

Minutes of the East Lyme Zoning Commission January 22, 2026, Regular Meeting

Date and Time: 1/22/2026 7:31PM to 9:59PM

Present: Members: Chairman, Anne Thurlow, Secretary, Nancy Kalal, Norman Peck, Debbie Jett-Harris, Denise Markovitz, Cathy Yuhas. Alternates: Jim Liska, Sarah Susco and Kerry Edwards. Ex-Officio: Roseanne Hardy. Recording Secretary: Janet Sutherland

Absent: Staff: William Mulholland.

Location: East Lyme Town Hall Upper Conf Room 108 Pennsylvania Avenue

1. Call to Order and Pledge

Chairman Thurlow called the January 22, 2026, Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Zoning Commission to order at 7:31PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Attendance

Ms. Thurlow called the roll and noted William Mulholland was absent.

3. Public Hearing

a. **Application of Jerry Lokken, for East Lyme Parks & Recreation, for a Special Permit under Section 20.1.2(F) of the East Lyme Zoning Regulations, to construct an ADA accessible trail, and improve the existing parking area for Darrow Pond, at property located at 16 Mostoway Road, East Lyme, Assessor Map #40.0, Lot #5. (Continued to 2/5/2026)**

Thurlow noted the application was waiting for Inland Wetlands Agency approval.

MOTION

- Ms. Jett-Harris moved to continue the Public Hearing to February 5, 2026.
- Ms. Kalal seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously; 6-0-0.

b. **Application of Parkers Place, LLC, pursuant to General Statutes 8-30g for a zone change, site plan, and Coastal Area Management Review for a multi-family affordable residential housing development on property located on the Westerly side of Park Place, East Lyme, Connecticut, more specifically designated as Assessor's Map #11.1, Lot #11.**

Thurlow opened the Public Hearing, then asked whether the Legal notices were run, Sutherland replied yes.

Peck recused himself, and Thurlow seated Susco.

Markovitz read the Memo from Zoning Official William Mulholland [Attachment A]

Jett-Harris read the Memo from Town Engineer Alex Klose [Attachment B]

Thurlow read the review from the Fire Marshal [Attachment C]

Markovitz read the Memo from the Water & Sewer Commission [Attachment D]

Thurlow read the Planning Commission referral response [Attachment E]

Markovitz read SECOG's referral response [Attachment F]

Attorney Harry Heller presented for the applicant. Heller provided background information on the 8-30g application, a Zone Change from RU-40 to an Affordable Housing District, and a Coastal Site Plan Review.

Heller continued that as an 8-30g application, they are required to have 15% of units at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI), and another 15% of units at 80% of the AMI. This development would have 18 affordable units.

Heller reminded the Commission that traditional zoning requirements for bulk and density are not applicable under 8-30g applications, and the burden of proof for a denial is on the Commission. Heller referenced the East Lyme Plan of Conservation and Development and Affordable Housing Plan on local needs for a solution to the housing crisis. Heller noted affordable units pose no threat to single-family home values, using references.

Heller referenced the traffic study, which had been revised to include neighboring Village Crossing as though it were completed. Heller referenced the Wetlands Report stating there are none on the property, and the project does not fall within the Upland Review Area. Heller discussed DEEPs response to the Coastal Site Plan Review stating there would be no impact to coastal resources.

Heller discussed the Parkers Place Affordable Housing Plan, which would be in effect for forty years. Other similar developments in East Lyme and their density rates were reviewed, Heller stated this density would be consistent with others in town.

Heller noted the Planning Commission found this application consistent with the POCD, and Engineering approved the stormwater report. Heller referenced the landscaping, with giant arborvitaes for screening and various native plantings.

Heller then introduced Brandon Handfield of Yantic River Consultants, LLC to discuss the stormwater system. Handfield noted this system was doubling the requirements of the 2024 Stormwater Management report. Kalal asked the depth of the catch basin, Handfield replied about four feet. Kalal questioned the materials used, Handfield replied this would have filter bed material, about 12 to 18 inches of depth.

Thurlow opened up the meeting to questions.

Jett-Harris asked whether the arborvitaes are native, Handfield replied they are a western variety resistant to deer, and detailed other native plants on the plans.

Thurlow questioned the emergency access from Village Crossing, Handfield replied emergency access would come from Park Place.

Thurlow opened the floor to people in favor.

Zachary Zaneski, 38 Lovers Ln – supports this application, and noted with unaffordable housing prices he sees this project as an opportunity to help others who cannot afford housing. He further noted support of the builder and his other projects in town.

