

Zoning Commission March 5th, 2026
Meeting Minutes

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George J. Kelly, Jr.
TOWN CLERK

Minutes of East Lyme Zoning Commission - 03/05/26

Date and time: 03/05/26 7:30 PM to: 03/05/26 8:14 PM

Present: Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary , Members Present:, Debbie Jett-Harris, Anne Thurlow, Denise Markovitz, Norman Peck, Nancy Kalal, Cathy Yuhas, Alternates: Kerry Edwards, Sarah Susco

CC: Absent:, William Mulholland, Zoning Official, Jim Liska, Alternate, Also Present: , Rose Ann Hardy, Ex-Officio, Jerry Lokken, Parks & Recreation Director, Gary Goeschel, Town Planner

Location: East Lyme Town Hall Upper Conference Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT, 06357

Topics

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Note Chairman Thurlow called the February 19th, 2026, Zoning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., and led the Pledge. Ms. Thurlow did rollcall; a quorum was present.

2. Public Hearing

2-1. 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 from 2/4/2025)

Note Ms. Thurlow explained the Hearing has been continued multiple times since December 4th, 2025. It must be continued to March 19th, since the posted signage already reflects that date.

Decision MOTION (1)

Ms. Jett-Harris moved to continue the Public Hearing 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, to March 19th, 2026.

Ms. Markovitz seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

2-2. Application of Jilian Lepore-Oyler for a Special Permit under Section 5.2.4, roadside stand, of East Lyme Zoning Regulations for property located 73 Scott Rd, East Lyme, Assessor's Map #34.0 #16.

Note Ms. Thurlow noted that the application of Jilian Lepore-Oyler for a special permit for a roadside stand will also need to be continued to the same date, due to a procedural oversight regarding posting signs.

Note Ms. Jett-Harris asked who is responsible for ensuring special-permit signage is posted and expressed concern that two recent applicants were unaware of the requirement.

Note Ms. Thurlow stated that the previous Administrative Assistant used to send reminders, but with staff changes, the process may need realignment.

Note The Recording Secretary noted that the signage requirement is printed on the back of the special-permit application form and Ms. Jett-Harris confirmed that this addresses her concern.

Decision MOTION (2)

Ms. Jett-Harris moved to continue the Application of Jilian Lepore-Oyler for a Special Permit under Section 5.2.4, roadside stand, of East Lyme Zoning Regulations for property located 73 Scott Rd, East Lyme, Assessor's Map #34.0 #16.

Ms. Yuhas seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

2-3. East Lyme Zoning Commission proposal to amend the Zoning Regulations to permit the keeping of poultry (6 or less) in R-10 and R-12 zoning districts.

Note Ms. Thurlow opened a Public Hearing on a proposed zoning text amendment to permit keeping six or fewer poultry as a permitted use (no special permit required) in R10 and R12 residential zoning districts. Previously, poultry keeping was not allowed in these zones.

Note Ms. Thurlow confirmed the legal notice for the Public Hearing was run.

Note Ms. Markovitz read Mr. Mulholland's memorandum dated December 2nd, 2025, into the record.

 [307248-Text-Amendment-Poultry-Regulations-in-R-10-and-R-12-Districts.pdf](#)

Note Ms. Jett-Harris read the correspondence from SECOG (the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments), dated January 5th, 2026, into the record.

 [SECOG-response-East-Lyme-Regulation-Amendment-202615.pdf](#)

Note SECOG reviewed the amendment and confirmed it is unlikely to negatively affect neighboring municipalities.

Note Ms. Markovitz read the correspondence from the East Lyme Planning Commission, dated January 20th, 2026, into the record.

 [Planning_Commission_Letter.pdf](#)

Note The East Lyme Planning Commission unanimously found the amendment consistent with the town's 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development.

Note Ms. Jett-Harris read the referral response letter from DEEP dated February 5th, 2026, into the record.

 [DEEP-Response-Letter_zoning-text-amendment_Agriculture-Poultry_-February-2026.pdf](#)

Note DEEP reviewed the amendment and found it consistent with the Connecticut Coastal Management Act.

Note Ms. Thurlow called for Public Comments on this item. No Public Comments were made for or against the amendment.

Note Ms. Thurlow asked for Commission comments:

*Mr. Peck asked why the regulation specifies that in R-10 and R-12 zones, the minimum lot size for keeping poultry must be 50% of the required lot size of that district.

*Ms. Jett-Harris explained the minimum lot size applies only to R10 and R12 zones, not others; R-10 and R-12 zones have higher residential density, so establishing a proportional minimum lot size ensures they're kept on adequate parcels.

