

Public Hearing
Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission
Monday, June 8, 2026 – Town Hall – Council Chambers – 7:00 PM

I. **Call to Order**

Chairman Kardaras called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

II. **Roll Call**

Earl Kurtz called the roll

Present: John Kardaras, Chairman; Chris Affie, Tom Selmont, Jeff Natale, Casey Downes, Earl Kurtz, Vice Chairman, Jim McKenney

Alternates: John Hilzinger, Anita Blake, Paul Calaluce

Absent: Sean Strollo, Matt Bowman, Secretary

Staff member present: Lina Cortez-Frazer, Assistant Town Planner; Jeffrey Donofrio, Town Attorney

III. **Determination of Quorum**

Following roll call, it was determined there were enough members present for a quorum.

IV. **Pledge of Allegiance**

V. **Business**

1. **Petition for a Zone Text Amendment on behalf of DEWC LLC, Applicant.**

Applicant is requesting an amendment to the Cheshire Zoning Regulations Section 3.4 and 3.8 Large Outdoor Events and Activities.

Christopher Rousseau, Esq., of Pullman & Comley, addressed the commission. William Cunningham, petitioner of the text amendment, addressed the commission as well. W. Cunningham explains that they are trying to save a farm that has been in town for over 200 years. He brings up the referendum that was passed where \$1.5 million was put away to fund open space. W. Cunningham states that the understanding when buying the property from the developer is, they were going to put an easement in place where a portion of the land can never be developed. He further explains the current regulations that are allowed for outdoor events on working farms and explains what they are looking for to have indoor events. W. Cunningham reads into the record a letter from the original owners of Norton Brothers Farm. He shows an aerial photo of where they could possibly put an indoor venue and also shows what the building could look like.

C. Rousseau explains that in the Plan of Conservation and Development it states a goal of preserving the agricultural properties and to do so it is important to consider and approve adaptive reuses.

J. Natale asks how many properties in town this zone text amendment would affect. He also asks about the deeded open space and if it would be open to the public, etc. Jeffrey Donofrio, Town Attorney, explains that in terms of what the ultimate structure is of any conservation easement is not within the purview of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Further, if the zone text amendment is approved then they will have the opportunity to consider the project as a whole.

E. Kurtz asks why they chose 60% of the total acreage to be the percentage of the property that has a restriction of development rights. W. Cunningham states that they put that since it is a town-wide regulation and not for one farm. C. Rousseau explains that they thought it was a fair number given the size of most farms.

Public Hearing
Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission
Monday, June 8, 2026 – Town Hall – Council Chambers – 7:00 PM

39 C. Affie asks about noise complaints and if something should be added to the regulations. L. Cortez-
40 Frazer explains that during the special permit process they can add conditions of approval and can include
41 something addressing that issue.

42 J. Kardaras asks if the conservation easement would require that the area be used for agricultural purposes
43 or just not developed. W. Cunningham explains that they have not finalized the easement yet.

44 Peter Grant, of 30 Judson Ct., addressed the commission. P. Grant states that he does not believe that the
45 town needs a privately owned entertainment venue in a suburb. He brings up that it will cause more traffic
46 and noise to the area. P. Grant explains that in the POCD it lists this road as being an area of traffic
47 concern.

48 Larissa Lenehan, of 30 Judson Ct., addressed the commission. L. Lenehan brings up that the only limit on
49 indoor event attendees had to do with the size building. Also, the need for a provided list of events has
50 been eliminated. Along with that, in the current regulations the maximum number of outdoor weekly
51 events was 3 and that was eliminated. She also brings up that it could exacerbate the traffic issues in the
52 area and what would happen if the property ever sold.

53 Christine Bruenn, of 150 Richmond Glen Dr., addressed the commission. C. Bruenn states that she is in
54 favor of the regulation changes but there are still some concerns with noise and the number of events that
55 are allowed a week.

56 Valerie Joyce, of 376 Academy Rd., addressed the commission. V. Joyce mentions that there are currently
57 no spaces like this available in town to hold events. She brings up concerns with traffic in the area. V.
58 Joyce also mentions that with the uncertain future of Cheshire's historic farms going forward any decision
59 should be a decision that best fits the changing future for all of the farms.

60 Sari Sirico, of 255 Richmond Glen Dr., addressed the commission. S. Sirico asks if outdoor and indoor
61 events will offer other amenities like fire pits, mobile cigar bar, etc. She also mentions that setup and
62 breakdown of events would take place outside of the set hours.

63 Mike Ceccorulli, of 75 Scenic Ct., addressed the commission. He shares that he is a land use lawyer,
64 president of the Cheshire Land Trust, and on the Economic Development Commission. He speaks as a
65 resident and states that it is very difficult for farmers to live on the money made from farming and that
66 this opportunity could help them with their livelihood and to pass on their business to future generations.
67 M. Ceccorulli explains that the POCD specifically points out adaptive reuse as a goal for agricultural
68 property.

