

TOWN OF SCOTLAND
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 22, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

Scotland Fire Department, 47 Brook Road, Scotland

- 1. Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by J. Jakubowski at 7:02 pm
Roll Call/Seating of Alternates: J. Nelson, J Troeger, J. Jakubowski, M. Garrison, R. Manning, J. Blake, and Members of the community

 - D. George Seated for B. Syme
 - H. Bowers Seated for R. Brautigam
- 2. Additions or Changes to the Agenda:** M. Gurnack would like to be added to the agenda to discuss a new sign at the Safety Complex
- 3. Approval of Minutes** of the August 25, 2025, meeting
Motion to approve the meeting minutes of the July 28th Regular Meeting made by D. George, 2nd by J. Troeger
Motion carries
- 4. Citizens' Participation:** Second Selectman, M. Gurnack, was seeking approval to install a new electronic sign in place of the current sign at the town Safety Complex on Brook Rd. The size will be 2'x4'x7' tall and will be used to inform the public of various events. Some examples given were as follows: blood drive, open showers, school events, and town meetings. This sign will be dimmable and will contain 7 rows of text. This is out to bid and M. Gurnack is looking for approval from the commission.
Motion to approve the new electronic sign at the Safety Complex on Brook Road made by R. Manning, 2nd by J. Troeger.
Motion carries
- 5. New Business:** Appointment of Jonathan Blake, AICP, CZEO as the new Zoning Enforcement Officer
J. Black gave background on his previous work experience and education. He works full-time for the town of Killingly and will be filling in until a replacement can be found for the Town of Scotland.
Motion to appoint Jonathan Blake as the new Zoning Enforcement Officer made by R. Manning, 2nd by H. Bowers. Motion carries
- 6. Public Hearings:**

 - a. Special Permit Application #PZ2025-002 of Jonathan Owen (Owner/Applicant) for a Place of Worship at 51 Palmer Road (MBL 22-21-6) in the Scotland Village District.
Jonathan Owen, Owner of Forest Wisdom, was available via TEAMS
Motion to re-open PZ2025-002 made by R. Manning, 2nd by M. Garrison

Motion carries

J. Blake stated that hard copies of the packet can be found online and are available at the office of the Town Clerk.

J. Owen stated that he has complied with all the requests of the P&Z Commission and has submitted the following (shown in Power Point presentation)

- Map with the parking for handicapped, overflow, and events
- Floor plans of the house showing worship areas (Living and Dining rooms)
- Any map that was available at Town Hall showing the property lines
- Cost for survey map (\$14K)

Discussion took place addressing the fire code. They would be approved for 49 attendees inside. If the headcount reached 50+ emergency lights and exit signs would need to be installed. To move forward, EHHD and the town's Building Inspector would need to give the ok.

J. Owen stated that if they held an event of that size, it would be outside.

D. Barrow informed J. Owen that he held an inspection previously that day and commented on the fact that it looked good. There were 2 exits plus a set of sliding doors. He should still add exit signs and a railing on the stairs

J. Troger clarified that this hearing does not give permission but that it stated that this could happen. There are still approvals that need to happen before there is a change.

J. Blake stated that the special permit would run with the property and could be transferred from one owner to the next.

Members of the audience were then welcomed to ask questions.

C. Lasch asked if conditions could be applied to the special permit such as dissolution when the land is sold as stated in a previous meeting.

J. Blake was not sure and asked if the commission had sought legal counsel on that.

J. Jakubowski stated that there had been a discussion on that and having a review every 2 years and there are potentially conditions that could be applied.

R. Manning stated that it would be based on duration of renewal vs. ownership of the land. We could put a temporal duration on it but not an owner limitation.

R. Dzieken wanted to know where the town was in requesting an A2 survey of the property.

J. Jakubowski informed her that there is a subdivision map showing the back of the abutting properties on Brunswick Road and that would be sufficient.

Motion to close the public hearing of PZ2025-002 made by R. Manning, 2nd by H. Bowers

Motion carries

The Commission will now have 65 days to render a decision.

- b. Special Permit application PZ2025-003 of Alex Bienvenido (owner/Applicant) for a Rural Business Use (Dog Kennel) at 5 Kemp Road (MBL 6-10-20) usage Residential Agricultural District.

Motion to open PZ2025-003 made by R. Manning, 2nd by H. Bowers

Motion carries

Alex Bienvenido is seeking permission from the Commission to open a dog kennel at 5 Kemp Road. This will be a daycare for dogs as well as a rehabilitation program for dogs to be placed with veterans at no cost to them. A. Bienvenido is a veteran himself and spoke to the number of veterans who would benefit greatly from this program both emotionally and physically. This property is 3.6 acres and images were shown via Power Point for the proposed 24' x 24' soundproofed building along with an attached outdoor run. He has been working closely with the state to ensure that all regulations are addressed.

J. Jakubowski informed the audience that questions will be open to the Commission and then will be open to the floor.

J. Troeger asked how many dogs do they anticipate having at one time and what is the breakdown of dog-sitting vs. rescue dogs in training.

A. Bienvenido stated that there are 8 spaces designated for overnight but there could be more with the rescue dogs. Ideally it would be split 50/50 overnight with no more than 4 rescue dogs and 4 kenneled dogs.

D. George inquired about his dog training background and who would be responsible for training the rescue dogs

A. Bienvenido had in-service training in the Marine Corp and could make his service records open if necessary

H. Bowers spoke to his support of this idea but wanted to say that there may be site review restrictions that could come up, and it would not be an indication of the Commission being against this.

J. Blake asked about the total number of dogs that they could handle and would be reasonable on the property.

A. Bienvenido stated this his own dogs are kept in his house

J. Blake stated that the regulation for a kennel is 5 or more dogs on the premises.

A. Bienvenido stated that there are 3 adults living on the premises and there are also several other volunteers who could easily handle 8-10+ dogs.

J. Blake asked again for the total number of dogs because the commission has the right to regulate this type of use in terms of total number of dogs on the property at any time or the total number of dogs to be kenneled overnight.

A. Bienvenido stated that the outdoor space is 45' x 60' and can easily handle 10 dogs. Total number of dogs would be 10 plus his own personal Frenchie who is in the house.

J. Blake stated that I. Kisluk (previous ZEO) had already had a conversation with A. Bienvenido and the wetlands on site would not be affected.

A. Bienvenido said that the state has heavy regulations. They need to have a sanitation area and storage, and they will be installing a deep sink for baths. They will have a service that cleans up fecal matter and EHHD has approved the use of a dry well for the gray water. As for the cleaning chemicals, the Dept of Health regulates what can be used.

J. Blake asked about the hours of operation.

A. Bienvenido stated that it would ideally be 9-5, with some exceptions to be flexible for customers' schedules. They would like to have Sunday's off but again will be flexible for their clientele.

D. George asked if the building would be heated for winter

A. Bienvenido informed him that yes there is a licensed plumber who will be installing mini-splits and humidifiers

J. Jakubowski asked if the letters of support could be read

J. Blake then read 3 letters from S. Lambert, N. Slater, and K. Chilly all in favor of this application and will be part of the record.

J. Jakubowski opened the floor for questions

Anne Insalaco, adjoining landowner (65 Kemp Road), began by reading a statement she had prepared stating that this is a commercial kennel and believes it needs to be discussed. She highlighted several P&Z regulations. She wants to see the number of dogs limited to 5 and believes that this is a good number to start with. She feels this will have a negative impact on the value of her adjoining land. She mentioned that Scotland does not have a noise ordinance, so she has no one to complain about to if the noise of the dogs becomes excessive. She also mentioned that she was never made privy to this information until she spoke with J. Blake at town hall last week. She states she wants to see this in writing and the conversation her husband had with A. Bienvenido was not sufficient.

J. Jakubowski asked if she received a certified letter and which property was hers on the map

A. Insalaco stated she did not receive a certified letter, showed which property she owned

D. George asked if she had a house on that property, and she stated there was no house on the property, that it was not their residence.

A. Bienvenido then pulled up an image on his cell phone showing that the envelopes that contained the information for the abutters report with the cancellations on the stamps directly from the post office.

There was question at this time whether these letters needed to be sent certified, J. Blake stated that a certified letter or proof of mail is required.

J. Blake pointed out that she was present at the meeting, so she did receive a level of notice.

R. Manning stated that the purpose of the certified letter is that you will have proof that it was never received. Notice means that you got notice and you have had the opportunity to come here and be heard. You may have wanted more notice but, you were informed, you are here.

J. Black confirmed that Zoning Regulation 75-E does not require a “certified” letter to be sent.

J. Jakubowski asked what the timeframe was for this project and if A. Bienvenido could give more specifics of the project in terms of the number dogs, noise, smell, traffic, etc.

