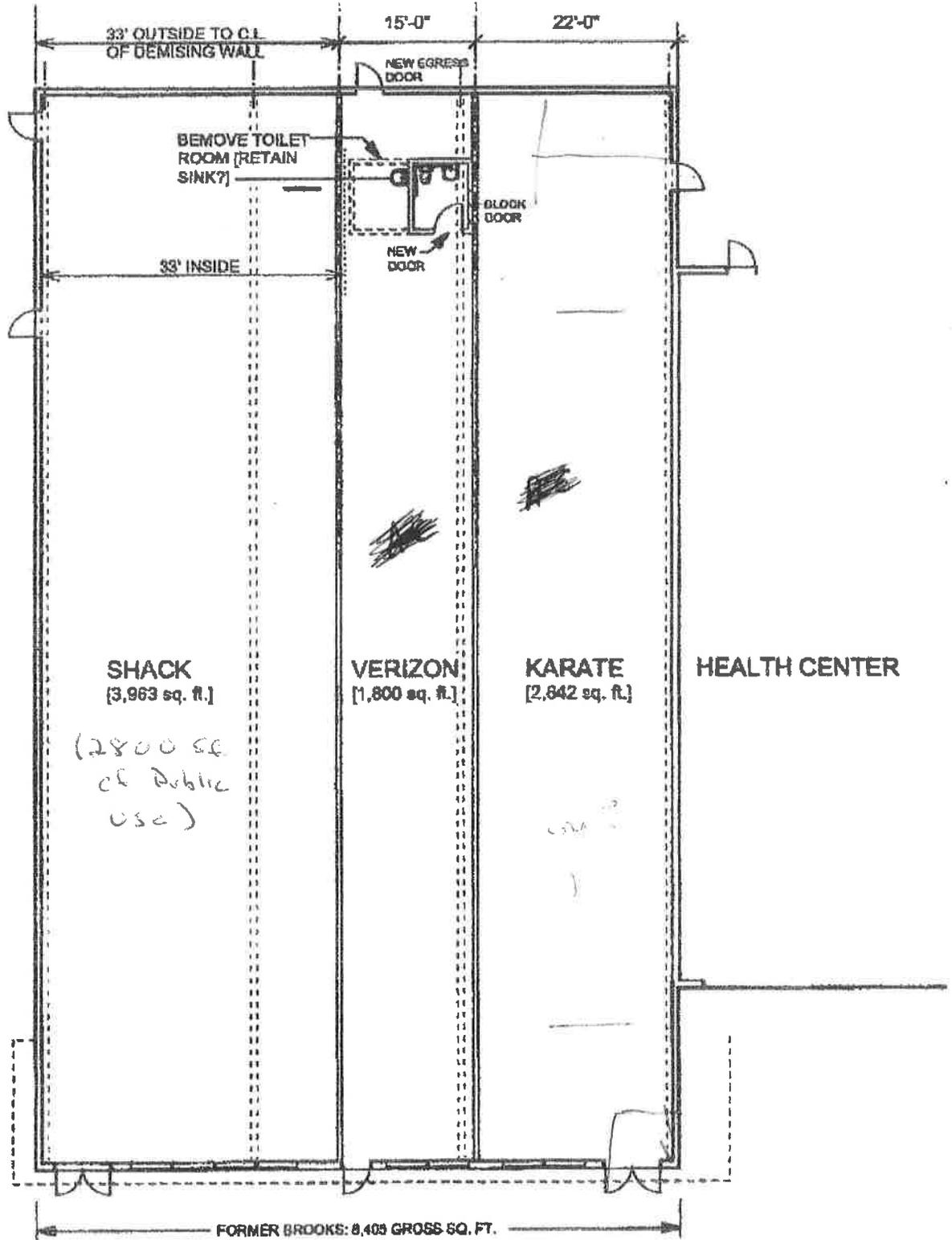
**Mr. Salerno seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Mr. Nickerson closed this Public Hearing at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary



**FORMER BROOKS SPACE  
330 +/- FLANDERS ROAD  
EAST LYME, CT**

**JAN. 16, 2007**

*Exhibit A - Zoning P.H. 1. 2/15/07  
Gabriele's Karate*