



# PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

## MINUTES – APPROVED

*Tuesday, October 7, 2025*

*7:00 PM*

*Town Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway*

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hammer called the meeting to order, welcoming all to the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, and asked Clerk Homicki to call the roll.

#### 1.1 ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES (*5 members required for a quorum*)

Member Name	Present	Absent
Joseph Hammer, Chairman	X	
Peter Leombruni, Vice Chairman	X	
Anthony Homicki, Clerk	X	
Christopher Brechlin	X	
Thomas Dean	X	
David Drake	X	
David Edwards	X	
Richard Roberts	X	
Tracy Gionfriddo		X
James Hughes	X	
<b>Alternates:</b>	--	--
Paul Thompson	X	
Joe Ercolani	X (Seated)	
Anna Laurie	X	

**Also Present:** Town Planner, David Elder and members of the public.

Chairman Hammer noted there were eight (8) members and three (3) alternates in attendance, with all eight (8) members voting and Alternate Commissioner Ercolani seated. Chairman Hammer explained the process and procedures of the meeting.

### 2. OLD BUSINESS

**2.1 Public Hearing 2220-25-Z Ready Imaging, Inc.** seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Sections 6.3.Q and 6.3.R (Sign Regulations) of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for a Master Sign Plan and Sign Exception at 1780 Berlin Turnpike. **Continued from 9-16-25**

Chairman Hammer stated that this Public Hearing was being continued to November 5, 2025 at the request of the applicant.

**2.2 Public Hearing 2218-25-Z Town of Wethersfield, Parks and Recreation Department** seeking a Municipal Recreation Facility Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.2.D.1 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the construction and associated improvements (fencing, drainage, grading) of pickleball courts at Mill Woods Park, 154 Prospect Street – **Continued from 9-3-25.**

Chairman Hammer reopened the Public Hearing and asked if several members who were not present at the September 3, 2025, meeting had reviewed the recording and supporting materials.

Town Planner Elder presented an updated staff report summarizing research conducted since the prior hearing, including information from multiple municipalities regarding pickleball noise, and recent studies addressing sound mitigation and site selection best practices. He referenced a 2025 qualitative study on pickleball noise, an acoustics firm report from 2023, and a Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association survey that detailed municipal experiences with pickleball installations. He explained that the revised site plan indicates the nearest residential property line is approximately 355 feet from the proposed courts, and the nearest dwelling is approximately 530 feet away. These distances exceed best practice recommendations of 100 feet or more and noted that distance remains the most effective method of noise reduction. He added that the Town is open to implementing additional measures such as sound barriers or limiting hours of operation to ensure compliance with the Town's noise ordinance.

He also reported that the Fire Marshal and Police Department had reviewed the proposal and raised no concerns related to public safety or access. The following email correspondence was received:

**Dave and Dale Kraus, 396 Griswold Road,** wrote "Thank you for the letter dated Aug 22 notifying us of the public hearing on the proposed pickle ball court construction at Mill Woods Park. Unfortunately, location was not provided and I have seen two proposed within the last few years. I generally support the installation of pickle ball courts in park provided they are far enough from private homes to not be a general nuisance from noise. I assume there are no lights proposed or additional parking. Pickleball is a growing sport that provides exercise and social interaction for all ages. It makes the town a more desirable place to live and adds proportionately to the wonderful **neighborhood** park."

**Adrienne Quinn, 63 Randy Lane,** wrote "I attended the September 3rd meeting to learn more about the proposed pickleball courts at Millwoods Park. I will not be able to attend the follow-up meeting on Oct. 7th and I wanted to let you know my concerns. I was surprised to learn that the proposed site had changed since last December. The courts would be much closer to the pool area and to Griswold Road. I was also surprised to learn no noise study had been done. Pickleball is a fun sport, but very loud. The high pitch repetitive pop from sunrise to sunset on four courts equals thousands of pops every day. The hard asphalt surface allows the sound to travel farther. I'm concerned about the increased traffic that will be entering and exiting the park for the free courts. As a frequent park walker, you need to be constantly checking on cars because there is only one short sidewalk at the very entrance. I'm for pickleball, but I don't think courts are appropriate for Millwoods since the park is such a peaceful oasis in a highly residential area. Location, location, location is what I've always heard about real estate and there must be a better location in town. Definitely, before a decision is made to move forward, a noise study should be completed and plans (e.g. money) should be in place for noise mitigation."

