

TOWN OF STAMFORD
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MEETING
June 29, 2026
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Board Members: Jean E. Kurpiel, Chair, Sheila G. Lawrence, Sheila Pecor, Theodore N. Dobbert, and David Saldo.

Angela Trudeau, alternate, was not present.

Visitors: Barry Berard, John Dupras (Trinity Engineering), Joseph Lora III, Diane Saldo, Donald Smith, John Stefanik, Charles Welsch, and Susan Welsch.

Debra Burchard, Zoning Administrator.

Lori Shepard, Clerk.

Jean Kurpiel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

MOTION by Sheila Pecor to accept the meeting minutes of June 1, 2026 as written. SECONDED by Ted Dobbert. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The board entertained discussion on ZBA Permit #255 (Building/Change of Use application #2027-4) from Andover Hills, Inc./Joseph Lora, III. Joseph Lora resides at 357 East Road in Stamford and owns property at 2260 Main Road. All visitors present and the appellant were sworn in.

John Dupras from Trinity Engineering is assisting Berry Berard and Joe Berard who will excavate the pit and Joe Lora who is the owner. He provided a large plan for the Zoning Board of Adjustment to view. John Dupras explained that the former Act 250 permit which was good for ten years has expired. He has submitted a new Act 250 permit application which is in the review stage. He has also submitted a Multi-Sector General Permit also known as a Storm Water Permit, with the state. In conjunction with the various state permits, they also need a permit from the town. John Dupras stated that the foot print of the gravel pit is a little smaller than the previous 2009 Act 250 permit. He has consulted with the state and a 50 foot buffer is required between the stream and the gravel pit. He addressed the conditions required in Section 8.2 of our Zoning Bylaws for the approval of the application: showing the proposed grades in blue and the finished grades at the end of the operation, the proper drainage needed, and the return of 4" of topsoil at the conclusion of the gravel operation. No work will be done in the river. He said the hours of operation under the former permit were Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. The new hours of operation requested are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., with rock crusher usage only on weekdays. He explained that this timeframe is more in line with a typical work week. The permit is requested for 20 years.

Jean Kurpiel noted that John Dupras had attended the hearing in 2009 with concerns and asked what has changed. John Dupras noted that the wetlands were not well identified back then, but they are well identified and will be well-protected this time.

Sheila Pecor asked if they would be digging down in the ground. John Dupras responded that they will not be digging down, but will be digging into the bank in a way that will not be steep and will maintain the stability of the mountain side.

Dave Saldo recalled a housing development that was initially started on the property. John Dupras stated that as part of Act 250, the property owner had to give up the development in order to pursue the gravel bank. Dave Saldo asked how close it is to the river and felt the standard buffer was 100 feet. Since the former gravel bank was closer than 50 feet to the river, they will be required to move the gravel extraction site back further and reseed the buffer area with local saplings. Hurricane Irene affected the river and it is encroaching toward the barn area, but it did not affect the gravel pit area.

Deb Burchard, Zoning Administrator, explained that she had to deny the permit as it was outside of her jurisdiction of things she can approve. She showed a map on her tablet indicating that a portion of the gravel bank is within the river corridor. John Dupras viewed the map. Act 250 presents several hurdles that they need to get past. He is working with Vermont regarding the flood plain and the stream. He felt it was important to note that the Berards have removed and piled all of the topsoil on site so that when the project is completed, the property can be restored easily.

Dave Saldo did not feel the town could deny the application if the state allows it. Jean Kurpiel said the town could deny the permit if it presented a traffic hazard or would cause an undue burden on our fire or police department. She feels the environmental concerns will be handled by the state. Dave Saldo asked how the gravel extraction will affect the ground water. John Dupras said that is why a Storm Water Permit is required from the state. The state will require them to install and maintain a settling basin and any discharge will have to be sampled quarterly to be sure they are operating it in a manner that complies with state requirements. There will not be a big hole left when the project is done. There will be a slope with 4" of topsoil that will be replanted with trees.

Ted Dobbert felt the state has been harassing several of the town's gravel bank owners. John Dupras agreed that the state has to stop making it so hard for small gravel banks to stay open. Costs go up when you need to haul gravel for a septic system or driveway from two hours away. Having small local gravel banks can help community members and contribute to the economy.

John Dupras directed the property owner to dig test pits to make sure there was gravel before beginning this process since it is so costly. The testing showed there was approximately 80,000 yards, which taken over a 20 year period, is not that much. This is a small operation.

Susan Welsch asked the governing bodies of Stamford to protect her interests. She does not want to wake up and listen to the noise of excavators and a rock crusher running all day, every day. She asked why the human side of this is not being considered. Barry Berard said the rock crusher will not run all day, every day.

John Stefanik said he is a neighbor and has no problem with the reopening of the gravel pit. He has lived there for many years and does not hear any noise.

Charles Welsch felt there was a presumption by the Zoning Board that Act 250 can override our local Zoning Bylaws. Jean Kurpiel disagreed and noted the board has many things to consider before reaching a decision.

Barry Berard said they will use their own trucks. There is not enough gravel to open the pit up to the public. They will leave all the trees in place as that tends to push sound up instead of out.

Dave Saldo said if our Bylaws are more restrictive, the state can't override them. If they are less restrictive than the state's laws, then the state laws will prevail. He feels the Main Road is a National Scenic Highway so the Zoning Board needs to look at this application seriously. John Dupras said that Act 250 also looks at the aesthetics. This gravel bank is set back and the view from the road will be undisturbed trees. Susan Welsch felt people need to take a stand to preserve the peace, beauty and quietness of the community. Deb Burchard agreed, but also felt that preserving our local gravel banks is important. There is a price to pay when you need your driveway done or a septic system. Hauling from a local area is much less expensive than hauling a long distance.

Jean Kurpiel asked if there was no new testimony or comments from the board, if they were ready to vote. Dave Saldo felt a state representative should come down to the ZBA in order for the board to approve it. John Dupras stated that the state needs our local approval before it moves forward. Dave Saldo felt that because of the river corridor and flood plains, the decision is out of the Zoning Board of Adjustment's hands. He suggested continuing the meeting and asking John Dupras to get back to the board with more information on the river corridor, wetlands, flood plains, and the buffer zone.

The board agreed to recess the meeting to Monday, July 20, 2026 at 6 p.m.

MOTION by Ted Dobbert to adjourn. SECONDED by Sheila Lawrence. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Lori A. Shepard, Clerk

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