



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Mark Wujtewicz, Planner

DATE: July 22, 2025

TITLE: Staff Report: Zoning Regulation Amendment – Application PL-25-10
Sections 1 – DEFINITIONS, 3.45 and 6.2.11 – Campgrounds

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application has been submitted by the applicant, Golden Fields, LLC pursuant to Section 28.2 of the Waterford Zoning Regulations to amend Sections 1, 3.45 and 6.2.11 of the Zoning Regulations regarding campgrounds.

The proposed modification to Section 1 is to add the definition of Campground. The applicant also proposes adding section 6.2.11- Campgrounds as a Specially Permitted Use within the RU-120 Zone District. In addition, the applicant is also proposing to add Section 3.45 to the Zoning Regulations that will establish the criteria and standards by which a campground may be specially permitted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

This application was received by the Commission on May 13, 2025

The application was posted in the Office of the Waterford Town Clerk on May 12, 2025.

An extension to hold the public hearing on July 22, 2025 was granted by the applicant on May 22, 2025.

The Public Hearing was advertised in The Day newspaper on July 8 and July 15, 2025.

The date of Public Hearing was July 22, 2025.

BACKGROUND

Pertinent Regulations

Connecticut General Statutes

CGS 8-3(a)

Waterford Zoning Regulations

*All *italicized* text is proposed

Section 1 – DEFINITIONS

Campground: A parcel of land used to provide overnight campsite accommodations to persons engaged in recreational camping using portable structures,

shelters and vehicles such as, but not limited to, tents, tepees, yurts, and recreational camping vehicles that have no permanent electrical wiring and no permanent drainage plumbing.

Section 3 – GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 3.45 Campgrounds shall be permitted uses within the RU-120 District subject to the approval of a Special Permit provided they meet the requirements of the Connecticut Public Health Code, Connecticut Fire Safety Code, and the Connecticut Building Code and further meet the following additional conditions:

3.45.1 Minimum Size and Density. Campgrounds shall only be located on parcels with a minimum size of twenty (20) acres. No more than fifteen (15) campsites shall be provided for each gross acre of overall parcel area.

3.45.2 Campsites. Campsites within a campground may be occupied by tents, tepees, yurts, recreational camping vehicles, and other similar rental accommodations, but not by any permanent type of building or manufactured home.

3.45.3 Access and Parking. Notwithstanding the requirements of Section 3.14, campgrounds shall not be required to have frontage on a street but shall provide adequate ingress, egress, and maneuvering for both regular and emergency vehicles by way of an interior road system connected to one or more state highways or approved streets within the Town of Waterford or an adjacent municipality. Any access provided through an adjacent municipality shall be subject to the review and approval of the Commission to ensure public safety. Off-street parking shall be provided on the basis of one (1) space per campsite provided that a campsite for a recreational camping vehicle shall not require any additional parking. No parking shall be permitted along any interior service road, access driveway or street.

3.45.4 Water and Sewer. A campground that is not served by public water and public sewer shall provide an adequate water supply and a sanitary sewage disposal system approved by the health department.

3.45.5 Buffers. Where a campground abuts any other use, a one hundred (100) foot landscaped and/or natural vegetated buffer, which may include necessary interior service roads or access driveways, shall be provided along the property line. Where a landscaped or natural vegetated buffer is required, such buffer shall provide complete visual screening between the different uses. Notwithstanding the above, no campsite shall be situated closer than three hundred (300) feet to any adjacent property line.

3.45.6 Accessory Uses. A campground may include certain accessory uses and permanent structures providing amenities to only patrons of the campground. Permitted accessory uses and permanent structures may include supply stores, bathrooms, snack bars, swimming pools, golf courses, tennis courts,

recreation pavilions, trails, and any other similar customary accessory uses or permanent structures associated with recreational camping activities. Within any supply store, items for sale shall be limited to groceries, gifts, beer, and camping supplies.

3.45.7 Storage. Unoccupied recreational camping vehicles may be stored in campgrounds. Campgrounds shall not be subject to the provisions of Section 3.22 of these Regulations.

Section 6.2 – USES PERMITTED IN THE RU-120 DISTRICT SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL PERMIT.

Section 6.2.11 Campgrounds subject to the provisions of Section 3.45 of these Regulations.

Section 28 – Amendments

DISCUSSION

Section 1 – DEFINITIONS

Campgrounds

The regulation amendment as proposed is to define the term Campgrounds for the purpose of Waterford's Zoning Regulations. The term Campground does not currently exist within the Town of Waterford Zoning Regulations. To permit the use within the Town, it is important to define the term as it will be applied in the Zoning Regulations. The proposed definition lists an assortment of recreational campsite uses within a campground as temporary in nature by requiring no permanent electrical or drainage plumbing connections.

Section 6.2.11 Campgrounds subject to the provisions of Section 3.45 of these Regulations.

The proposed amendment adds Section 6.2.11 as a use that the Planning and Commission may approve through the issuance of a Special Permit in accordance with Section 23 of the Zoning Regulations. Waterford's RU-120 (Rural Residential) Zone District currently allows certain commercial uses by Special Permit. The Campground use as proposed will also require a Special Permit which allows the Commission to consider the impact of this use on neighboring uses and the surrounding area.

An application to establish a specially permitted use must be presented to the Commission and the Commission will review the application to determine whether the use as proposed is consistent with each of the findings listed in Section 23.5 of the Zoning Regulations.

The applicant proposes adding Campgrounds to the Zoning Regulations as a specially permitted use within the RU-120 Zone District only. An applicant shall be required to submit a Special Permit and Site Plan application to the Planning and Zoning Commission to allow a campground within the RU-120 District in accordance with Section 3.45, 22 and 23 of the Zoning Regulations. The Commission will determine the application's consistency with each of the findings contained within Section 23.5 as well as the prepared site plan in accordance with Section 22 of the Zoning Regulations.

Section 3.45 - Campgrounds

Section 3.45 as proposed establishes the standards and criteria by which a campground may be proposed. These criteria include a minimum lot size of 20 acres, maximum density of 15 campsites per

acre of total gross area, minimum parking standards, public and private water and sewage disposal systems, buffers, allowed accessory uses and on-site storage.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-3a, before the Commission can act upon an application to amend the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Waterford, it must find whether or not the amendments being proposed are consistent with the goals, policies and objectives contained in the 2012 Waterford Plan of Preservation, Conservation and Development, herein after called the Plan.

Waterford has many areas of natural resources and open space that contribute to the overall appearance of the community by enhancing people's sense of quality of life (Plan, pg 38). Allowing the use of Campgrounds through the issuance of a Special Permit with criteria and standards that contribute to preserving the natural resources and open space, enhances people's sense of quality of life.

Waterford's RU-120 (Rural Residential) Zone District currently allows certain commercial uses by Special Permit. The Campground use as proposed will also require a Special Permit which allows the Commission to consider the impact of this use on neighboring uses and the surrounding area.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Based on the information provided, staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission find that:

Findings:

1. Application PL-25-10 meets the requirements of Section 28 of the Waterford Zoning Regulations.
2. Application PL-25-10 meets the requirements of Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 124 §8-3 governing changes of zoning regulations and districts.
3. The proposed regulation amendments are consistent with the Plan in meeting the stated goals of the Quality of Life Chapter (Pg. 38) by allowing a campgrounds use through the issuance of a Special Permit with criteria and standards as proposed will contribute to preserving the natural resources and open space, thereby enhancing people's sense of quality of life.
4. The proposed requirement to preserve no less than 25% of the parcel area in its natural state in order to promote passive recreation use and protect sensitive natural and archeological areas is consistent with the Community Character chapter of the Plan (Pg. 36).

Proposed Motion:

That the Commission approve Application #PL-25-10 to amend Zoning Regulations Sections 1, and add Sections 3.45 and 6.2.11 – Campgrounds and to adopt the findings 1 thru 4 of the Staff Report dated July 22, 2025.

Effective Date: August 15, 2025

ENHANCE

Quality of Life

GOAL

Promote events and activities which enhance the overall quality of life in Waterford.

Residents of Waterford are very satisfied with the quality of life in the community. Impressively, more than 97 percent of respondents in the telephone survey reported that the quality of life in Waterford is good or very good.

Although everyone has their own definition of quality of life, the following table identifies some elements of a community that may contribute to people's perception of their overall quality of life:

Category	Resource	Description
Enhancing	Basic Needs	Physical safety, economic security, sense of community
	Local Events	Unique events (parades, fairs, and concerts) where residents join in a common activity
	Volunteerism / Philanthropy	Voluntary donations of time and money help make Waterford a special place
	Shared Visions / Goals	Establishing and attaining shared visions and goals
	Open Communication	Communication about community issues and priorities is an important part of maintaining community spirit
	Community Ambience	Overall appearance (including preserved natural resources and open spaces) enhances people's sense of quality of life.
	Positive Recognition	Positive recognition by others of local activities and events helps build community spirit and pride
Detracting	Negative Communication	A lack of communication or negative communication can undermine community spirit and pride
	Negative Recognition	Negative recognition of a community by others can undermine community spirit and pride

Waterford should continue to encourage activities that contribute to community spirit and pride. These activities will also contribute to the overall quality of life of Waterford residents. We must do more to promote events and activities which enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

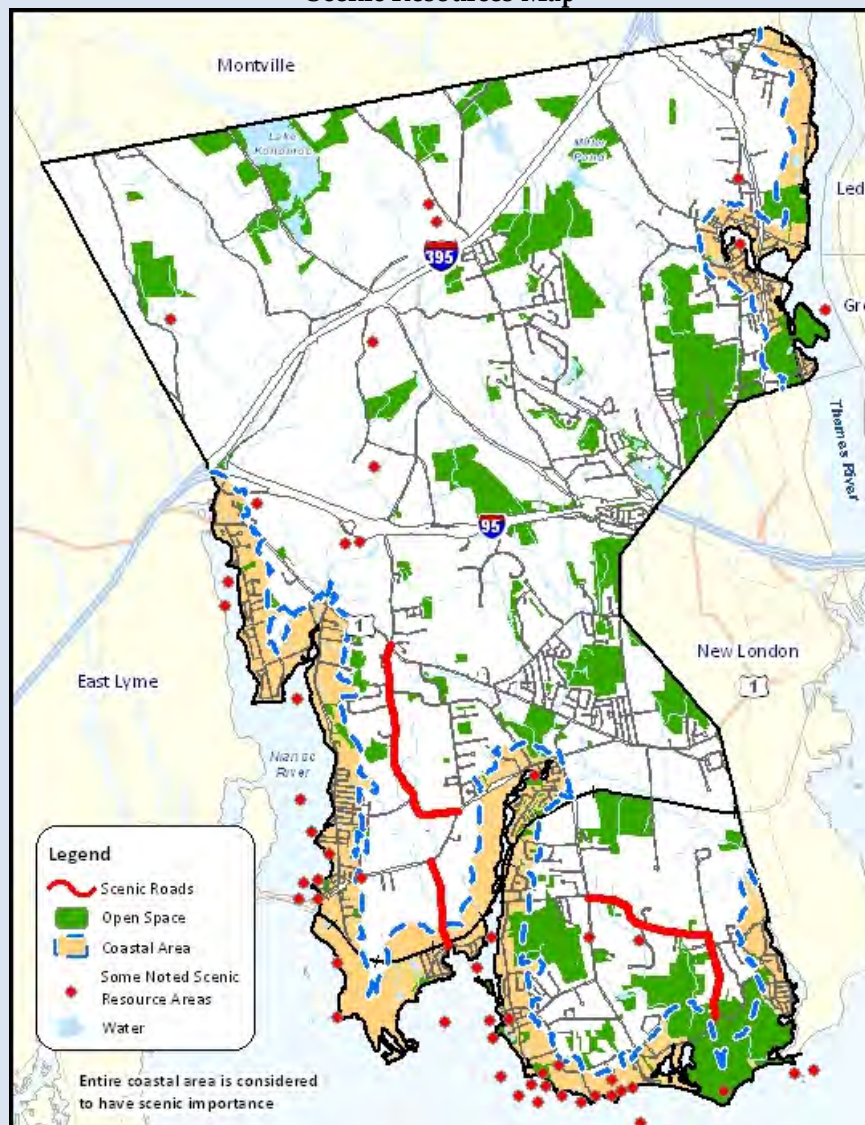
C. Preserve Scenic Resources

Due to its coastal location and natural features, Waterford has some significant scenic views and resources. In addition, there are some roads in Waterford recognized for their scenic values. These scenic assets provide pleasure to residents and visitors on a daily basis.

Waterford should continue efforts to preserve key scenic vistas, scenic roads, and scenic areas while allowing for reasonable use of the specific property and the surrounding area. The preservation of scenic resources (through open space dedication or conservation easements or similar approaches) should be considered as part of any application submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Since scenic resources can also include stone walls and historic barns and other cultural features, efforts to identify and preserve these types of scenic resources should continue.

Scenic Resources Map



Note: This map is subject to change as new information becomes available.