

TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

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AUGUST 28, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bart Pacekonis, Kevin Foley, Stephanie Dexter, Kevin Greer, Bill Flagg, Steve Wagner

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mike LeBlanc

STAFF PRESENT: Michele Lipe, Director of Planning; Lauren Zarambo, Recording Secretary

PUBLIC HEARING / COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Pacekonis called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m.

Acting Secretary Commissioner Dexter read the legal notice into the record as it was published in the Journal Inquirer on August 16, 2018 and August 23, 2018.

Chairman Pacekonis appointed Alternate Commissioner LeBlanc to be seated for Commissioner Bonzani.

1. **Appl. 18-43P, Indian Valley Family YMCA, Ellington CT** – request for a Special Exception to Article 3.1.A to operate a before and after school program for a maximum of 120 children at the Temple Beth Hillel facility, on property located at 20 Baker Lane, A -20 zone

Ms. Tina Gladden, regional child care director for the Indian Valley Family YMCA, presented the request stating they were contacted to help out the community because of the long wait list for the 4th R program by Temple Beth Hillel which already has great classroom facilities in place. The wait list of 120 children can be accommodated but their program will be limited to a total of 50 children with the morning enrollment capped at 20 children.

Hours for a.m. care will be 7:00 - 8:30 a.m. and then be reopened for after school care at 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. When there is no school the ‘vacation club days’ will run unless the temple is not available because of holidays at which time care will be provided at their Vernon facility. Two buses are anticipated. Locations of the bus stops are still to be determined by the bus company. Outdoor play areas will be in the back on grass and blacktop that will be coned off and limited to 40 children at a time but may be as low as 20 children. Drop-off of children in the morning is between 7:00 – 8:00 a.m. and the afternoon program closes at 6 p.m. with parents arriving from 3:30 – 6 p.m. to pick up children so traffic will not be all at once.

Director of Planning Michele Lipe gave staff comments:

1. Request for request for a Special Exception to Article 3.1.A to operate a before and after school program for a maximum of 120 children at the Temple Beth Hillel facility, on property located at 20 Baker Lane, A-20 zone. After speaking with the applicant about the proposed number of students requested without a traffic study completed, she agree to scale the request back to a maximum of 50 students.
2. There are no exterior site improvements proposed with this application other than the requirement for a sidewalk to be added from the exit door to the parking lot.
3. This use, is permitted by special exception. Special exception review criteria for this use include:
 - The proposal is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan of Conservation and Development.
 - The application has met the requirements of the zoning regulations.
 - The land is physically suited to the proposed use.
 - Minimal, if any, adverse environmental impacts are created.
 - No traffic or other hazards will be created.

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- The impacts on the capacity of the present and proposed utilities, street, drainage systems, sidewalks, and other elements of the infrastructure will be minimal.
- There will be minimal or no adverse effects on existing uses in the area.
- Surrounding property values will be conserved.
- The character of the neighborhood will be maintained or minimally disrupted.
- The general welfare of the community will be served.
- There is a balance between neighborhood acceptance and community needs.
- Historic factors are adequately protected; or due consideration to preservation of historic factors has been demonstrated.
- The overall physical appearance of the proposed development is compatible with surrounding development and the Commission's goals for the neighborhood/corridor.
- The architectural design is aesthetically pleasing and blends well into the surrounding area.

The Commission may impose additional conditions in accordance with these regulations in order to ensure that all applicable criteria enumerated above and/or within a particular use category are satisfied.