A. Bienvenido spoke to the times he had conversations with the Insalaco family (both John and Anne) about this project.

J. Insalaco said as a fellow veteran he agrees that this is a worthy cause but feels that his wife, Anne, did not receive enough notice to research all that she wanted to. There was question to the number of dogs that would be on the property, and they did not know there would be a kennel for boarding overnight dogs. He now feels that there are many more dogs than they were expecting.

K. Chilly stated that she is a real estate agent and is the 2nd closest neighbor. She also stated that this will not have a negative impact on the value of the land, and she and her family are in full support. She also stated that there had been very little noise coming from the property.

D. Barrow spoke about the possibility of soundproofing

A. Bienvenido stated that the building is a regular structure, it’s not a metal building. It will be a wooden structure with siding. It will have 6” spray foam insulation, and studio panels to minimize any noise. He also stated that he has had up to 10 dogs in the dog park and there have been no complaints. According to a NY study, having a non-profit such as this can increase the property values of 5-10%.

R. Manning asked for an explanation within the regulations of the state.

A. Bienvenido said that the “dog park”/outdoor area is 6’ chain link fencing, 45’x65’. The dogs are brought outside several times per day to get exercise.

R. Manning asked J. Blake if conditions could be put to add vegetation.

J. Blake said yes, it would be a 50' setback.

J. Jakubowski asked if A. Bienvenido could step forward and show where the run would be on the map.

A. Bienvenido showed that it would be right in the middle of the property adjacent to the garage and would be attached to the new building.

J. Jakubowski asked if he knew approximately how far from the property line this would be.

A. Bienvenido stated it would be 50' which is just enough to allow the 24'x24' building.

R. Mason stated that he walks by the property daily and there is very little noise. The dogs bark for a minute or so then quiet down.

A. Insalaco questioned if the map was to scale and did not believe it was. She questioned if the setback that was mentioned was to the property line or to the wetlands.

J. Blake informed her that there was no issue with the wetlands being impacted. This had already been discussed and approved with the previous Wetlands Agent.

J. Insalaco stated that for reference the people who say that this has been very quiet, the dogs have been boarded in the house and not in the run until the last month or so.

J. Beck asked what the distance is from the property line to the garage is.

J. Blake measured on the map and determined it was 437'.

A. Bienvenido pointed out that this measurement was to the property line of the vacant property owned by the Insalaco's, the distance to that property line was about the same as 4 football fields.

J. Jakubowski asked the audience if there were any more questions or comments at this time.

S. Niskanen said she is still confused with the number of dogs that will be on the property.

A. Bienvenido stated that 9-5 for daycare, up to 8, overnight, we prefer to stay under 5. The dogs will not be left outside; they will be indoors.

H. Bowers asked if they have a state license

A. Bienvenido said they have been working closely with the state. They are waiting on approval from the Commission to move forward with the state. We have been in touch with the state for over a year. I can give you Melissa Lucas' contact information and that of Shannon Downy. The state gives the license; the town just needs to allow it.

J. Blake stated that if the Commission approves this, a requirement for the state license is an endorsement from the town's Zoning Officer just to submit. The state can then apply any conditions to that license.

J. Jakubowski asked the board if they would like to leave the public hearing open to allow more information to be submitted. He then asked A. Bienvenido if he would be opposed to the Commission keeping the hearing open for 30 more days. He would like the time to come up

with a list of things that the Commission would like to see and to give time to A. Insalaco to get the information she is requesting. J. Jakubowski also stated that if the hearing closes no more information can be accepted, and the Commission could deny the special permit and the process would have to start over.

A. Bienvenido stated that he would not be in favor of that decision. He has many volunteers who are ready to assist him with this project, and a delay could change that. He has been in talks with the previous P&Z Agent for over a year on this and she did not do her job. He feels that with winter coming it could delay the project for months. They feel that they have gone above and beyond with their plans. He is voluntarily spending thousands of dollars more than needed to address any issues of noise which he believes would be the biggest concern.

G. Nelson mentioned some of the regulations that he felt would not allow this

J. Blake stated that only Article 4, Section 7, C 1-6 would apply.

H. Bowers feels that this Commission needs more time and that they have the right to ask for it. There may be things that the Commission feel needs to be done prior to approval such as an A2 survey.

J. Troeger said that A. Insalaco's main concerns were with noise and property value, and he does not believe they have had enough information to discern that

D. George is for granting this tonight assuming building codes are complied with. He does not feel that making this applicant wait any longer is undue. Concerning noise to the property that is not occupied is not an issue.

M. Garrison cannot think of any other questions to ask and agrees with D. George.

R. Manning is also in favor of approving this evening.

J. Blake suggested that conditions should come from Article 4, Section 7, "C" 1-6 which speaks to hours of operation and owner occupancy requirement for running the business.

