

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Avon held a regular hybrid meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2026. Present were Lisa Levin (in person, sat) Chair, Peter Mahoney (virtual, sat), Joseph Gentile (in person, sat), Robin Baran (in person, sat) Vice Chair, Jamie DiPace (in person, sat), Chris White (in person, sat), Alternates Randall Bowers (virtual, did not sit), Mardelle Pena (in person, sat only for App #5083), Clay Stevenson (in person, sat). Christine Graesser was absent. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and Community Development.

The meeting was called to order at 7pm.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. White motioned to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2026, meeting, as amended by Ms. Levin. The motion seconded by Ms. Baran received approval from White, Baran, Gentile, Mahoney, Stevenson, Levin. Mr. DiPace abstained.

PUBLIC HEARING

App. #5079 - Red House Homes, LLC, owner/applicant, request for 4-lot Subdivision, 5.75 acres, 41 Verville Road, Parcel 4430041, in R15 and R30 Zones

App. #5080 - Red House Homes, LLC, owner/applicant, request for Special Permit under Sections 5.12 and 7.1.C. of Avon Zoning Regulations for three rear lots, 41 Verville Road, Parcel 4430041, in R15 and R30 Zones

The public hearing was continued from January 13.

Tim Coon, PE, was present in person on behalf of the owner. Bruce Appell, Fire Marshal, was also present in person.

Ms. Levin noted that Mr. Peck visited the site on two separate occasions (Feb 4 and Feb 5) with some members of the Commission. Ms. Graesser submitted comments (via email dated Jan 21, 2026) that were distributed to all members and read into the record by Ms. Levin. A letter was received February 10 from Bryant Chatfield.

Mr. Peck addressed questions from the Commission at the last meeting and reported that he has spoken with the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD) in connection with any problems with wells in the area/abutting properties – the FVHD indicated that there are no records of any problems in their files/records. The FVHD confirmed, however, that if there were any issues with abutting wells that that would be an issue between the homeowner and the Health District and no one else. All the proposed wells for the subject applications are cited in accordance with existing Regulations. He explained that all proposed utilities (electricity) are reviewed and addressed during the building permitting process by the Building Official, Town Engineer, Fire Marshal, and Planning Director for compliance/conformance to all standards and Codes. The Town Engineer has reviewed the proposed sewer connection noting no problems with the project, adding that all standards/requirements of the AWPCA must be met.

Mr. Peck addressed open space and the submitted appraisal – the Subdivision Regulations are clear that the Commission has the ability to ask for or agree with the applicant for the donation of 10% of the pre-development, fair market value of the land. There are several options – the Commission can say they don't want any open space and won't require it. The Commission can require open space land located on the subject property – the applicant has indicated they don't want to do that and prefer the fee in lieu option (which is \$26,000 in this instance). If an approval is granted with the fee in lieu option, the entire fee could be requested up front or a percentage of the fee attached to each lot and collected when sold. The decision is ultimately up to the Commission. He explained that the Town has a fund called "Open Space Fees in Lieu of Land Dedication" and while not a lot of fees in lieu

have been collected in recent years, significant fees have been collected over the years for past subdivision approvals – the fund currently contains well over \$500K. He confirmed that these funds can only be used to purchase open space in the Town.

Bruce Appell, Fire Marshal, noted that he is also the Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director and reviews all proposals/projects wearing all three hats. The Fire Marshal has no jurisdiction over single-family homes – everything falls under the Building Code/Building Official but the Fire Marshal can make recommendations and the biggest issue for the Fire Department is access. The proposed driveway is about 600 feet from Verville Road – the closest hydrant is about 1,000 feet, located at the corner of Verville and Deepwood. All fire trucks carry a minimum of 1,000 feet of hose. There are plenty of areas in Town where multiple fire trucks are needed because the closest hydrants are farther than 1,000 feet away. Modern streets have standard distances of 500-700 feet between hydrants. He explained that there are many older narrow roads in Town but it does not affect the Fire Department's capability to fight fires.

Mr. Coon, PE, confirmed that the proposed driveway is 12-feet wide and paved.

Mr. Appell continued by explaining that a 12-foot wide driveway will accommodate fire trucks. He requested the installation of a dry pipe system (in the ground) from the end of the driveway to the farthest "T" intersection. The first truck coming in lays a line from the hydrant to the end of the driveway, hook up then drive down the driveway and hook up/connect to the dry pipe system/hydrant. A dry pipe/hydrant means a hose does not have to be laid down in the driveway allowing access to the site for other emergency vehicles, as needed.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Appell explained/reiterated that having a dry pipe in the ground allows you to lay a line/hose from the hydrant down the street to the end of the mailbox where you hook up to the dry pipe sleeve which charges the line/hose located next to the driveway to a connection at the bottom of the driveway – another hose is connected at that point that goes into the fire truck. Mr. Appell explained that we are pre-laying pipe in the ground should it ever be needed. The design of the driveways is such that a fire truck or other emergency vehicle could back into the other driveway to be able to drive out and exit the site (without having to back all the way out).

In response to Mr. DiPace, Mr. Appell explained that the hydrant is 400 feet from the location of the "T" intersection on the driveways.

In response to Mr. Gentile, Mr. Appell explained that typically dry pipes do not require maintenance or inspections – he noted that he will work with the design with the engineers – basically it will be a 5-inch PVC or steel pipe installed at least 4-feet underground with a dry connection at the top of the road and a connection at the bottom with some type of valve system to allow for cleaning out the entire pipe system. In order to charge the line it has to be completely drained. He added that there should be some training for the Fire Department on the dry pipe system. Mr. Appell indicated that if the system is installed properly there should not be a maintenance issue.

In response to Ms. Baran, Mr. Appell noted there are other locations in Town with a dry pipe system. He agreed that it would be very beneficial to drain the dry pipe line on the subject site after use, as the houses will be located below the street line.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Appell noted his knowledge of the fire that occurred about 10 years ago on Verville Road and explained that anytime a fire truck parks on a narrow road the opportunity to get by it is very limited and once a ladder truck parks the whole road is shut down anyway. He noted that while he doesn't have the fire report with him for the aforementioned fire that occurred 10 years, he indicated that all fire instances/records are

reviewed and he doesn't recall ever reading or hearing anything indicating fire access problems – he noted that he has been a member of the Fire Department for 40 years and a Chief Officer since 1997. He pointed out that fire hydrants only exist on one side of the road so there is potential for access complexities in many locations. He explained that there is nothing in the Fire Code that looks at the number of houses to determine the number of hydrants needed – there is no ratio. The standard is how many gallons are needed to put out a typical single-family house – an average house requires about 750 gallons per minute. If a house were located 3,000 feet or more from a water source it would be relevant – in this instance the distance is less than 1,000 feet. Mr. Appell stated that given the additional safeguard measures he has proposed, the subject proposal does not pose a risk to public health or safety.

Mr. Peck explained that the question from the last meeting relating to methane does not pertain to the subject site. The methane issue involved new house construction on School Street within the last year or so – methane was released during excavation but dissipated over time.

Mr. Coon, PE, thanked the Fire Chief for providing clarification on health and safety issues. Addressing concerns from the last meeting, he explained that the proposed three wells have been approved by the Farmington Valley Health District and sited in accordance with all Regulations. There is no anticipation that there will be any impacts to the existing neighboring wells from three additional wells. He pointed out that the subject site is zoned both R15 (minimum lot size 15,000 SF) and R30 (minimum lot size 30,000 SF) which would allow for more lots and more wells than what is being proposed. Rear lots require more land per the Zoning Regulations. All three proposed rear lots are oversized and contain over 60,000 SF each so the well density is less than what would typically be required in these zones and is also less than the existing well density in this area. He explained that if a standard subdivision with a cul-de-sac public road with standard lots sizes were proposed the result would be more lots/homes. The subject proposal for three rear lots is deemed the least impactful for the neighborhood.

In response to Mr. DiPace, Mr. Peck explained that there is one driveway that will serve one of the rear lots; there is another driveway that will serve two of the rear lots. Mr. DiPace noted his favor for fire sprinklers inside homes, especially in places where hydrants are not that close by.

Mr. Coon indicated that installing fire sprinklers in these houses would be up to the owner/builder.

In response to a general discussion, Mr. Peck noted he would look at the former Zoning Regulations for language relating to fire suppression and the requirement for a certain number of gallons per minute.

In response to Mr. Gentile, Mr. Peck explained that if a traditional subdivision were proposed with a road/cul-de-sac there is potential for six lots in this zone and open space would still be a requirement under the Subdivision Regulations.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Coon explained that he could provide a “sample” for a shared driveway maintenance agreement – an easement would need to be in place. He further explained that at this time there is no construction plan in place, as it is not known how they will be developed (sold all together or individually).

Mr. Peck explained that a shared driveway agreement would be supplied to the Town as part of the deed review done by the Town Attorney. The driveway agreement would be filed in the Land Records at the same time as the filing mylars for the subdivision and Special Permit for the rear lots.

The hearing was opened for public comment.

Bryant Chatfield, 35 Verville Road, asked if all the underground connections would be done prior to house construction on any of the lots. He asked how the Town would keep track of all the construction details if each lot is developed individually. He noted his concerns for blasting/hole ramming due to the ledge in the area. He noted concerns for his own well – he also wonders where all the snow will be put from the long driveways.

Mr. Coon explained that the sewer connection would be done only once – a connection would be made to the manhole in the street so the street is closed only once. All utilities would be installed prior to the road being paved. The force mains would be brought up all at once if all lots are developed by one person; if not the force mains could be brought up individually.

Mr. Peck explained that prior to the beginning of any construction on any lot a pre-construction meeting is held with the developer and Town Staff to ensure all standards and requirements are met. In addition, any blasting that may be proposed requires a permit from the Fire Marshal and input/review from the Town Engineer.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Peck confirmed that if a six-lot subdivision were proposed here with a road, all the same concerns/issues would exist and may be amplified depending on the proposed infrastructure.

Mr. Peck confirmed that Town Staff (Engineering, Health District, Building, Fire, Planning) is very familiar with all the concerns being voiced here – Town Staff address/review all types of issues/concerns routinely when reviewing all permitting applications.

Mr. Kulinski, 49 Verville Road (rear lot), noted his concerns with his well and septic when clearing and grading are done on the subject site, as well as removal of the stone wall.

Mr. Coon explained that the plans show the proposed clearing limits associated with house construction – he confirmed that the existing stone wall located at 41 Verville Road is not proposed to be taken down.

Dan Fortin, 33 Verville Road, noted that he has a very treed view right now - the proposal is overly aggressive and takes away a lot of his privacy. He asked how he can be assured that his property value will not decrease. There are many unanswered questions - the Zoning Regulations should be taken into account as to why this project cannot go forward.

Jared Boorky, 68 Verville Road, noted his concerns with wildlife and rainwater impacts on existing house. He noted his is against allowing the donated property on Huckleberry Hill to satisfy the open space requirement.

Carrie Edquist, 42 Verville Road, noted she has lived on this road for over 50 years and is very upset that this land is being developed – flooding is also a concern.

There were no more public comments.

After some discussion, the Commission agreed that they can only suggest that fire sprinklers be installed.

There being no further discussion the public hearing for Apps #5079-80 was closed, as well as the entire public hearing portion of the meeting.

Ms. Levin motioned to table Apps #5079-80 to the next meeting; the motion was seconded by Ms. Baran and received unanimous approval.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING**OUTSTANDING APPLICATION**

App. #5081 - Christopher Norman and Darcy Firebaugh, owners/applicants, request for Special Permit under Sections 5.5 and 7.1.C. of Avon Zoning Regulations to permit earth removal, 4 Vermillion Drive, Parcel 4420004, in the RU2A Zone

Mr. Peck offered background from the January 13 meeting noting the application presentation was complete and the hearing closed. The property owner at 15 Vermillion wanted to ensure that all erosion and sedimentation controls would be in place to avoid any adverse effects to neighboring properties and submitted a letter for the file. Less excavation is proposed than was previously approved. He indicated Staff recommends approval with all the items listed in his Staff Memo.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Peck explained that the applicant would like to start as soon possible, weather permitting. The time period for removal is expected to last 5-6 months - the hope is that it can happen as quickly as possible so the site can be stabilized and vegetated as soon as possible. The amount of earth to be removed is 8,400 CYs and the hours of operation are 8am to 5pm The need for a bond is determined only by the Town Engineer, per the Regulations.

Mr. White motioned to approve App #5081 subject to the following conditions:

1. Excavation shall be completed in accordance with all aspects of the applicant's project narrative as well as all requirements of the Town Engineering Department, per their memo dated 1/2/26 (copy enclosed).
2. The applicant/contractor shall setup a preconstruction meeting with Town Staff prior to beginning any site activities including excavation.
3. Special attention shall be paid to erosion and sedimentation control measures on this site – any problems shall be addressed immediately. Failure to properly control erosion and sedimentation may result in the issuance of a Cease and Desist Order from Town Staff for any work on this site.
4. The Town Engineer shall determine if a bond for erosion and sedimentation is required for this project, with consideration given to the history of this site as well as adjacent sites. If a bond is required, the applicant shall submit a cash bond to the Planning Department prior to beginning any excavation on the site.
5. All necessary improvements to the site entrance shall be made to prevent any tracking or sedimentation issues occurring on local roads. An anti-tracking pad shall be designed and maintained to the satisfaction of both the Planning Director and the Town Engineer.
6. A filing mylar shall be submitted to the Planning Department upon completion of all excavation work.

The motion seconded by Mr. Stevenson received unanimous approval.

NEW APPLICATION

App. #5083 – Dom's Properties LLC, owner, Dom's Creamery LLC, applicant, request for Site Plan Approval to permit playground, 16 West Main Street, Parcel 4540016, in the CS Zone

Present in person were the owners of Dom's Creamery, Andrius and Asta Plankis.

Ms. Baran recused herself and left the room.

Ms. Pena sat for App #5083.

Andrius and Asta explained that they would like to install a playground at Dom's Creamery – the same playground

design that has existed on Iron Horse Boulevard in Simsbury for many years. The playground would be available to all children ages 2-12 years old – the playground would not be installed in the parking area and some type of barriers would be installed between the parking area and the playground. The owners of 14 West Main have been informed of the proposal and is happy about it. The entire playground would be fenced in (a fence that can be seen through) with a locked gate to the parking lot – access to Route 44 will be blocked for safety. The playground would be open only during the business hours for the ice cream shop. They noted they would be happy to consider some minor landscaping near the playground but noted that they don't want to hide the playground from the road as the playground would be open to the community. Benches would be provided for parents as well as bicycle racks. They explained that they wanted to see how the proposal was received before they checked with their insurance company. They noted that the playground design and materials take into account hot weather conditions.

Mr. Peck indicated that should the application be approved, prior to any construction the applicants would meet with Town Staff regarding necessary safety measures from the parking lot (i.e., installation of barriers/bollards and curb stops). He further explained that the playground would be an accessory use to the ice cream shop use; should the ice cream shop cease to operate, the playground may also go away.

Mr. Gentile said that while the playground is a great idea, the location is not warranted. He also stressed his concerns with safety.

Mr. Stevenson motioned to approve App #5083 subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall prepare a plan illustrating how children/parents will enter and exit the fenced in playground area. In addition, a safety plan showing placement of bollards or some type of blockade from the parking lot to the playground is required. Both plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department for review and approval.
2. A fence shall be installed/located completely within the boundaries of the subject site. The fence should not be installed any closer to West Main Street than the existing building porch. A building permit is required prior to fence installation.
3. The applicant needs to determine/confirm the location of any underground utilities prior to any digging or staking in the area for the playground. Applicant shall contact Town Staff (Building, Engineering, Planning) to ensure there are no utility issues. Any necessary digging/staking information shall be shown/included in the building permit.
4. Evergreen landscaping next to the fence to screen from West Main may be required by the Planning Department Staff.

The motion, seconded by Mr. White, received approval from Stevenson, White, Pena, Mahoney, DiPace, Levin. Mr. Gentile voted in opposition of approval.

Ms. Baran returned to the meeting.

Ms. Pena stepped down.

OTHER BUSINESS

8-24 Referral – Request for addition to Senior Center to relocate Department of Social Services

Mr. Peck reported that the proposal is to add office space to relocate the Department of Social Services from the Town Hall Complex to the Senior Center; the proposal also adds program space for seniors. This proposal makes the Senior Center more accessible to all individuals who need and use the services provided by the Department of Social Services, while providing the needed office space for Town employees. Staff recommends approval.

Ms. Levin motioned to approve the 8-24 Referral for an addition to the Senior Center noting consistency with the 2016 POCD. The motion seconded by Mr. Gentile received unanimous approval (Levin, Gentile, Baran, Mahoney, White, DiPace, Stevenson).

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm

Avon Planning and Community Development