*Mr. Peck called attention to the language inconsistency between "chicken" and "poultry."

*It was suggested to standardize the text to "poultry" to cover all relevant birds such as chickens, quail, ducks, and turkeys.

Decision MOTION (3)

Ms. Jett-Harris moved to close the Public Hearing.

Ms. Markovitz seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Ms. Jett-Harris expressed appreciation for Ms. Kalal's significant work on this amendment, noting strong community support

3. Regular Meeting

3-1. 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 I6 Mostowj Road, East Lyme, Assessor Map #40.0, Lot #5. (Continued from 2/4/2025)

Note This item has been continued until the next meeting.

3-2. Application of Jilian Lepore-Oyler for a Special Permit under Section 5.2.4, roadside stand, of East Lyme Zoning Regulations for property located 73 Scott Rd, East Lyme, Assessor's Map #34.0 #16.

Note This item has been continued until the next meeting.

3-3. East Lyme Zoning Commission proposal to amend the Zoning Regulations to permit the keeping of poultry (6 or less) in R-10 and R-12 zoning districts.

Note Ms. Markovitz suggested to change all instances of "chicken" to "poultry" for consistency and the other Commission Members concurred.

Decision MOTION (4)

Ms. Markovitz moved to approve the zoning text amendment allowing up to six poultry in R-10 and R-12, with the terminology standardized to "poultry" throughout the document.

Ms. Jett-Harris seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3-4. Application of Jerry Lokken, for East Lyme Parks & Recreation for a Coastal Area Management (CAM) Review for seawall replacement for property located McCook's Beach, 8 Atlantic Street, Niantic, Assessor Map #11.4, Lot #175.

Note see attachment.

 [McCook-Point-Beach-Site-Plan.pdf](#)

Note see attachment.

 [McCook-Point-Beach-Municipal-Coastal-Site-Plan-Review-Complete-Application.pdf](#)

Note The Commission reviewed the CAM application submitted by Jerry Lokken for replacement of a damaged seawall at McCook's Point Beach, located at 8-10 Atlantic Street. The seawall had been severely damaged by storms, requiring temporary repairs. The permanent solution involves removing about 120 feet of the old concrete seawall and replacing it with approximately 105 feet of steel sheet piling capped with poured concrete, along with replacement of an existing beach stairway.

Note Ms. Markovitz read Mr. Mulholland's memorandum dated March 4th, 2026, into the record.

 [Adobe_Scan_Mar_12_2026_\(1\).pdf](#)

Note Mr. Mulholland's letter explained that because the wall is above the Coastal Jurisdiction Line, the Commission must ensure it meets state environmental goals, if the project minimizes damage to coastal resources, and if the town took enough steps to mitigate environmental impact.

Note Ms. Jett-Harris read the memorandum from Alex Klose, P.E., the Deputy Public Works Director, dated March 4th, 2026, into the record.

 [Town_Engineer_letter.pdf](#)

Note Mr. Klose's letter warned that the current emergency repairs are at risk of undermining and collapse because the concrete blocks are sitting on soft sand rather than a solid foundation. The proposed plan is the most cost-effective and durable way to protect the beach while keeping a consistent look with the rest of the wall.

Note Ms. Kalal read the Planning Commission referral letter dated January 20th, 2026, into the record.

 [Planning_referral_letter.pdf](#)

Note The Planning Commission correspondence confirmed that they unanimously backed the project on January 13th, 2026, and that the seawall repair matches the town's POCD.

Note Mr. Lokken discussed the CAM application with the Commission and some of the following was highlighted:

- *McCook Point Park is a major town asset, providing public access to the beach.
- *Although work will occur above the Coastal Jurisdiction Line and falls under local zoning authority, the town notified CT DEEP as a courtesy.
- *This plan was developed with input from Town Engineering, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, as well as Professional coastal engineers
- *The chosen solution best protects the parking lot and preserves the beach,
- *The proposed steel sheet-pile design is comparable to the construction of the boardwalk, which is built on sheet piles driven deep below sand.
- *The estimated cost is approximately \$800,000, with funding subject to the town's budget process and capital improvement plan.
- *Construction is likely to begin in fall 2027.
- *Temporary repairs are holding well but could fail if undermined by storm action.
- *The permanent fix is designed to last many years and prevent future undermining.
- *This is the first major failure of the seawall area since late 2023 after several storms.
- *The project will preserve the beach in front of the wall and maintain public access.