4. The program will open at 7:00 a.m. and close at approximately 8:30 a.m. An estimate of 20 children would be accommodated in the morning, and traffic is anticipated to take place over the hour and half, and not all at once. The program will re-open at approximately 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and at 1:30 p.m. on half-day Wednesdays. Families are expected to arrive for pick up between 4:30-6:00 p.m. When there is no school during the school year (other than major holidays and major Jewish holidays), the YMCA will provide care from 7 a.m.- 6 p.m. There will be no bus activity on these days, only parent drop off and pick up.
5. Students would be dropped off in the morning by parents and one bus would bring them to the school. Students would be brought to the center in the afternoon by one or two buses and be dropped off curb side and walked into the building.
6. Where will the children be discharged from the buses that come to the site?
7. The site currently has 83 parking spaces currently on site. Fifty-four (54) spaces would be available at any given time as 29 spaces in a portion of the southern parking area are shown to be designated for outside play. Can the applicant explain how many students would be outside at any given time and what activities are likely to occur? Would the parking be cordoned off by a barrier? I would note (as evidenced by the aerial in front of you) that area is screened by a landscaped buffer as well as existing wooded area on the abutting property.
8. Sgt. Chris Duschene from Police Services has indicated that the site line at Baker Lane and Governor Highway need to be improved. He also stated if the proposal is for more than 50 children, a traffic study would be necessary to evaluate any impacts.
9. The applicant has had discussions with both the Fire Marshal and Building Official regarding the proposed changes to the facility and permits will be taken out as necessary. The Fire Marshal has inspected the site and is requiring an additional walkway from the building to the parking area.
10. The site is served by public water and public sewers.
11. Any new signage would require a sign permit.

If this application is approved, the Planning Department has no additional modifications to request.

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Chairman Pacekonis asked for public comment in favor of the application.

Mr. Tim Wentzell of 630 Governors Highway spoke in a favor of the application as a reasonable use and requested a crosswalk and signage as an approval condition where there are sidewalks on both sides of Baker Lane.

Ms. Karen Lydecker of 107 Lefoll Boulevard spoke in favor of the Y using the facilities at Temple Beth Hillel and reviewed 9 of 14 special exception criteria which are met by the application: 3) Land is suited to the use since the building is already there with existing classrooms vetted for the use. 4) No environmental impacts since nothing has been changed. 5) No additional traffic or hazards since enrollment is capped at 50 with staggered drop-offs and pick-ups. 6) Impact on utilities will be minimal. 7) Minimal to no adverse effects on neighborhood since the building is there already. 8) Surrounding property values will be conserved since property values are high and nothing is being changed with approximately 35 children enrolled which is significantly less than when the temple is used. 9) Character of the neighborhood will not change since there is a public facility already there for use. 10) General welfare of the community will be served addressing the wait list for the before and after care program. 11) Balance between community acceptance and need is served helping fill the need for before and after school care to support young families to live and grow in South Windsor.

Mayor Saud Anwar of 93 Rockledge Drive spoke in support of the application thanking the commission and stating South Windsor is experiencing growth with young families arriving where both parents work and need before and after school care.

Town Councilor Jan Synder of 191 Bourbon Street thanked and congratulated all involved and stated there has been great effort to increase the 4th R program to meet the before and after school care needs of residents. This partnership between the Y and temple will be beneficial for both groups and the town.

Deputy Mayor Andrew Paterna of 301 Strawberry Lane stated South Windsor is one of the few Connecticut towns with an increase in school age population and as a member of the Town committee created by the Mayor to look into solutions for day care need he supports the application as a reasonable solution applauding the temple for stepping forward and thanking the Y in partnering with the project.

Mr. Dan Edwards of 131 Hilton Drive spoke in favor of the application as a reasonable and great use of the space stating the more children that are in the neighborhood making it a more vibrant community the better and will promote driving slower through the neighborhood.

Ms. Divya Subramanian of 86 Swan Nest (Lakewood) spoke in favor of the application as someone in need of after school care and that the location of the program being close to the school it will serve makes it an ideal solution.

Mr. Brian Powers of 164 Carriage Drive as a father of 3 spoke in favor stated daycare options are very limited and his 1st grader has been on the wait list for a 2nd year. He stated this is a great example of the Town Council and community coming together to create a solution.

Mr. Anthony Leone of 57 Beelzebub Road stated he serves on the committee from Town Council to find a solution to the problem which he knows firsthand having stood in line at 4 a.m. to register for the program. The committee has explored many solutions and the Town has come together to find a long term solution. The facility is existing and the Y's program is established. There may be a little added traffic but otherwise is a good solution for the community.