**Pat Horton, 139 Randy Lane,** wrote "Per our conversation, I am following up with my concerns in writing. Please pass along my email to any necessary town members or town records regarding this matter. My neighbor, Joan Derech (132 Randy Lane), is also a Wethersfield resident and shares the same concerns regarding noise pollution. from the park near our homes. She is collaborating with me to share our reservations for your consideration.

Questions: (1) Are the public and/or surrounding neighbors going to be notified of the plans prior to any permits being put into effect or plans being set in motion? (2) Is the committee aware of the noise pollution and potential problems resulting from pickleball courts being put in an outdoor setting with

surrounding neighborhoods? (3) Will there be a vote so that the tax payers have a say in the benefits and the potential sound problems resulting from the addition of these pickleball courts before any installation?

Concerns/Items for consideration: Noise from Pickleball - Several sites, including the following research study (The Physics of Pickleball Noise--Measuring, Analyzing, And Comparing the Sounds of Paddle and Ball Impacts) indicate that depending on the equipment used and the construction of the court itself, noise from a single paddle to ball connection can range from 70-90 db. Would there be rules regarding which kinds of paddles and balls would be allowed or restricted for recreational use at this facility?

Conversational speech occurs around 55dB, and alarm clocks or garbage disposals make noise around 80 dB, just for frame of reference. These examples can be controlled. On-going noise from a pickleball court daily, cannot. Safe levels of sound for hearing go up to 70 db. Occasional noise at 80dB can be safe, but levels of 90dB and above over prolonged periods of time are considered dangerous for the integrity of your hearing.

In addition to the acoustic information listed above, when a single noise is made from one instance of a paddle hitting a pickleball, the same study indicated that the sound has a duration of 2ms. However, the paddle and ball continue to vibrate after that single strike, causing a human to hear not only that impact, but also up to 30 ms of post-impact air vibration sound. Again, this is from EACH strike of a paddle hitting a ball. Please also note that it is not just the sound level and duration of each sound that can be problematic, but it is also well documented that the pitch for each strike of a pickleball is quite high can be very aversive as well.

The amount of courts installed also should be considered. 4 pickleball courts fit into the space of 1 tennis court. Therefore, instead of the noise from 1 game, we would have noise from potentially 4 games at any given time. Please also consider that these courts would be accessible for use during all daylight and potentially evening hours (within town ordinances) every single day, not just on occasion (as with other sounds, such as fireworks for example).

In reading town ordinances for Wethersfield, it states that any noise over 80dB is not permitted at any time, with exceptions listed for single events. Recreationally, the examples of these single events included: parades, sporting events, concerts and fireworks. All of these instances are for single events that occur, not consistent noise everyday as could be provided through these pickleball courts.

We are absolutely not opposed to exploring recreational activities to be enjoyed by the residents of Wethersfield (and residents from other towns that may also use the facilities in Mill Woods Park). We are not opposed to pickleball as a sport. We would just like the noise factors to be acknowledged and considered or addressed prior to installing something that could potentially have a real adverse impact to those of us in surrounding neighborhoods that enjoy the peace and quiet of our outdoor space within the homes and yards that we pay taxes for.”

**Nancy Correa**, 9 Ridge Road, wrote “Parks and Recreation Commission Director, Rachael Mattioli was unable to answer basic questions concerning the four proposed pickle ball courts at Mill Woods Park during the Planning and Zoning meeting on September 3, 2025: (1) What percentage of residents want a pickle ball court? (2) What noise studies were done? (3) What environmental studies were done? (4) How will these courts affect traffic patterns? And (5) Safety studies?

They are placing the four courts in an unsuitable location without any pertinent studies! The courts will lead to more traffic congestion and danger to pedestrians. I have seen many mothers with strollers, people with dogs, children on bikes, and elderly pedestrians narrowly missed by speeding cars. Although this is an infrastructure grant, no sidewalks have been built for the safety of pedestrians. Instead, heat island causing pickle ball courts are to be implemented without any input from the residents. I urge you to go to the proposed site on a busy day. I urge you to look through these studies. I firmly believe that placing the

pickle ball courts in Mill Woods Park will add to more traffic congestion leading to pedestrian injuries. Studies: <https://romitoresearch.org/> and <https://pickleballscience.org/pickleball-noise/>”

**Tom Carson, 12 Avalon Place**, wrote “I support the Town’s plan to construct pickleball courts in the preferred location in Mill Woods Park. I’m not a pickleball player (yet), but my children are. This past summer, my college-aged daughter and her friends spent many evenings playing pickleball, but they had to travel to Maxwell Park in Rocky Hill to do so. I often hear complaints in town that there’s not enough activities for children and young adults in Wethersfield. New pickleball facilities in Wethersfield would be a recreational benefit not only for them, but for residents of all ages. At the public hearing for this proposal in September, certain residents who live adjacent to or near Mill Woods Park, who consider the park to be their “backyard,” would have you believe that the town is trying to site an airport or a nuclear waste dump in the park. They raised concerns ranging from environmental destruction to permanent hearing loss. While I am sensitive to noise pollution, I think the concerns here are over the top. Mill Woods Park is not just open space; it’s a public amenity with numerous recreational and sports activities that exists to benefit all town residents. (For those who believe that the courts will be built too close to residential properties, I’ve attached two photos. The first is an overhead map of Mill Woods Park and the second is an overhead map of Maxwell Park in Rocky Hill. You will notice that there any many more residential properties in the Maxwell Park area. I’ve spoken to a resident who lives next to Maxwell Park to the north (which is in Wethersfield, actually), and he said that the pickleball sounds are not a nuisance.) Please don’t delay this project any longer. I encourage you to vote “yes.”

**Christina Plant, 34 Fernwood Street**, wrote “I heard about the town proposal to add pickleball courts at Millwoods. As a resident and avid player, I emphatically support the addition.

**Kyle Sitler, 98 Wells Road**, wrote “I want to take this opportunity to lend my support to the proposed construction of pickleball courts in Mill Woods Park. As you probably know, pickleball (“PB”) is the fastest growing sport in the U.S. I was introduced to PB two years ago. I can honestly say that it has changed my life. My physical health has improved dramatically and I have made countless new friends and connections. Not only is the sport a lot of fun and great exercise for people of all ages, it fosters a strong sense of community. It is the great equalizer in my experience. Regardless of age, size, shape, color, gender, sexual identity, etc., everyone is equal on a pickleball court. Furthermore, PB players look out for each other and their environment. The biggest concern is always the noise. It certainly looks like you have taken that into consideration and the courts will be far enough away from nearby homes to minimize any nuisance factor. I think Wethersfield needs these courts, not only for the reasons outlined above, but in order to remain competitive with nearby towns. Virtually all of the nearby towns have multiple options for PB players - outdoor and indoor. My friends and I spend a lot more of our leisure time (AND MONEY) in neighboring communities now because of our passion for pickleball.

Chairman Hammer stated the Commission could take questions now or proceed directly to public comment, noting several attendees had not been present at the first hearing. He invited Commissioner Drake to begin.

Commissioner Drake stated the Commission was contemplating significant expenditure without a sound study. He referenced reported 90 dB figures at certain distances in outside literature, added that 90 dB exceeds OSHA allowances, and questioned why a site-specific analysis had not been done before funding decisions. He stated that many articles describe municipalities closing courts after construction due to noise and suggested obtaining a calculation for expected dB at ~500–550 feet so the Commission would know whether results would be 25–30 dB or similar before voting.

Town Planner Elder stated that 90 dB would be unacceptable, and the staff intends to stay well below that. He noted the Town is open to commissioning a sound study and to noise mitigation if required.

Chairman Hammer asked if other members had questions.

Commissioner Brechlin asked why the application required Commission action when the property is already a municipal recreation facility , and the regulations mainly require a special permit for that use in residential zones without further detail.

Chairman Hammer stated that even if parts of Mill Woods predate current requirements, the introduction of a new use (pickleball courts) is a significant change and therefore requires a new special permit. He added that special permit standards require the Commission to consider potential impacts (noise, light, traffic, property values, etc.).

Commissioner Brechlin acknowledged the clarification.

Town Planner Elder responded to Commissioner Drake that he had conferred with the Town Manager; if necessary, noise barriers and a noise study could be pursued to right-size mitigation and ensure compliance with the municipal noise ordinance.

Commissioner Drake asked about the noise ordinance decibel limits.

Chairman Hammer stated his understanding that the ordinance is 55 dB daytime and 45 dB nighttime and noted a clause that more stringent zoning provisions continue to apply. He added that compliance with the ordinance does not preclude a finding of adverse impact, and the Commission must still evaluate what neighbors will actually hear.

Vice Chairman Leombruni stated that conditions are site-specific (ground conditions, berms, trees) and a study is needed to understand peak volume. He added that beyond volume, the nuisance of repetitive impact sounds may remain even at lower decibel levels.

Town Planner Elder asked the audience to allow the Commission's discussion to continue and stated public comment would follow.

Commissioner Dean asked whether noise attenuation was planned on all three sides of the courts and about barrier height.

Town Planner Elder stated barriers would be designed as needed to meet ordinance levels, with details (sides, height, density/type) determined by analysis. He referenced studies using ~3 meters (~10 feet); site conditions could change that.

Commissioner Dean stated that materials he reviewed recommended ~3 meters and asked about player safety measures (e.g., emergency response for older participants).

Town Planner Elder stated that player safety procedures were not specifically included and noted the comment for the record.

Commissioner Dean stated much of the submitted material is anecdotal; only a few pieces provide scientific analysis, one of which noted participant safety.

Commissioner Edwards stated that the Little League field between the houses and proposed courts already generates crowd noise likely exceeding pickleball impacts and asked whether complaints had been received.

Town Planner Elder stated the mitigation objective would be to keep any new facility's noise no greater than ambient background levels, noting that pickleball's character of sound is different and that hours of operation are an important regulatory tool.

Chairman Hammer asked whether cumulative effects from concurrent sports had been considered and referenced literature recommending greater distances (e.g., adding hundreds of feet) based on sound character.

Commissioner Brechlin referenced the BAP Acoustics guidance for a 2×2 court layout: with soft ground and a 3-meter barrier, the recommended distance to achieve ~50 dB was ~45 meters, and the proposed siting exceeds that. He stated a CRPA survey (20 respondents) indicated five towns reported complaints, with three resolved by changing hours, and no litigation was reported.

Commissioner Homicki asked about the year of the CRPA survey.

Town Planner Elder stated 2024 (with responses ranging from 2022–2024).

Commissioner Brechlin stated the survey captures real-time responses.

Commissioner Homicki stated that most responses were 2024 and added that complaint sites were generally closer than recommended distances.

Commissioner Drake stated the survey does not identify what mitigation was used and that the current plan shows no sound mitigation.

Chairman Hammer stated the plan includes a 10-foot fence.

Commissioner Drake replied that a chain-link fence is not sound mitigation and reiterated the need for a specified mitigation designed to meet a target dB at ~500 feet (e.g., 25–30 dB).

Town Planner Elder added that the Commission interprets the regulations and that modifications to special permits are processed in like manner. He summarized prior regulatory changes (2008, 2016), moving many uses from site plan to special permit, and stated the current process is proper.

Vice Chairman Leombruni agreed that the special permit pathway is appropriate.

Chairman Hammer opened the hearing to the public.

**Tom Mazzarella, 600 Wolcott Hill Road**, stated he is not opposed to pickleball but urged the Commission to address nuisance noise, not just decibel compliance. He referenced a barking dog case on Beaver Road where sealing fence joints resolved complaints. He recommended barriers on all four sides, daylight-only hours, and an explicit no-lights condition to preserve passive recreation in Mill Woods and reduce sound toward Prospect Street, Randy Lane, and Ox Yoke Lane.

**Mary Ellen Lurate, 15 Mapleside Drive**, stated she plays pickleball in surrounding towns because Wethersfield lacks facilities. She stated the nearest home is ~530 feet, almost two football fields, and urged members to visit Rocky Hill's courts (without mitigation) and listen from similar distances rather than commissioning another study. She supported no lights and stated Mill Woods' central location is appropriate.

**Kathy Ferrara, 24 Pickering Lane**, stated she has advocated for years for courts, is embarrassed by delays, and noted that other towns have built courts successfully. She stated that from Elm Ridge Park's parking lot, she cannot hear play from the courts and urged the Commission to approve without another study. She stated Mill Woods is the only practical site.

**Jim Pettit, 88 Griswold Road**, opposed the location, citing nuisance noise, safety, and parking. He stated there are no sidewalks from Prospect Street into the park, making pedestrian access unsafe; nearby uses (church, Little League, tennis) would be affected; and pickleball's hard, repetitive knock is incompatible with a residential area.

**Mary Kate Speer Harlow, 631 Wolcott Hill Road**, supported the project and questioned the claim that "80% of courts closed", stating courts continue to be built and used. She stated active recreation improves quality of life and noted distance and daytime hours should address concerns.

**Carol Troutman, 70 Griswold Road**, referenced an Acoustical Society of America report (May 2025) describing potential health concerns associated with repetitive impulse noise and comparing the frequency to truck backup alarms. She stated courts should not be placed within 100–1,000 feet of homes until further study and urged consideration of Mill Woods as a passive recreation space for walkers, cyclists, and families (including the Mitchell House residents). She requested consideration of sidewalks from Prospect Street.

**Linda Tajarian, 223 Gordon Street**, supports courts at Mill Woods due to its central location. She stated residents currently spend money in other towns after play and would prefer to patronize Wethersfield businesses.

**Peter Gardow, 60 Griswold Road**, opposed the location, stating the distinctive high frequency "pop" will be debilitating to nearby residents and that the siting has moved to ~355 feet from his property. He referenced press accounts of complaints and litigation, stated noise travels farther in winter with hard ground and no foliage, and cited the Plan of Conservation and Development language about protecting neighborhood character.

**Patricia Horton, 139 Randy Lane**, stated she already contends with pump noise from the adjacent turf farm for long periods and fears additional repetitive pickleball sounds would make her back porch unusable on otherwise quiet days. She stated she is not opposed to athletics but is concerned about cumulative impacts and neighborhood quiet enjoyment.

**Kathy Ferrara, 24 Pickering Lane (second comment)**, reiterated that residents adapt to ambient noise and that from Elm Ridge Park, she cannot hear pickleball at the parking area. She questioned alternative locations outside Mill Woods and urged approval.

**Jim Pettit, 88 Griswold Road (second comment)**, suggested compromise by arranging reduced-rate access for Wethersfield residents at a nearby private facility (e.g., in Berlin) similar to Goodwin Park golf discounts. He reiterated that pickleball paddle/ball impact is not a joyful noise and urged the Commission to deny the Mill Woods siting.

Chairman Hammer asked whether staff or the Parks & Recreation representative had additional information.

Vice Chairman Leombruni asked whether grant funds for sidewalks and safety improvements in Mill Woods would be displaced by the pickleball proposal or whether they are separate appropriations.

Town Planner Elder stated his understanding that there is dedicated funding for sidewalks and pedestrian improvements from Prospect Street into the park, moving on a separate track from the pickleball project.

Chairman Hammer asked whether "dedicated funding" refers to state grants and whether the safety improvements are fully funded.

Town Planner Elder stated the pickleball project is funded for design and construction, and the sidewalk/pedestrian project is funded for design.

Rachael Mattioli, Director of Parks & Recreation, clarified that the Town received DECD Urban Act funds, with approximately \$1.5 million allocated to Mill Woods Park improvements. She listed completed and ongoing items (tennis, basketball, filter tanks, bocce, Little League Classic). She stated \$150,000 within the grant is set aside for signage, road improvements, traffic calming, walking/bike path, and parking, as approved by the Town Council on March 6, 2023.

Chairman Hammer asked about the schedule for the entrance/traffic calming work.

Rachael Mattioli stated it is not yet scheduled and would follow current projects. The next project after pickleball would be road/entrance improvements.

Vice Chairman Leombruni asked the amount appropriated for pickleball courts.

Mrs. Mattioli stated \$300,000 (design and construction).

Commissioner Brechlin asked whether the funding expires.

Mrs. Mattioli stated funds should be appropriated by end of 2026 and the Town will seek a one-year extension.

Commissioner Brechlin asked whether a sound study could be covered within the \$300,000 and how it would affect timeline.

Mrs. Mattioli stated that the \$300,000 does not include a sound study. The reallocation among Urban Act line items would require Town Council action. A study could affect schedule but the extent is unknown.

Town Planner Elder stated a study would likely require three quotes and preliminary estimates suggest under \$10,000 depending on scope. He reported a positive commitment that funds outside the \$300,000 would be made available if the Commission requires a study to determine mitigation.

Vice Chairman Leombruni asked whether grant money could be used elsewhere (e.g., Putnam Park).

Mrs. Mattioli stated the Urban Act allocation is restricted to Mill Woods Park.

Chairman Hammer asked whether the Town could request DECD to change the project location within the same grant.

Mrs. Mattioli stated she did not know and would need to inquire.