Note Ms. Thurlow said she views this as essentially a "housekeeping" item, it's a necessity to protect town infrastructure and she sees no reason to deny the application.

Note Ms. Jett-Harris asked when the work will be done and it was confirmed that no construction will happen during the summer season.

Decision MOTION (5)

Ms. Markovitz moved to approve the CAM application for reconstruction of the McCook's seawall as presented.

Ms. Jett-Harris seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3-5. Continuation of the Application of Parkers Place, LLC, pursuant to General Statutes 8-309 for a zone change, site plan, and Coastal Area Management Review for a multifamily 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. (Continued from 1/22/2026.)

Note The Commission agreed to continue this matter for two more weeks to allow thorough review of public input and materials.

Decision MOTION (6)

Ms. Markovitz moved to continue this item to the March 19th, 2026, Zoning Commission meeting.

Ms. Jett-Harris seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-1.

Mr. Peck abstained from the vote.

4. Disposition of Minutes

4-1. January 22nd, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

Note see attachment.

 [Zoning-Commission-January-22-2026-Minutes.pdf](#)

Note The Commission discussed how corrections were needed regarding the identification of the three-bedroom unit on a floor plan and inclusion of the Engineering comments.

Decision MOTION (7)

Ms. Jett-Harris moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of January 22nd, 2026, as amended.

Ms. Kalal seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

4-2. February 19th, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

Note see attachment.

 [Minutes of East Lyme Zoning Commission 02 19 26.pdf](#)

Note Ms. Yuhas noted that she has one correction, it is her and Ms. Jett-Harris who are on the Zoning Short-Term Rental Subcommittee.

Decision MOTION (8)

Ms. Kalal moved to approve the February 19th, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes as corrected.

Ms. Yuhas seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

5. Old Business

Note There was none.

6. Subcommittee Reports

6-1. Short-Term Rental Subcommittee

Note Ms. Jett-Harris and Ms. Yuhus reported significant progress, and they will likely be ready to present draft material at the next meeting.

7. New Business

7-1. Application of Michael and Mary Manning for a Coastal Area Management Site Plan Review to demolish and rebuild a single-family dwelling at 30 West Lane.

Note Ms. Thurlow will speak to Mr. Mulholland about scheduling this item.

7-2. Any business on the floor, if any, by the majority vote of the Commission.

Note There was none.

8. Public Delegations

Note Time set aside for the public to address the Commission on Land Use items not on the agenda.

8-1. Lisa McGowan of 33 Spinnaker

Note Ms. McGowan spoke regarding concerns about public comments and timing, referencing a newspaper article about public input restrictions.

Note Ms. Thurlow clarified that the meeting focuses on zoning and land use matters; timing for public comments varies per meeting.

Note Ms. McGowan asked that the New London Day article dated February 28th, 2026, be entered into the record.

Note see attachment.

 [Public Comment Article.pdf](#)

9. Zoning Official

Note Mr. Mulholland was not in attendance.

10. Comments from Ex-Officio

Note Ms. Hardy provided a detailed update on the town's budget process, highlighting the challenges of controlling costs amid inflation and the extensive deliberations involved. She confirmed the seawall repair project is included in the capital improvement plan but funding remains uncertain. The Selectmen emphasize balancing fiscal responsibility with infrastructure needs.

Discussion included the possibility of state funding, which was deemed unlikely after thorough examination.

11. Zoning Board Liaison to Planning Commission

Note Ms. Kalal is scheduled to attend the March 10th, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting and Mr. Liska is scheduled to attend the Planning Commission Meeting on April 14th, 2026.

12. Comments from Chairman

Note Ms. Thurlow issued an urgent alert regarding a sophisticated scam targeting individuals with active applications before the town.

An applicant received a fraudulent email that appeared to be from the Land Use Department. The message claimed her application was approved but demanded an immediate \$4,000 permit fee via credit card.

The scam was caught by Town Hall staff before any payment was made. Because the scam is brand new (appearing within the last 24–48 hours), it may not be widely known yet.

Ms. Thurlow emphasized two key facts to help residents identify fraud:

*The town will never request payment via email.

*The Department does not accept credit cards; payments must be made in person via cash or check.

Note Ms. Jett-Harris suggested that the First Selectman should publish a formal warning on the town website or official Facebook page to ensure maximum visibility. Ms. Thurlow said she also plans to share the details of the scam on her personal Facebook page to alert other local applicants.

13. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (9)

Ms. Markovitz moved to adjourn the March 5th, 2026, Zoning Commission Meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Ms. Jett-Harris seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary Pro Tem