R. Manning suggests that the Commission approve this evening and put a 1-year renewal on it. Asks if he gets a provisional license from the state how long is it good for.

A. Bienvenido stated it was a year, J. Blake confirmed

J. Jakubowski said that is how the campground is being done. If there is a violation it goes on the agenda otherwise it automatically renews.

J. Jakubowski asked if this hearing was to be closed tonight, what is the Commission's opinion on the 5 or 8 dogs. There is still a question of how many dogs will be there.

A. Bienvenido stated that overnight there will be no more than 8 dogs. Four rescues, and four under care. During the day, there can be as many as 10 with the doggy daycare with 3 staff members. They have already had 12 on the 4th of July with no issues.

S. Gadbois wanted to clarify that there are 8 stalls for overnight. No dogs would be in the outdoor area overnight, and the building can reasonably house. Each space can hold up 2 dogs per stall based on the size of the dog. According to this image this exceeds the number of

dogs you plan to keep. The state would allow up to 16. She feels that if the state allows this space for this number of dogs, the town should not set a lower limit on this.

D. George stated that there are 2 dogs in the image, but that's just showing what could fit.

A conversation of several members happened at this time asking about the number of dogs, A. Bienvenido stated again that the state would allow 16 dogs in this space but that is not the intention of their plans.

A. Insalaco said she does not understand how many dogs will be there; there is no non-profit status. She also stated that the run was just put up and that's why there are no complaints yet but wants the Commission to continue to give them and herself time to figure this out as again, she doesn't understand what's going on. She feels strongly that this will affect her and other residents. She wants more information from the state agriculture commission to see if this can be approved on this amount of land, the wetlands Commission for plan for waste. She feels this will be a giant operation in her back yard. She also stated that the 2 properties are separated by a corn field but does not know the size of it.

N. Slater stated that it's important for the Commission to verify how far down the road they live.

K. Chilly stated that the building for the dogs will be built like a house. The dogs are currently being kept in the home of the family. She cannot hear them now in the house, she does not believe that they will be heard once they are in the new building which will have extra soundproofing applied. She also wants to clarify what the Commission is approving. She asked if this is the Commission giving permission for A. Bienvenido to go to the state where the regulations will be set.

R. Manning states that he is looking for a Special Use Permit which requires permission from the town to do "this thing", it's like a deed, it runs with the property. What the town gets to do is set terms and conditions of what happens. It's not just yes/no, it's yes with these conditions or no. The state then takes these conditions and adds them to their own. The state will not allow him to go forward until we say yes.

J. Jakubowski asks if he has a building permit to build the building.

A. Bienvenido has been speaking to Jason who has come out to the property and has the plans for the building. He does not want to spend money on a permit if this is not approved.

J. Beck mentioned that there is 400' between the garage and the property line, which means that the noise would not be detrimental. If there are problems, residents could come to P&Z with a complaint, and the Commission could then go to the business to request them to put up privacy or soundproofing. The town's people have had the opportunity to speak about it. Where he lives, there is a solar field going in next door to him where the town and its residents have no say. He states that he believes he's doing a great job and from what he can see he's

jumped through all the hoops. There may still be things that need to happen such as a dry tank, which will require him to go before another board; and this is still 400' from their property. He's been working on this for over a year, and he feels that it's crazy to ask for more.

H. Bowers asked the Commission when the last time was that a hearing received a decision the night of the hearing. Never.

J. Blake stated that in terms of time frame per §87d for public hearings. 65 days to have the public hearing which we are on day one today. Once started, you have the ability for extensions that cannot exceed 65 days. He points out that his submission to staff was in April. But the date of receipt is the date the Commission receives it. The public hearing will be in 35 days. The public hearing started today, you have 35 days without any extension from anyone to close the public hearing. That would be the next meeting, at that meeting, you must close or extend. The Commission is within their rights to continue this to the next meeting. And then after the hearing is closed, you have 65 days to render a decision.

J. Jakubowski suggests that they keep the public hearing open until next month to take the public out of the conversation, we can sit down and come up with a list of questions for the ZEO and the applicant that can be answered at the next meeting regarding the wastewater and other state regulations. This can be reopened next month for further discussion; it can then be closed and a decision rendered.

R. Manning stated that he is against it as the previous ZEO received the information in April, he's come before us and was transparent then. His answer has not changed throughout this process. He states that we have all the information we need. He feels that the only thing that could potentially change this is if A. Insalaco gets an appraisal of * [REDACTED] value change in her property. This is the only thing that has not been presented tonight, is proof of a value change in her property if a kennel is put in next door.