Commissioner Ercolani asked whether returning to the Town Council would be required.

Town Planner Elder stated he could not speak to that process but noted this is the third location evaluated within Mill Woods. Prior sites were closer to residences or regulated areas/trees. The current site best satisfies prior concerns.

Mrs. Mattioli added that the Town Council approved Mill Woods as the location for pickleball on October 7, 2024.

Chairman Hammer asked for the approximate distance from the earlier location near the Mitchell House to that residential complex.

Mrs. Mattioli did not have the distance and indicated that she would provide it later.

Town Planner Elder stated it was much closer than 355 feet.

Commissioner Dean asked for the project schedule if a special permit were approved now.

Mrs. Mattioli stated the Town would prepare bid documents over the winter, with construction in spring and then taking 3–6 months depending on the weather.

Commissioner Dean concluded the opening would likely be July–September 2026 and asked whether the Commission could require a two-year status report from the commencement of operations.

Town Planner Elder stated that the condition would be consistent with prior Commission practice.

Chairman Hammer stated the Commission has several options. To act now or continue the hearing to obtain additional technical information. He stated any approval must be based on findings that special permit standards are met, including no adverse impacts on neighbors. He questioned whether the current record supports approval and asked whether a noise report could address both ordinance compliance and nuisance.

Commissioner Drake suggested setting a performance specification (e.g.,  $\leq 20$  dB at 350 feet) as an operating condition, leaving the Town to choose mitigation to achieve it.

Chairman Hammer questioned approving a project without knowing in advance whether the design can meet the specification given the public cost.

Vice Chairman Leombruni stated he would need a design and expert analysis demonstrating mitigation for both volume and nuisance. Otherwise, he would be opposed. He could support approval only with an engineering study specifying barrier height, configuration, materials and expected results.

Commissioner Dean stated the real issue is the quality of the impact noise (incident, repetitive), not merely decibel counts. He favored conditions (distance, barriers, hours) and a term-limited approval with review, but recognized members seek expert specifications first.

Chairman Hammer stated that in most approvals, the Commission relies on experts (e.g., traffic, mechanical noise), and he is not comfortable approving first and “figuring it out later.”

Commissioner Brechlin stated he can support either a required study or clear guardrails but is not in favor of delay for its own sake. He stated that surrounding towns have installed courts without litigation and recommended framework conditions so the project can move forward.

Commissioner Drake reiterated that many articles describe closures elsewhere and that the noise must be addressed up front.

Commissioner Roberts stated he was unsure whether time remains under statutory limits to keep the hearing open long enough to get information that would satisfy members.

Chairman Hammer stated the hearing opened on September 3, providing 65 days, and the applicant can consent to extensions.

Town Planner Elder stated preliminary feedback suggests a study could be completed about a month after procurement, with cost likely under \$10,000, depending on scope.

Chairman Hammer asked whether the study would include site-specific mitigation recommendations.

Town Planner Elder stated the Town will commit to installing noise barriers necessary for compliance and believes distance alone places levels within ordinance. There will still be some audible gameplay during hours of operation and so the key question is whether that level is acceptable in a park setting.

Vice Chairman Leombruni stated that if the objective were  $\leq 20$  dB at 350 feet, nuisance would likely not be an issue, but such a target may require substantial barriers and might be infeasible.

Town Planner Elder referenced the BAP Acoustics study, indicating  $\sim 25$  dB at  $\sim 165$  feet under certain conditions (soft ground with barriers), suggesting low levels are achievable with design.

Commissioner Thompson stated the challenge is the special, repetitive nature of the pickleball sound. Even if decibel limits are met, repeated impacts could be disruptive to nearby uses (e.g., pool lifeguards). He noted comparable Church Street studies did not prompt the same degree of debate.

Town Planner Elder stated that much testimony relies on a heavily cited qualitative study (Acoustical Society of America). He reviewed its methodology (content analysis of public comments/media) and emphasized that the Town is willing to conduct a study and install barriers. Some level of audible sound will remain during play.

Chairman Hammer asked whether an expert could address nuisance in addition to decibels.

Vice Chairman Leombruni referenced the dog case where sealing barrier joints addressed the nuisance.

Town Planner Elder stated the Town seeks feedback on whether, if a study demonstrates reasonable levels in a park setting, the Commission would be amenable to approval.

Chairman Hammer stated the Commission needs specifics of design/mitigation before acting.