69 Barbara McWhirter, of 223 Woodpond Rd., addressed the commission. B. McWhirter brings up how
70 there is noise throughout town from different activities, e.g. Bartlem Park, the high school, fall festival,
71 etc. She states that she does not think that this proposed regulation would add much to the noise
72 throughout town. B. McWhirter mentions that farming in CT is one of the most expensive business to run
73 in the state, and that having this opportunity to create revenue can offset some of the cost of running a
74 farm.

75 Ben Mattheis, of 210 Richmond Glen Dr., addressed the commission. B. Mattheis explains that farming
76 in the 21st century is a long harder than it used to be and having an additional source of income would
77 help these farms to stay open. He asks if the open space would allow for public recreation. He also states
78 that they need to do everything they can to protect the Honeypot watershed.

Public Hearing
Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission
Monday, June 8, 2026 – Town Hall – Council Chambers – 7:00 PM

79 Tyler Derrico, of 249 Winthrop Dr., addressed the commission. T. Derrico states that he is in support of
80 the proposed zone text amendment and that it won't just be a wedding venue it will still be an apple
81 orchard.

82 Jim Bulger, of 61 Warren St., addressed the commission. J. Bulger states that he is in support of the
83 proposed zone text amendment. He also brings up that having a subdivision on any of the possible farm
84 properties would add a burden to the town and taxpayers. J. Bulger mentions that having an indoor venue
85 would eliminate a lot of the noise concerns. He states that by having a venue like this in town it would
86 keep money being spent in the town.

87 Elizabeth Drysdale, of 417 Willow Well Ct., addressed the commission. E. Drysdale states that she is in
88 support of the proposed zone text amendment and that it is a win for the town. She mentions that
89 anywhere in town you will find noise and traffic. Given the previous uses as a working farm with
90 customers coming in and out, it won't be much of a difference with this new use.

91 Michael Simeone, of 7 Melrose Dr., addressed the commission. M. Simeone states that he appreciates the
92 effort to save the land. He brings up that there is no mention in the proposed text of any restriction on the
93 size of the building and that there should be something in there limiting the size.

94 Michael Mocanu, of 332 Academy Rd., addressed the commission. M. Mocanu brings up concerns for
95 traffic in the area and that this could add to the current issue. He also asks how lights for the venue and
96 parking lot areas will be shielded from leaving the property causing light pollution.

97 Sandra Molkenbuhr, of 74 Carriage Dr., addressed the commission. S. Molkenbuhr states that they need
98 to make sure that the text of the regulations matches with what is intended. She brings up that they should
99 also look more closely at the outdoor event regulations.

100 Maureen Murphy, of 11 Burning Tree Pl., addressed the commission. M. Murphy states that she is in
101 support of the proposed text amendment.

102 Ryan Smith, of 298 Redwood Ln., addressed the commission. R. Smith states that he is in support of the
103 proposed text amendment.

104 Jodie Monllos, of 141 Braemar Dr., addressed the commission. J. Monllos states that they have the
105 opportunity to protect a historic farmland that can never be replaced. She mentions that it can contribute
106 economically while still respecting the history and beauty of the land.

107 Susan Dillman, of 875 Wolf Hill Rd., addressed the commission. S. Dillman states that she is in support
108 and believes they can find a way for this to work for everyone.

109 Jim Bertini, of 540 Alpine Dr., addressed the commission. J. Bertini states that he is in support of the
110 proposed text amendment. He mentions that preserving the historic farm aligns with the long-term
111 interests of both the town and the residents.

112 E. Kurtz asks about the purchasing of development rights and who's decision that is. J. Donofrio explains
113 that the decision as to any interest that the town may acquire in the subject property is the decision of the
114 Town's legislative body, which is the Town Council. Further he explains, if it is approved by the Town
115 Council any restriction will be in detail and recorded on the land records.

116 J. Natale asks if the applicant would be willing to put in the text change a building size restriction and that
117 there can't be an indoor and outdoor event happening simultaneously. W. Cunningham explains that they

Public Hearing
Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission
Monday, June 8, 2026 – Town Hall – Council Chambers – 7:00 PM

118 could currently come in for a special permit for outdoor events since it is already in the current
119 regulations. Further he explains that they are unsure at this time how large of a facility they will need so
120 they don't want to put a cap on building size yet. C. Rousseau explains that they can add conditions of
121 approval when they are getting the special permit.

122 Robert Sirico, of 255 Richmond Glen Dr., addressed the commission. He asks where on the farm the
123 outdoor events and activities would take place.

124 L. Cortez-Frazer shares for the record correspondence that was received regarding the application.

125 J. Kardaras closed the public hearing.

126 VI. **Adjournment**

127 **MOTION:** J. Natale made a motion to adjourn the public hearing meeting, seconded by J. McKenney.

128 ***The motion was passed unanimously by commission members present.***

129 The meeting was adjourned at 9:06PM.

130

131

132 Attest: Colleen Costello