Mr. John Holowczak of 39 Cody Circle spoke in favor of a modest use of the facility for 50 children but 120 is too many. He voiced concern that original occupancy calculations were based upon the number of seats in

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the synagogue and now this request will move the use from a house of worship to a mixed use. He asked for a condition of approval that an independent firm create a true occupancy number for the safety of children involved.

Mr. Jeff Bemis, a direct abutter at 126 Cody Circle, stated the application will change the character of the neighborhood and is opposed to it but is in favor of a smaller version that could be approved temporarily while Pleasant Valley gets built or other daycares are created. Indian Valley YMCA is big business and the application indicates 9 classrooms with 2 assembly areas compared to the 4th R at Pleasant Valley which uses the cafeteria. The Y will be filling the space and the number of students will be increased over time. Mr. Bemis asked for the Town to find a location properly zoned for the use. Existing traffic conditions were described as issues already and businesses growing in the area will be effecting traffic.

Mr. Kumar Ellappan of 3 St Marc Circle #L spoke in favor of the application as a parent who stood in line at 4 a.m. and did not get on the list and asked the commission to approve the application.

The Chairman asked for public comment with concerns or against the application.

Ms. Doreen Blondin of 7 Cody Circle stated she and other neighbors were unaware of the plans being presented and that Rabbi Glickman met with the Town, YMCA and his congregation about the program but there was no neighborhood outreach. The 4th R program is an important program to address parent's needs but does not belong in the residential neighborhood. There are 86 parking spaces with 30 to be taken away for play and parking is now problem on holidays. Ms. Blondin recalled a stipulation that there would not be a daycare or school at the temple and asked if the record could be researched.

Mr. Peter Andrews of 80 Cody Circle stated he waited 2 years to get into the 4th R program which he supports but not in his neighborhood. He spoke in opposition not knowing where this application will lead for their neighborhood. One criteria for a special exception approval is a balance of neighborhood acceptance which is not being met. The neighborhood is not in acceptance.

Mr. Nise Kuriakose of 7 Baker Lane across from the temple spoke in opposition stating the application will change the neighborhood. Baker Lane is very narrow and will not accommodate 2 buses at the same time. Emergency vehicles will be challenged and it will be risky for neighborhood kids who are used to using both the sidewalk and the street. The number of cars for 120 students will be huge. The speed limit is 25 but cars now go 35 to 40 mph plus and this will increase the risks. He requested to either increase the size of the road or look for alternate locations.

Mr. Rich Delhaie of 95 Cody Circle asked his neighbors opposing the application to stand and stated they are not asking for a special exception to the rules but to uphold the regulations for the residential zone and submitted his daughter's certificate of legal blindness and picture of a Blind Child Area sign located on the applicant's property to the commission (Exhibit A). He compared the amount of traffic that will be generated in their neighborhood during rush hour to that of a McDonald's drive-in which will be 40' from their home and will cause issues for his disabled and blind daughter who is enrolled in South Windsor medically fragile school program where teachers come to their home and her world is their neighborhood. Mr. Delhaie cited special criteria not met and stated 50 children enrolled are too much and will change the character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Jim Clyburn of 35 Cody Circle, spoke in opposition to the application stating parents are responsible for finding care for their children and should not expect the Town be responsible for their lives. There are plenty of other commercial facilities that could house the program. Safety and traffic on Governors Highway create too much of a hazard now and has an affect property values. He encouraged leaders to plan better not hold their neighborhood responsible for the program.

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Mr. Wei Zhang of 125 Cody Circle, showed his house on an aerial map very close to the Temple and stated the traffic, pollution and noise on Baker Lane will be impacting their yard. He is respectful of the 4th R program but is in opposition to the location where their cul de sac will be used to turn around putting neighborhood children playing at risk.

Mr. Gerald Jeyaraj of 105 Cody Circle spoke in opposition stating the parking lot is in his back yard and since moving to the neighborhood the cul de sac and temple have always been quiet but with this program going on every day it will affect the character of their neighborhood and what goes on in his backyard literally.

Ms. Mary Hockenberry of 16 Foxglove Lane asked if the road width is already regulated for buses, what precautions will be taken for the blind child, whether a stop sign or other signage can be added to slow traffic and if a police officer will be available during drop-offs.