Commissioner Homicki asked whether such requirements could be incorporated into the RFP following a conditional approval (e.g., hours 8 a.m.–8 p.m.).

Chairman Hammer suggested taking a round-table consensus to determine the next steps.

Commissioner Drake requested time to engage an acoustical engineer to propose a reasonable spec (e.g.,  $\leq 20$  dB at 350 feet).

Vice Chairman Leombruni agreed.

Commissioner Homicki asked what the appropriate dB should be (e.g., 22–26 dB).

Commissioner Drake stated that an expert should recommend the level; 45 dB is too high.

Chairman Hammer stated that other Connecticut zoning bodies have sought additional data for pickleball and there are consultants available.

Commissioner Dean summarized that members are seeking an engineering specification study identifying parameters (distance, barriers, materials, performance levels) to judge the application.

Vice Chairman Leombruni agreed.

Commissioner Drake asked whether a vote was necessary or whether staff could obtain an expert.

Vice Chairman Leombruni suggested inviting an acoustical engineer to present specifications capable of addressing nuisance at property lines

Chairman Hammer confirmed the intent is to look beyond ordinance levels to neighborhood impact.

Town Planner Elder summarized that members are asking (1) what a reasonable noise level at nearby residences in a park context is; and (2) whether the current location can achieve it with or without mitigation.

Chairman Hammer stated the expert should opine on acceptable levels at ~350 feet and whether a design at this site can meet them.

Commissioner Brechlin asked about the process if a small location shift were recommended (e.g., 10–100 feet).

Mrs. Mattioli stated that even a modest shift may require a new geotechnical survey, contract amendments, and added cost/time; the gas line also constrains siting.

Vice Chairman Leombruni shows that the current location can meet levels.

Commissioner Dean stated the application lacks noise criteria for the current plan, making it difficult for the Commission to judge impacts.

Mrs. Mattioli acknowledged and understood the request.

Commissioner Homicki stated staff “have their work cut out” and suggested continuing the hearing.

Chairman Hammer agreed and proposed a continuance to allow staff to pursue expert input and report back. He stated a target of November 5, 2025, with the possibility of further continuance if needed for procurement.

Vice Chairman Leombruni asked whether an RFP would be required.

Town Planner Elder stated that, depending on the amount, most firms will need some site investigation.

Clerk Homicki motioned “**TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING TO NOVEMBER 5, 2025**” seconded by Vice Chairman Leombruni.

**Note:** All members, including the Chairperson, voted. The motion **PASSED** 9-0-0.

Chairman Hammer requested a progress report at the next meeting.

**3. NEW BUSINESS** – None

**4. OTHER BUSINESS** – None

**5. MINUTES** - September 16, 2025

Commissioner Drake motioned **“TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED”** seconded by Vice Chairman Leombruni.

**Vote:** All members, including the Chairperson, voted. The motion **PASSED** 7-0-2 (Commissioners Roberts and Thompson abstained).

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING**

**7. CORRESPONDENCE** – None

**8. STAFF REPORTS** – None

**9. APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT NEXT PZC MEETING** – October 21, 2025

Commissioner Thompson asked for a status on the Ken’s Foods/Weight Watchers, 1000 Silas Deane Highway and noted he recalled plans that would look different and had not observed much change.

Town Planner Elder stated there are pending lawsuits related to the original code violations and a recent pretrial but progress is being made on code compliance. He stated that no new site plan has been submitted to the Planning Office.

Chairman Hammer asked if there were any other items for the October 21 agenda.

Town Planner Elder stated there are no new applications at this time. The Commission could take up the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Chairman Hammer asked for a brief update on the POCD and next steps for the Commission and stated that if there are no other applications for October 21 then he would like hold a short meeting to discuss the POCD so it can be advanced to a public hearing.

Town Planner Elder stated that a full draft of the POCD is complete. He explained that the 2013 future land use map used specific housing types (e.g., two-family, three-family), while the 2020 draft used density categories (low, moderate, high). He stated the Commission will need to decide which approach to adopt, noting the 2013 map included “two-family” areas, although two-family dwellings are not permitted in the current zoning regulations.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Thompson motioned **“TO ADJOURN THE MEETING”**, seconded by Commissioner Brechlin.

**Vote:** All members, including the Chairperson, voted. The motion **PASSED** 9-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kassandra Felipe, Interim Recording Secretary