Joshua Caskey, 1 Grooms Ln – voiced support of affordable housing in the community, especially downtown with walkable access to shopping and beaches. Caskey added these developments are for locals, teachers, etc., who have to make sacrifices to afford rent, locals who should be able to stay within the community.

Thurlow opened the floor to those against.

John Bahouth, 3 Village Crossing – voiced concern regarding the traffic study being completed during quieter times. Other projects mentioned by Heller were located on wider roads with traffic lights. Questioned lack of archaeological study or cultural resources assessment.

Thomas Brubaker, 35 W Main St – noted concern that Park Ln had only twenty houses before the first development [Village Crossing], and this would add another sixty units. Brubaker detailed the problematic traffic patterns and unsafe intersection. In favor of affordable housing but needs access to amenities.

Catherine Marrion, 50 W Main St – works for the Town Attorney's Office but is speaking independently. Marrion voiced concerns of intersection and location as detailed in a letter to the commission [Attachment G]

Mike Raksnis, 11 Village Crossing – referenced earlier comments, noted the Flanders highway construction redirecting vehicles causing traffic. Raksnis added it was difficult and unsafe to walk downtown. Questioned whether Water & Sewer approval for one- and two-bedroom mixed units would work for revised two-bedroom plans.

Barbara Weinschenk, 26 Huntley Ct – noted environmental concern as area is completely wooded, and potential Native history. Weinschenk stated difficulty biking and walking to downtown due to blind spots, and noted many accidents near Huntley Ct.

Dawn Griswold, 5 Dodge Ct – stated this housing was still not affordable to many, and concerns this town is becoming a small city. Griswold voiced concern for traffic, non-native arborvitaes, and suggested the Inland Wetlands Agency be involved due to marsh.

Thurlow read correspondence from the public into record.

Arthur Beebe, 46 W Main St was present in the audience and discussed their submission. [Attachment H]. An email from Brittany Auger was read by Thurlow [Attachment I]. A final submission from Michele and Rayment Bissell, 16 Village Crossing was read by Thurlow [Attachment J].

Noting the late hour, the Public Hearing was continued.

MOTION

- Ms. Markovitz moved to continue the Public Hearing to February 5, 2026.
- Ms. Jett-Harris seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously, 6-0-0.

4. Regular Meeting

a. Application of Jerry Lokken, for East Lyme Parks & Recreation, for a Special Permit under Section 20.1.2(F) of the East Lyme Zoning Regulations, to construct an ADA accessible trail, and improve the existing parking area for Darrow Pond, at property located at 16 Mostow Road, East Lyme, Assessor Map #40.0, Lot #5. *(Continued to 2/5/2026)*
Application was continued to next meeting.

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more specifically designated as Assessor's Map #11.1, Lot #11.

Application was continued to next meeting.

5. Disposition of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of January 8, 2026, Regular Meeting

MOTION 6

-Ms. Jett-Harris moved to approve the Minutes of the January 8, 2026, Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Zoning Commission, as presented.

-Ms. Markovitz seconded the motion.

-Motion passed 6-0-0.

6. Old Business - None

7. Subcommittee Reports

Jett-Harris noted the subcommittee met but had nothing to report.

Susco stepped down and Peck was reseated.

8. New Business

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

b. Correspondence

9. Public Delegations

A resident discussed issues with the proposed cell tower, Thurlow recommended discussing this with the CT Siting Council as they had jurisdiction.

Joshua Caskey, 1 Grooms Ln – had no intention of disparaging others, but questioned the commissions Public Hearing procedures. Caskey spoke in favor and was cut after three minutes, while others speaking against were given more time, up to seven minutes, and found this to be unfair. Thurlow noted the Public Hearing had been continued.

10. Zoning Official - None

11. Comments from Ex-Officio - None

12. Zoning Board Liaison to the Planning Commission

Edwards attended the January 13, 2026 Planning Commission meeting where there was a lengthy discussion on the Cedarbrook / Catbird Lane Resubdivision. The Parkers Place application and new Poultry Regulations were also discussed and approved.

13. Comments from the Chairman

Thurlow reiterated earlier comments regarding the CT Siting Council Public Hearing for the cell tower application at 306 Flanders Road.

14. Adjournment

MOTION

- Ms. Jett-Harris moved to adjourn the January 22, 2026, Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Zoning Commission at 9:59PM.
- Ms. Markovitz seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously, 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Sutherland,
Recording Secretary