

**COVENTRY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 10, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

By: Jobbagy

Time: 7:02 p.m.

Place: Virtual

ROLL CALL:

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Steven Hall, Secretary	X	
	Bill Jobbagy, Chairperson	X	
	Ed Marek	X	
	Christine Pattee, Vice Chairperson	X	
	Darby Pollansky		X
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Bob Burrington	X	
	Carol Polsky	X	
	Arianna Mouradijan		X
STAFF:	Eric Trott, Town Planner	X	

Polsky was seated for Pollansky.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

No one wished to speak.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Preliminary review of draft Zoning Regulations to allow anaerobic digesters as a special permit use

Staff provided anaerobic digester information to the Members giving them two options to consider. The Town Attorney researched information about anaerobic digesters; examples from Michigan were provided to the Members. Hytone Farm has had this concept for two to three years. Now they have narrowed their project enough that they are in a position to move forward with a proposal. This will be using the microbes doing the processing of manure from the farm and supplemental food waste. The by-product is electricity production. The electricity will be used by Hytone or sold back into the grid. The digester helps to reduce the odor of manure. The tasks of the PZC will be to create the criteria to analyze the impacts to the neighborhood and assign regulations for digesters. It could be decided to allow this as a permitted use with Staff approval or that such use requires the PZC to look at each application. The information provided shows a variety of conduits for regulating digesters.

Staff shared his thoughts on the better alternative to enable a reasonable view on digesters – permitted by special permit or permitted by right. The import of food waste from off site will create truck traffic. In Hytone’s proposal that would be 5 -10 trucks per day; in this case it is along Route 44. Trucks would be using the road anyway. PZC could create criteria for evaluating traffic impacts whether along main roads or back roads. A transportation study or traffic analysis could be requested. Other items to consider are – how the vehicles will load and unload, the type of materials stored on the site, the nature of the scale of the operation. These would be discretionary pieces for the regulations to manage what is going to occur within the town’s boundaries

In Hytone’s plan the farm would sell electricity to New Britain as that is where the food waste will come from. Staff will check with Hytone if they expect to hire employees as part of this project. DEEP’s perspective is that it is a good thing to be removing food waste from the waste stream. There are digesters in Thompson and Ellington both of which are not doing electricity export nor the import of food waste. Staff feels it that is the case in town permitting could be done by Staff review. This would make the permitting process more streamlined but more eyes would be on the proposal if applications require PZC approval.

Pattee said if applications are only for manure digesters that should be an as-of-right use. She likes the idea of Coventry being part of a pilot project with importing food waste. Staff said Hytone Farm is already managing their manure as required by the State. The PZC would be building the regulations based on Hytone Farm’s proposal but they have to be built so as to fit all size projects.

Hall asked if Hytone Farm will be required to meet some inspection from a regulatory body above the town level. Coventry is not suited to be responsible for monitoring gases to prevent explosions or affixation. Staff believes there are review criteria and inspections at the State level but he will check that some entity is looking at the scientific impacts, flammability, and emissions controls.

Jobbagy said the PZC should generally know what the State will do. Greg did go over the

permits he is working on for the State at the previous meeting. He feels this would be a special permit if it impacts the neighbors with consideration given to the groundwater, construction and use, odor, traffic, maintenance and cleaning, building size and location, and the gas (methane). If the State is not looking at what happens if the methane leaks Coventry needs to look at that. Staff will research who is handling methane and emissions from digesters. If the science is so new does the State have the standards in place and how that can be measured. There are air quality measures at the State level. Jobbagy said he is encouraged we are looking at this and likes that Coventry will be the first to use food waste in digesters.

2. Discussion on Zoning Regulations for home occupations and residential dog grooming operations

Staff said a resident wants to do dog grooming out of their home. This will involve people dropping off dogs throughout the day and pick up later in the day. The animals would be groomed inside this house and, by State requirement, an outside area is needed for the dogs to get some exercise. This brings up the question of how close a dog grooming home occupation this is to a commercial kennel operation. Kennels are only allowed in a rural development zone which means near Pelletier Builders or the Nadeau Industrial Park. A dog grooming home operation has the potential for being high impact with people coming and going to drop off pets throughout the day. Also barking can be a negative impact with dogs.

Pattee said she uses Pet Appearance on Daly Road to have her dog groomed. The owner went before the PZC to receive her approval. This owner is licensed by the Department of Agriculture. She uses an appointment system that allows for one dog at a time with some occasional pick up/drop off overlap. Pet Appearance does not keep dogs overnight. Staff did not recall having a dog grooming home occupation in town. He will research the application and file for Pet Appearance. The PZC should be consistent in reviewing and approval.

DECISIONS:

None

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

1. April 12, 2021

Motion: The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission approves the minutes of the April 12, 2021 meeting.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Polsky

With the following corrections:

- Page 2, third paragraph, third sentence – change “impervious” to “pervious”.

Voting:

For: Polsky, Pattee, Marek, Jobbagy, Hall

Against: None
Abstain: None

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Zoning referral – Town of Mansfield – special permit, zone change applications

Staff said this refers to two zoning matters that Mansfield sent as a courtesy. One involves a large scale residential project north of the four corners.

Hall discovered the Dr. Lance Stewart Forest. Staff said that parcel was added to our open space. The trails have not yet been blazed. This connects to the Nathan Hale forest.

Polsky said she has heard the archery place on Snake Hill Road has not panned out. Staff said that plan did not go forward because of the pandemic. The property was sold for a single family residence.

STAFF REPORTS:

None

ENFORCEMENT:

None

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Jobbyg adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, PZC Recording Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission at the next Commission meeting. Please see the next Commission meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.