Ms. Susan Ruchin of 75 Risley Road in Vernon spoke with concerns as a member of the temple about the traffic pattern and what it will do to the neighborhood.

Acting Secretary Commissioner Dexter read a letter into the record written with concern and in opposition from Mr. Andrew Viola of 21 Baker Lane (Exhibit B).

Rabbi Jeff Glickman of 114 Cody Circle stated a well-advertised after school care forum to which everyone was invited was held to discuss options and only one family expressing concern showed up for the event. The Rabbi stated it is a fine proposal and recommended its adoption.

Past president of Temple Beth Hillel Gary Ruchin of Vernon stated he was present for the original approval for the building which was built on a smaller footprint than was originally proposed. The number of parking spaces were determined by the Town and there has always been school with classrooms in the building. The Fire Marshal has control over capacity. He stated he has questions for the Y about some of the details but clarified there are ways to egress in an emergency from Cody Circle which is not a cul de sac.

A concerned neighbor stated the school in the temple is a Hebrew school and not a public day care program. The neighborhood has concerns this will expand into something much bigger once approved. If there are cars parked on both sides of the street on Baker Lane and Cody Circle a fire truck cannot get through.

Board of Education Chairman Craig Zimmerman stated he is part of the subcommittee which came up with the proposal as one of the solutions for the 4th R and voiced concern the neighbors had not heard about the proposal with all the press in the papers, Town Council and the public meeting held by Rabbi Glickman. School starts tomorrow and families are looking for the program to go through. There will not be 50 cars coming at the same time morning or evening and if the program grew beyond the cap of 50 it will have to come back to the commission for approval. He voiced concern for the blind child asked for protections to be put in place.

Town Councilor Matt Reilly of 12 Heatherwood Drive voiced support for the project stating the Y in combination with the temple is a private sector solution which can help meet the need for day care. The concern for traffic and that the program could expand is legitimate but by limiting the number to 50 children the program is reasonable to proceed

Mr. Dan Edwards of 131 Hilton Drive with 2 children in the program voiced support for the program with a cap of 50 and noted exiting onto Cody Circle from the temple should be limited.

Mr. Jeff Bemis noted the sign limiting traffic onto Cody Circle has been respected by the temple and the balance between neighborhood acceptance and community versus political needs were noted.

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Mr. Rich Delhaie of 95 Cody Circle commented the number of children playing outside at a time daily should also be limited in tandem with number of children in the program and asked where the demand for afterschool care is coming from since there are 4 different schools. He noted emergency vehicles have come to their house 15 times over the past years so their concern for access is real.

Ms. Karen Lydecker of 107 Lefoll Boulevard stated she is on the committee for before and after care and as of July the wait list at Eli Terry was 2 and is now zero, 41 children are on the wait list at Orchard Hill, 18 at Philip R Smith and 46 at Pleasant Valley school. She noted wait lists for local private daycare facilities and the severe lack of options for parents. The bi partisan committee has been working extremely hard to help residents since April and noted the balance of neighborhood acceptance and community need is not represented clearly by those who are here to speak.

Mr. Bob Dickinson, 19 Birch Road, asked if the approval could be granted for a two-year period rather than by special exception in order to work out the concerns being brought forward.

Mr. Grum Ngatu of 236 Kent Lane spoke in support of the application as good for the Town and families.

Mr. John Blondin of 7 Cody Circle asked if any other religious facilities were asked to use their property.

Mr. Anthony Leone of 57 Beelzebub Road speaking in support and as part of the committee stated Avery Street Church is also being explored for the program but are not able to be up and running right now. With school starting tomorrow the temple is the best solution for now. Wait list numbers are part of the committee minutes and are online and have been reported by Town Council. He sympathized with the neighbors but with the building with classrooms at the temple already in place it is the best solution at this time and encouraged the commission to approve the application.

Ms. Selam Haile of 236 Kent Lane voiced a need for the program and also sympathized with the neighbor's concerns.

