

Apr 7 20 08 at 3:55 AM (PM)

**EAST LYME ZONING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING I  
Thursday, APRIL 4th, 2008  
MINUTES**

*Esther B. Williams*

EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

The East Lyme Zoning Commission held a Public Hearing on the Application of Sonny Chok for a Special Permit for Outdoor Dining at 344-348 Main Street, Niantic, CT on Thursday, April 4, 2008 at the East Lyme Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT. Acting Chairman Carabelas opened the Public Hearing and called it to order at 7:32 PM.

**PRESENT:** Rosanna Carabelas, Acting Chairman, Marc Salerno, Acting Secretary, Norm Peck, Steve Carpenteri, Ed Gada, William Dwyer, Alternate

**ALSO PRESENT:** Sonny Chok, Applicant  
Paul Formica, Ex-Officio, covering for Rose Ann Hardy

**ABSENT:** Mark Nickerson, Chairman, Bob Bulmer, Alternate

**PANEL:** Rosanna Carabelas, Acting Chairman, Marc Salerno, Acting Secretary, Norm Peck, Steve Carpenteri, Ed Gada, William Dwyer, Alternate

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge was observed.

**Public Hearing I**

**1. Application of Sonny Chok for a Special Permit for Outdoor Dining at 344-348 Main Street, Niantic, CT.**

Acting Chairman Carabelas said that she had seated Alternate William Dwyer at the table. She said that the Legal Ad for this application had run in The Day on 3/21/08 and 3/31/08. She then called upon the applicant for their presentation.

Sonny Chok, applicant said that he is opening a coffee shop at 344-348 Main St. in the area that was previously the Eclectic Chef, which had outside dining. He is proposing to have a patio similar to that of the Charter Oak Bank across the street from his site. This would make the area look more presentable with the stone patio and small tables and chairs. He said that the stones would be a little lighter in color than those of the bank. He showed them some pictures from some patio block brochures.

Ms. Carabelas asked if he had talked with Mr. Mulholland about if he could do the patio on both sides or just on the side of 344 where he is opening his shop.

Mr. Chok said that he has spoken with Mr. Mulholland and that it would not really work to do only the one side due to the nature of the building. A patio will be put in front of the salon to balance it out however it will not have any tables, only a few benches and some planter pots. 600 sq. ft. is the maximum allowed and the whole frontage of the both businesses is only 900 sq. ft. so he falls within his area for his side. He said that he had also shown his plan to the First Selectman. He said that he would be using vineyard blend and quarry blend pavers.

Mr. Salerno, in looking over items listed in Section 20.27 asked if there would be outdoor lighting.

Mr. Chok said that he would probably do some as it would make more sense however it is not a part of this application and he would have to see Mr. Mulholland about it beforehand anyway.

Mr. Salerno asked if there would be any entertainment or a sound system with outdoor music.  
Mr. Chok said that there would not be any entertainment type of music but he might have a speaker that would have low level background music. He said that he is only planning on being open from 7AM to 2 or 3PM during the week and perhaps a bit later on the weekends. The music would be low level if any and the hours are short.

Mr. Salerno asked if he would have umbrellas at the tables outside.  
Mr. Chok said yes, he plans on having umbrellas and that they would not have any advertising, they would be plain. He said that this is the only Town that does not have a nice coffee/cappuccino shop that you can stop at and sit outside. He added that he also runs the Singapore Grill which has been good for the Town and that he could have left this as it is but he wanted to make it nice for the Town.

Ms. Carabelas asked if he would be serving anything other than coffee.  
Mr. Chok said that he may have soup, salad and panini but the area inside is small and he only plans on being open short hours.

Mr. Salerno asked if there would be some bushes in front as depicted in his drawing.  
Mr. Chok said that he would have some low level flowers or something to act as a buffer for the road so that if the Town wants the area in the future, they will not have to move them.

Ms. Carabelas asked how many tables would be there.  
Mr. Chok said that he may have six small coffee tables with two chairs each. He added that he would be widening the walkway to better balance the building.

Ms. Carabelas called for anyone from the public who wished to speak in favor of this application –  
Paul Lapedes, 39 Romagna Road said that he is in agreement with this application and this project and finds it to be in good taste. It augments Main Street and maintains the quaintness of the Town.

Candy Shapiro, 8 Irving Place said that on behalf of Niantic Main St. that she is happy to see another restaurant come to downtown with an outside area for dining.

Ms. Carabelas called for anyone from the public who wished to speak against or neutrally regarding this application –  
Hearing no one –

Ms. Carabelas called for a motion to close this Public Hearing.

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

**Mr. Salerno moved that this Public Hearing be closed.**

**Mr. Dwyer seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Ms. Carabelas closed this Public Hearing at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary