



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Mark Wujtewicz, Planning Director

DATE: May 12, 2026

TITLE: Staff Report: Aikido New London County, LLC
Karate Studio
131 Boston Post Road
Private Educational Institution – Special Permit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed use is classified as a private educational institution with instructor led martial art classes. Class size will be 10-25 students. The tenant space is located within a multi-tenant building located at 131 Boston Post Road in the Wynding Hill Plaza. The proposed use as a private educational institution is listed as a Specially Permitted Use within the CG (General Commercial) Zone District.

BACKGROUND

Pertinent Regulations

Connecticut General Statutes
CGS 8-3c(b)

Waterford Zoning Regulations
Section 8 - General Commercial District (C-G)

Section 8.2 - Uses Permitted in the C-G District subject to the approval of a Special Permit:

Section 8.2.4 – Private Educational Institutions

Section 23 - Special Permits with Design Review

DISCUSSION

The application as presented is a request for approval to locate a martial arts studio within the Wynding Hill Shopping Plaza located at 131 Boston Post Road. The proposal does not contain any physical changes to the site and will not require any additional site improvements. The use is one that may be allowed through the issuance of a Special Permit in accordance with Sections 8.2.4 and 23 of the Zoning Regulations.

The Wynding Hill Plaza was approved on June 28, 1993 as a planned group development through Special Permit #93-307/118. The Special Permit did not include Private Educational Use, which is the use being proposed in this application. The use as a karate studio providing organized and scheduled class instruction in the martial arts is classified as a private educational institution. Private Educational Institution is a use that is allowed in the General Commercial (C-G) Zone District through the issuance of a Special Permit by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Wynding Hill Plaza is a multi-tenant shopping plaza that contains 93 approved parking spaces onsite. The proposed use will be located in the tenant space of a former hair salon, which is defined in the Zoning Regulations as a personal service establishment. The number of parking spaces required for a personal service establishment is 1 space per 175 square feet of floor area. Section 20.4c of the Zoning Regulations (Regulations) allows the Commission to consider the parking generation data from the latest edition of Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual if a particular use is not specifically listed in Section 20.3 of the Regulations. For the purpose of determining peak parking demand, the ITE manual suggests that Karate Studios be classified as Health Spas with an average peak period parking demand of .9 spaces per 175 square feet. The peak parking demand for the karate studio is similar to that of a personal service establishment.

Section 23.5.5 Traffic Considerations in the applicants Statement of Use submitted into the record as Exhibit 4 states the following:

“Classes are scheduled primarily during late afternoon and evening hours, typically beginning after 4:30 PM... Classes are staggered to prevent large simultaneous arrivals and departures. Typical class sizes range from approximately 5-10 students; with this move, we anticipate 10-25 students.”

The applicants Statement of Use indicates that the timing of the classes is such that there will be minimal impact to the overall parking demand for the plaza by avoiding the hours of peak parking demands from the other existing uses sharing the parking lot.

Before the Planning and Zoning Commission can approve a Specially Permitted Use it must determine that the proposed use conforms to the required findings listed in Section 23.5 of the Zoning Regulations. The applicant has submitted a statement of consistency of those required findings (Exhibit 4). Staff has reviewed the statement of consistency for each of the findings as presented by the applicant and confirm that the use as proposed is consistent with these findings.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

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

Findings:

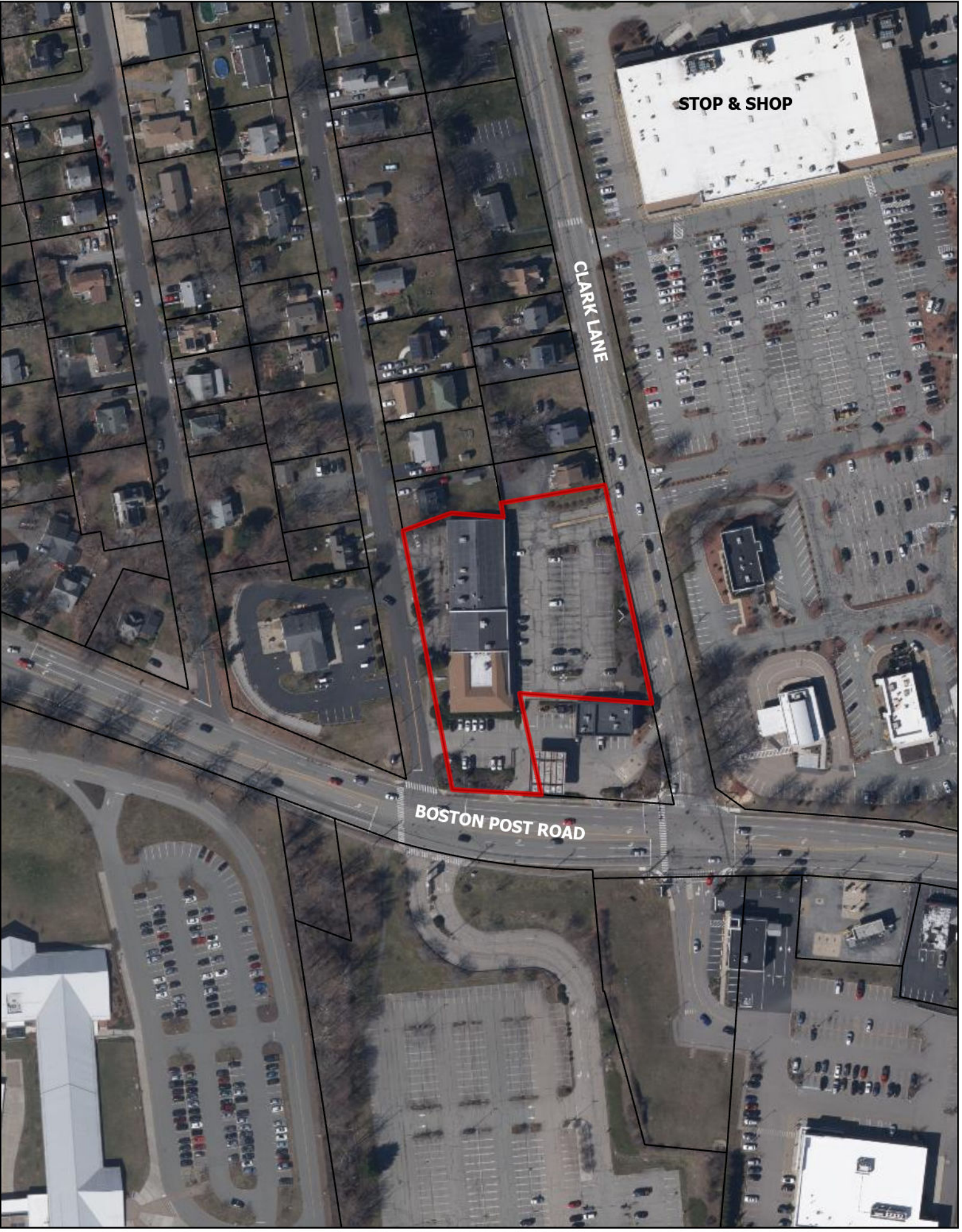
1. The use is within the Wynding Hill Shopping Plaza at 131 Boston Post Road and as such is located in the General Commercial (C-G) Zone District.
2. The proposed use as a karate studio qualifies as a Private Educational Use in accordance with Section 8.2.4 of the Zoning Regulations.
3. A Private Educational Use is one that may be permitted subject to the approval of a special permit.
4. The Statement of Use (Exhibit 4) provided by the applicant in accordance with Section 23.5 identifies the findings and that the proposed use is consistent with sections 23.5.1 through 23.5.9 of the Waterford Zoning Regulations.

and that the Commission approve the proposal with the following conditions:

1. Class size shall be limited to 25 students.

Proposed Motion

To approve Special Permit #PL-26-9 for a private educational institution for Aikido New London County, LLC located at 131 Boston Post Road with condition 1 and to adopt the findings 1 through 4 of the staff report dated May 12, 2026.



STOP & SHOP

CLARK LANE

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