A concerned gentleman stated the duration of the time taken for this decision is not enough to consider the neighborhood's concerns.

Ms. Lauren Powers of 164 Carriage Drive spoke in support of the application as a mother of 3 using Kindercare and a nanny but in need of a better solution and stated parents will be the most cautious drivers when picking up children in the neighborhood.

A gentleman from St. Marks Circle spoke in favor of the application stating traffic will increase only slightly because parents will not be picking up the children at the same time. Planning has taken place over 4 months and there has been open forums and no opposition was given. There will only be one or two additional buses.

The Chairman asked for comments from commissioners.

Commissioner Greer asked if buses will exit through Cody Circle. Ms. Gladdens stated they have not yet heard from the bus company about their route and described existing stops the bus will most likely make. The commissioner stated he would not be in favor of having a police presence during drop offs as the Town would incur the cost and asked if there will be any cost to the Town to run the program. Ms. Gladdens stated she did not think there would be and discussed enrollment numbers.

Vice Chairman Foley asked Mr. Zimmerman about other options for solutions for the program. Mr. Zimmerman stated a comparable solution will be run with the Y at Avery Street Church which still needs to get approvals. The Vice Chair asked if there was any direct outreach to the neighbors. Rabbi Glickman stated he did not have contact with all neighbors but did have contact with some and there was more publicity about the information meeting than anything else that has taken place in his 24 years with the synagogue. The Vice

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Chair asked if daycare use is approved for the synagogue. Director Lipe stated it is not but when the synagogue was first approved in 1999 nighttime use of classrooms was approved and in 2010 approval was granted for about 35 children for daycare but never the facility was never started up. Ms. Gladdens described their goal to have care set up at Temple Beth Hillel and once licensing is in place open the Avery Street Church program.

Commissioner Dexter asked when they will open and would they be willing to limit the amount of children playing outside at one time. Ms. Gladdens stated their plan is to open October 1 and are willing to limit the number of kids playing out of doors based on their 1 to 10 ratio and are agreeable to the limit as an approval condition.

Commissioner Wagner asked about the requested use in Table 3.1.1A which Director Lipe stated is a non-profit educational use. He also asked if a crosswalk can be created across Baker Lane, and the 'No Right Turn' sign moved off private property and onto the Town right of way so it can be enforced, and to install a 4-way stop at Baker Lane and Governors Highway. The Director recommended getting police input before any approval conditions are put in place regarding on street road signage as the Traffic Authority has jurisdiction of over road signage. A two year temporary and conditional permit was discussed but not recommended since it was proposed as a permanent solution.

Commissioner Wagner asked whether Wapping School could be used. Mr. Zimmerman explained it will not since it is being used by the Parks and Recreation Department and is not in district with Pleasant Valley School. Mr. Tim Wentzell of 630 Governors Highway recalled a stop sign which was later removed and suggested a painted crosswalk to help with traffic calming on Governors Highway.

Commissioner Flagg discussed the program run by the Y with Ms. Gladdens and suggested a traffic study be done and agreed with having the right hand turn sign on Town property.

Commissioner LeBlanc shared concerns about traffic and spoke highly about the 4th R program which his children went through remembering the time it took to pick them up from the program which did have an impact on traffic. The original number of 120 will be too many but voiced agreement with a limited number and approval conditions in place.

The Chairman thanked the public for speaking and asked if Baker Lane is sized for buses. Director Lipe stated Baker Lane and Cody Circle are standard Town subdivision roads at 26' wide and the width of the temple's entrance driveway is 24' flaring out at the road. The Chairman stated he would be more comfortable with an approval if their driveway could safely accommodate buses and the number of students was limited to up to 50.

The Chairman asked for the original approval conditions from 1999 and suggested parking be reviewed by the traffic commission for what will be allowed on Baker Lane. The Chairman suggested traffic calming measures on Governors Highway be proposed as part of the special exception and a limit of 30 children outside at a time for play. Painted walkways for handicap accessibility were requested. Parking requirements were explained and discussed.

Mr. Ruchin commented though the Y is seeking approval the synagogue membership of Beth Hillel still needs to vote on this and approve the use for the temple.

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Commissioner Greer asked if school vacation days would result in full day care. Ms. Gladdens replied it would be full days 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and described their process and decision to limit enrollment to 50. Commissioner Greer stated it will be difficult to make a decision without information on how buses will drop off and pick up students.

Vice Chairman Foley asked about snow conditions and location of the playground area. Ms. Gladdens noted snow removal on Baker Lane will be the responsibility of the synagogue and any change in the location of the playground area would have to be discussed with them.

Discussion ensued about the one or two buses that will be used to bring children from other school districts.

Mr. Peter Andrews of 80 Cody Circle asked why the Commission would not wait on voting until concerns and questions are answered. The Chairman stated if commissioners have adequate information the public hearing can be closed and will be able to move forward.

Commissioner LeBlanc voiced concern about how the traffic generated will flow from Baker Lane onto Governors Highway and if there is an existing traffic study. Director Lipe stated the traffic study goes back to the original application. Sgt. Duschene from Police Services requested a traffic analysis for 120 children but with the number reduced to 50 he was comfortable without one unless the number is increased.

Commissioner Wagner noted the regular bus stop for children from Pleasant Valley school is not at the synagogue and asked that the BOE work with the bus company so that there is a stop at the temple and not on Governors Highway.

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to close the public hearing at 10:30 p.m.

Commissioner LeBlanc seconded the motion.

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

SPECIAL MEETING / COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CALL TO ORDER:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

NEW BUSINESS: Discussion/Decision/Action regarding the following:

Commissioner Greer made a motion to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m.

Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion.

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

- 1. Appl. 18-43P, Indian Valley Family YMCA, Ellington CT** – request for a Special Exception to Article 3.1.A to operate a before and after school program for a maximum of 120 children at the Temple Beth Hillel facility, on property located at 20 Baker Lane, A -20 zone

Commissioner Dexter made a motion to approve with the following conditions:

1. The program will have a maximum of 20 children for the morning and maximum of 50 children in the afternoon. In the event the applicant would like to increase the number of attendees, a traffic study will be required at the time of the application.

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2. The program will open at 7:00 a.m. and close at approximately 8:30 a.m. The program will re-open at approximately 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and at 1:30 p.m. on half-day Wednesdays. Pickups will occur between 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. When there is no school during the school year (other than major holidays and major Jewish holidays), the YMCA will provide care from 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. There will be no bus activity on these days, only parent drop off and pick up.
3. The sight line at the intersection of Governor's Highway and Baker Lane must be improved to be compliant with sight distance based on the speed of traffic.
4. The Building Official must be contacted to determine what building permits may be required for this use.
5. The Fire Marshal's comments about additional walkways to the parking areas from exit doors must be incorporated into the final plans.
6. The parking lot that will be utilized for outside play should be blocked off with cones, or some other barrier, during its use.
7. All free standing signs and/or building signs require the issuance of a sign permit before they are erected.
8. No more than thirty (30) children are permitted outside at one time.
9. Crosswalks are to be added to the intersection of Baker Lane and Governor's Highway and Baker Lane and Cody Circle.

Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion and added conditions that an agreement with parents participating in the program require entry and exit from Governor's Highway and not via Cody Circle and that the right turn only sign is moved onto Town property so that it can be enforced by the Police.

Commissioner Dexter accepted the two conditions as a friendly amendment.

Vice Chairman Foley added a condition that if the use does not receive approval by the membership of Temple Beth Hillel that any further use of the property will return back to the Commission for approval.

Commissioner Dexter accepted the condition as a friendly amendment and Director Lipe read the added conditions:

10. An agreement with parents participating in the program will be made to enter and exit the property only from Governor's Highway.
11. The right turn sign is to be moved onto Town property so that Police can enforce it.
12. If the membership of Temple Beth Hillel does not approve the use any other use on the property will require additional approval from the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Motion passed 6 in favor and 1 against. Commissioners LeBlanc, Flagg, Wagner, Dexter, Foley and Pacekonis voting for and Commissioner Greer voting against.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Special Meeting adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lauren L. Zarambo
Recording Secretary