J. Jakubowski asks if the application is approved tonight with that stipulation and she comes back in 30 days can we do that.

J. Blake/R. Manning stated that this would be new information and not submissible.

J. Blake gave warning on testimony regarding expert vs statement and whether they would accept it. He said that the Board of Assessment Appeals could make an adjustment in terms of tax valuation. He mentioned that there could be claims of fundamental flaw depending on the time of submission to this commission which would be the office of the First Selectman. The application may not have been complete and there was no payment despite A. Bienvenido's attempts to do so. There was confusion on how to figure these amounts out and upon my arrival, I was able to get those calculations clarified for the staff. The fee was paid 9/4/2025.

K. Chilly spoke to the qualifications of her husband who is the master plumber and will be doing the work on this project. He has been in the business for 10 years and currently works

for UCONN on many commercial buildings. He will ensure that all issues with the water run-off, and gray water will be addressed.

A. Insalaco stated that she hasn't read all the material but thinks Zoning gets to make the decision on the limit of number of dogs.

R. Manning informed her that the state gives the kennel license, they decide on the size of the property how many dogs can be kept, that would be the maximum number that the Commission would consider. He has asked for eight. The Commission can then limit it to eight and the state will only allow for what the town agrees to despite the ability to have more.

A. Insalaco said this is the first she has heard of these numbers of dogs. When we are talking about a noise ordinance, the dogs are outside, and this has nothing to do with kennels. These dogs will be outside during the day, and she was surprised when she heard there would be 20 dogs. She feels there needs to be a limit on the commercial aspect of this. She stated that she thought the non-profit was awesome but still only in the process from what she was able to research. She feels this is separate from what is being discussed but again stated that she felt it "was wonderful". She questions that if her questions are not answered what is her appeal process, can she appeal the decision.

J. Blake stated that if a decision is made tonight either for or against an application, a legal notice will be posted with the Town Clerk, and it will be published in the Chronicle. The date of publication gives you 15 days to file an appeal with the courts. It is not a local appeal process, so you would need to file with the state courts, and he would advise her to seek legal counsel.

J. Jakubowski asked for clarification on this venture. There would be 2 businesses running, one for profit and one not for profit at this location.

A. Bienvenido stated that a non-profit is allowed to make profit but it's not the primary goal. These will be as independent as possible, but it is one kennel license from the state. The non-profit has been approved.

R. Manning stated that the Commission is trying to establish that there isn't a not-for-profit entity, and a for-profit entity operating simultaneously out of the same space under the same license. Your kennel license from the state allows you to keep the dogs and some of those dogs are utilized in your not-for-profit activities.

J. Blake stated that all owners must reside on the property according to number 2 of the previously mentioned zoning regulation.

J. Jakubowski asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing

Motion to close the Public Hearing made by D. George, 2nd by R. Manning

J. Jakubowski rescinded the motion and asked if there were any more comments or questions from the audience

S. Powers stated that she was very impressed with all the work they have done.

J. Jakubowski thanked her and moved to the motion on the floor to close the Public Hearing.
Motion carries

J. Jakubowski stated that this closed the Public Hearing for Special Permit PZ-2025-003

8. Unfinished Business

a. Special Permit Application PZ2025-002 of Jonathan Owne (Owner/Applicant) for a Place of Worship at 51 Palmer Road (MBL 22-21-6) in the Scotland Village District.

J. Blake stated that once the Public Hearing was closed the Commission would have 65 days to render a decision and no more information could be presented. You can review the information that has been received, and you do want to be careful not to have conversations outside of our meetings here.

Motion to table the decision on PZ-2025-002 made by R. Manning, 2nd H. Bowers

Motion carries

c. b. Special Permit application PZ2025-003 of Alex Bienvenido (owner/Applicant) for a Rural Business Use (Dog Kennel) at 5 Kemp Road (MBL 6-10-20) usage Residential Agricultural District.

Motion to table the discussion to the next meeting on PZ-2025-003 made by R. Manning, 2nd J. Troeger

Motion carries

9. Sub-Commission Reports None

10. Regulation Revisions None

11. Correspondence to the Commission

J. Blake gave correspondence to the commission and spoke about letters for upcoming trainings.

12. Commission Open Discussion Discussion took place

13. Executive Session None

14. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 10:03 pm made by R. Manning, 2nd H. Bowers

Motion carries

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon George

Secretary