



Town of Seymour  
Department of Land Use & Code Compliance  
Wetlands & Watercourses, Planning & Zoning,  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
20 Pine Street 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Seymour, CT 06483  
(Subject to Revision)

COPY RECEIVED  
DATE: 6/1/26  
TIME: 4:00pm  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

**Public Hearing Minutes- May 7, 2026**  
Seymour Community Center, 20 Pine Street, Seymour, CT 06483

**Attendees**

**Members Present:** Chairman P. Wilhelmy, P. Chapla, P. Wetowitz, B. Lynch, S. Walsh, A. DeFelice (alternate)

**Others Present:** M. Marganski, CZEO; J. Baldwin, Dir. Land Use; Attorney J. Marini, Town Land Use Counsel; Attorney Stephen Bellis (Representing Alfred and Kristen Bruno); Alfred Bruno 10 Macconnie Ct, Seymour, CT; Kim Warner (Applicant/Appellant) Owner of Red Clover Farm 174 S. Benham Rd.; Seymour First Selectwoman Annmarie Drugonis 111 Middle Benham Rd.

**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman P. Wilhelmy opened the public hearing at 7:09pm and led assembled with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Roll Call (Seat alternate as necessary)**

Chairman Wilhlmey introduced the board, alternate was not needed.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman led assembled in pledge during call to order.

**4. Application ZBA-26-2: 174 South Benham Road, Seymour, CT 06483**

Chairman read legal notice into the record, introduced the board to the public. Chairman reviewed the public hearing procedures and requested that all public comments remain respectful and orderly throughout the hearing.

Attorney John Marini addressed the audience regarding the hearing process and stated the Board would first hear testimony from the appellant, followed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer presentation, questions from the Board, and public comment.

**Applicant Presentation:** Kim Warner, owner of Red Clover Farms, 174 South Benham Road, Seymour, CT addressed the Board in support of the appeal. Ms. Warner stated that Red Clover Farms has operated continuously as a family farm since 1915. Ms. Warner stated that Town records identified the barn structure as commercial and that annual Fire Marshal approvals had been issued for occupancy. Ms. Warner stated she had discussions with zoning staff regarding workshops, seminars, and related



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programming prior to operating such activities and relied upon those discussions in establishing programming at the farm.

Ms. Warner stated the activities conducted at the farm included workshops, retreats, educational programming, music gatherings, artisan activities, and agricultural-related events intended to support and sustain the farm operation. Ms. Warner stated the activities were customary accessory uses associated with agriculture and farming operations.

Ms. Warner further stated the Cease-and-Desist Order stemmed from a complaint and argued that other farms within Seymour and surrounding municipalities conducted similar activities without enforcement action. Ms. Warner requested the Board vacate the Cease-and-Desist Order.

**CZEO Presentation:** CZEO Michael Marganski read the Cease-and-Desist Order dated April 13, 2026 into the record.

CZEO stated the property located at 174 South Benham Road is located within the R-40 Residential Zone and that an investigation determined activities occurring on the property included weddings, live musical performances, open mic events, artisan markets, wellness retreats, yoga classes, food truck activity, and related commercial programming.

CZEO stated these activities were not permitted uses within the R-40 Zone under the Seymour Zoning Regulations. CZEO further stated that mobile food trucks and related commercial activities were expressly permitted only within designated commercial and industrial zones.

CZEO stated that certain agricultural and farm stand related activities may qualify as customary accessory uses; however, weddings, open mic nights, musical performances, and similar events exceeded what could reasonably be interpreted as subordinate agricultural uses. CZEO stated the Cease-and-Desist Order was issued based upon those findings.

CZEO further submitted into the record approximately 60 emails received in support of Red Clover Farms as well as petitions containing approximately 2,000 signatures supporting the farm and opposing the enforcement action.

#### **5. Public Comment:**

**Attorney Stephen Bellis:** Attorney Stephen Bellis, representing adjacent property owners Alfred and Kristen Bruno of 10 Macconie Court, Seymour, CT spoke in opposition to the appeal. Attorney Bellis stated the complaint was not directed toward farming activities, but rather commercial activities occurring on the property which he argued were not permitted within the R-40 Zone. Attorney Bellis stated agricultural uses are defined within the zoning regulations and Connecticut General Statutes and argued the activities identified in the Cease-and-Desist Order did not constitute farming operations. Attorney Bellis stated the Zoning Enforcement Officer acted appropriately in issuing the Order.



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**Alfred Bruno – 10 Macconie Court:** Mr. Bruno stated he and his wife purchased their property knowing it abutted a farm and that they support farming and agricultural uses. Mr. Bruno stated concerns arose from the evolution of the property into what he characterized as a commercial event venue including weddings, food trucks, music events, wellness activities, and retail operations. Mr. Bruno stated he believed zoning regulations and permitting procedures should apply equally to all residents and businesses.

**Darlene Zawisza – 42 Hotchkiss Terrace, Ansonia:** Ms. Zawisza spoke in support of Red Clover Farms and referenced the agricultural history of Great Hill Road and surrounding farm families. Ms. Zawisza stated music and community gatherings historically occurred on local farms. Ms. Zawisza questioned procedural aspects of the enforcement process and expressed support for Red Clover Farms and agricultural preservation.

**Matthew Carano – Middlebury:** Mr. Carano stated the farm promotes responsible land use, local arts, and community engagement. Mr. Carano stated the events were respectful in nature and requested the Board vacate the Cease-and-Desist Order.

**Kathleen Brown Carano – Middlebury:** Ms. Carano spoke regarding community fellowship and musical gatherings held at the farm. Ms. Carano stated the events were peaceful, acoustic in nature, and positively impacted attendees.

**Josh James – 29 Maple Street, Seymour:** Mr. James stated the issue represented a broader discussion regarding the future of farming and small business within Seymour. Mr. James referenced Connecticut Right to Farm principles and stated municipalities should balance agricultural viability with neighborhood concerns.

**Lucky Gold – 23 Peach Drive:** Mr. Gold stated Red Clover Farms created opportunities for community engagement, compassion, and connection and supported continuation of the activities at the farm.

**Karen Esposito – Seymour:** Ms. Esposito spoke in support of Red Clover Farms and described participation in workshops, artisan markets, and seasonal events. Ms. Esposito stated the activities supported local vendors, tourism, and the local economy.

**Cheryl McMahon – Shelton:** Ms. McMahon spoke regarding the economic and community benefits associated with Red Clover Farms and stated farms must diversify operations to remain viable. Ms. McMahon stated the activities preserved farmland and promoted agricultural education.



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**Brian Kalinowski – 158 South Benham Road:** Mr. Kalinowski stated he was one of the closest neighboring property owners to the farm and supported the activities occurring on the property. Mr. Kalinowski characterized the events as marketing and promotional activities related to the farm operation.

**Vera Roy:** Ms. Roy stated the farm gatherings were small scale and community-oriented and expressed support for allowing the activities to continue.

**Frank Parvola – Ansonia:** Mr. Parvola spoke in support of Red Clover Farms and referenced the positive community atmosphere associated with the farm and related events.

**Peter Raza – 33 Woodcrest Road:** Mr. Raza referenced other farms within Seymour and neighboring communities that conduct events, workshops, and seasonal programming. Mr. Raza questioned why Red Clover Farms had been singled out for enforcement action.

**Diana Kaprowski – Newtown:** Ms. Kaprowski, a farmer from Newtown, spoke regarding agritourism and diversification of modern farming operations. Ms. Kaprowski referenced Connecticut Department of Agriculture guidance regarding agritourism and stated farms require supplemental activities to remain financially sustainable.

**Christine Audette Ernfeld:** Ms. Ernfeld spoke regarding the agricultural history of the area and stated community events, educational programs, and gatherings had historically occurred on local farms.

**Debbie Rene:** Ms. Rene expressed support for Red Clover Farms and stated the farm positively promoted the Town of Seymour.

**Joshua Warren:** Mr. Warren referenced Connecticut Right to Farm statutes and questioned whether local zoning regulations conflicted with state agricultural protections.

**Nancy Chepta – 77 Tomlinson Road:** Ms. Chepta referenced the agricultural history of Great Hill Road and stated music, square dances, and gatherings historically occurred on local farms.

**Silas Pinto:** Mr. Pinto expressed support for Red Clover Farms and questioned why the farm had become the subject of enforcement action.

**Theresa Conroy- 177 Squantuck Rd:** Former State Representative and lifelong Seymour resident, spoke in support of Red Clover Farms and preservation of local farmland. Ms. Conroy referenced historical farming operations within Seymour and stated concern regarding continued loss of farmland within the community. Ms. Conroy referenced community events within residential zones utilizing food trucks and



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encouraged Town officials and land use commissions to review and update zoning regulations related to agricultural and community-based activities. Ms. Conroy stated Red Clover Farms is a positive asset to the Town of Seymour.

**Jim Zioli – 621 Lambert Road, Orange:** Mr. Zioli, a farmer, spoke regarding the evolution of modern farms and diversification of agricultural operations. Mr. Zioli referenced procedures utilized in other municipalities to address agritourism and farm events through local regulations.

**John Juhalski – 15 Third Avenue:** Mr. Juhalski referenced historical gatherings and music associated with local farms and questioned consistency in enforcement activities within the Town.

**Vin Porzio – Ansonia:** Mr. Porzio spoke regarding agricultural hardships and government regulation impacting farms and expressed support for Red Clover Farms.

**Pam Honahan – Naugatuck:** Ms. Honahan spoke regarding participation in a wellness retreat at Red Clover Farms and described the property as a positive community resource.

**Nicole Klarides-Ditria-12 Woodland Path in Beacon Falls:** Ms. Clarice-Ditria, a Connecticut small business owner, spoke in support of Red Clover Farms and local agricultural businesses. Ms. Klarides-Ditria stated the Town should consider reviewing processes and regulations to better support farms and small businesses within the community. Ms. Klarides-Ditria also expressed support for women-owned businesses and the importance of agriculture to Connecticut's economy.

**Heather Dokla- 174A S. Benham Rd:** Ms. Dokla spoke regarding the longstanding history of the Dokla family farm and stated her grandmother instilled farming values and traditions within the family. Ms. Dokla stated Ms. Warner returned to the farm years earlier to assist in caring for family members and continued the agricultural traditions associated with the property. Ms. Dokla referenced historical music and gatherings occurring at the farm and stated the current activities represented efforts to adapt and sustain the farm operation. Ms. Dokla further stated farms and small businesses must explore various opportunities and programming in order to remain financially viable while preserving the agricultural and historical character of the property and the Town of Seymour.

**Resident- 106 Maple St:** The speaker, a lifelong Seymour resident, spoke regarding the historical presence of farms throughout Seymour and stated Red Clover Farms represents one of the remaining longstanding agricultural properties within the community. The speaker referenced the history of the Dolka family farm and stated the farm predates current zoning regulations. The speaker further stated the activities and events promoted at the farm help bring awareness to the property and support continued agricultural operations.



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**Edward Zehall- 5 Davis Rd:** Mr. Zehall, a business owner and individual with family farming history, spoke regarding the importance of preserving local farms and supporting small businesses within Seymour. Mr. Zehall encouraged cooperation and compromise between neighboring property owners and the farm operation and expressed concern that loss of the farm could ultimately result in future residential development with greater impacts to the neighborhood. Mr. Zehall stated Red Clover Farms contributes positively to the local economy and community.

**Roger Dilliber- 15 Elmwood Dr.:** Mr. Dilliber, a longtime Seymour resident, spoke in support of Red Clover Farms and expressed concern regarding the ongoing dispute surrounding the property. Mr. Dilliber encouraged cooperation between neighboring property owners and stated the farm and its activities provide a positive community atmosphere and opportunity for public engagement.

**Aaron Dewitt-owner of Mustang Meadow, Oxford, CT:** Mr. DeWitt spoke regarding farm-related events and activities and stated that uses such as farm weddings and agricultural wellness programming are inherently tied to farm properties and agricultural settings. Mr. DeWitt expressed support for recognizing such activities as part of modern farm operations.

**Anmarie Drugonis Seymour First Selectwoman-111 Middle Benham Rd.:** First Selectwoman acknowledged the difficulty of the Board's decision and stated the Board was responsible for determining the validity of the Cease-and-Desist Order, while emphasizing that amendments to zoning regulations would fall under the authority of the Planning and Zoning Commission and elected officials. The speaker requested the Board consider allowing Red Clover Farms additional time to comply while encouraging the Planning and Zoning Commission to review and amend regulations related to agricultural activities and modern farm operations.

**Chris Carson- 49 N. Benham Rd:** Mr. Carson stated he and his family had known the Bruno family for many years and spoke positively regarding their character and community involvement. Mr. Carson stated the issue before the Board was ultimately a legal and zoning matter and expressed that any desired changes to regulations should occur through the established democratic and legislative process.

**John Shea- 174 S. Benham Rd:** Mr. Shea stated he and his family have resided at the farm property since 2002 and described prior agricultural uses of the property, including Christmas tree operations, hay production, and participation in conservation programs. Mr. Shea stated farming operations have evolved over time in an effort to maintain the financial viability of the farm and expressed support for continued adaptation of the farm business.



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**William Della Camera, owner of Ciccarelli's Harrison Hill Farm, Northford, CT and Northeast Director of the American Ag Movement:** Mr. Della Camera spoke regarding the challenges facing modern farms and stated agricultural operations have evolved over time in order to remain financially viable. Mr. Della Camera stated farming activities are protected under Connecticut agricultural laws and expressed concern that continued complaints and enforcement actions against farms could negatively impact agricultural operations statewide. Mr. Della Camera encouraged municipalities and land use boards to work cooperatively with farms through appropriate zoning mechanisms and approvals rather than actions that could threaten continued agricultural use. Mr. Della Camera further stated many residential developments were constructed adjacent to longstanding farms and emphasized the importance of preserving farming for future generations.

**Additional Public Comments:**

Additional members of the public spoke both in support of and opposition to the appeal. General comments included support for preservation of local farms, concerns regarding commercial activity within residential zones, agricultural sustainability, community programming, traffic, noise, and consistency of zoning enforcement.

**Chairman Wilhelmy,** at this time asked if there was any further public comment on the application 3 times. Upon hearing no further public comment, asked if the applicant/appellant would like to respond.

**Kim Warner:** Ms. Warner responded to comments made during the hearing and stated there appeared to be inconsistencies regarding the classification of the barn structure and the commercial enforcement action. Ms. Warner clarified that certain references identified online, including weddings and retreats, were conceptual or future planning items and not established commercial operations. Ms. Warner further stated agricultural activities continue on the property including produce cultivation, hay production, beekeeping, and conservation-related farming efforts. Ms. Warner also stated children's educational programming conducted at the farm incorporated agricultural, artistic, and musical components intended to support community engagement and education. Ms. Warner expressed concern regarding the timing of the Cease-and-Desist Order during the farm's operating season and stated the family farm has historically served the Seymour community for many years.

**6. Disposition of Public Hearing:**

- a. Public Hearing shall close within 35 days.

**Motion made to continue the Public Hearing**

**Made by Chapla, seconded by Wetowitz**

**Vote: Aye-6 Nay-0 Abstain- 0**

**All in favor motion passed.**

*Staff will send notification of the next meeting for continuation.*



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Respectfully Submitted,

L. Rajvong  
Clerk, Zoning Board of Appeals