

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Mark Wujtewicz, Planner

DATE: July 22, 2025

TITLE: Staff Report: Project LEARN
Proposed School Facility
51 Daniels Avenue
Site Plan
Application PL-25-8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project as proposed is to construct a single story 87,500 square foot footprint public, magnet elementary school and daycare facility located at 51 Daniels Avenue. The project as proposed will accommodate a maximum of 574 students, with 526 students occupying the magnet elementary school and 48 for the daycare. The property is the site of the Town of Waterford's former Southwest public elementary school. The Planning and Zoning Commission (Commission) had previously approved a CT General Statute (CGS) 8-24 application (PZ2010-029) on July 26, 2010 to lease a portion of the Southwest School Building to Project LEARN for use as a dual language middle school. Subsequent to the approval of PZ2010-029 the Commission approved a CT General Statute (CGS) 8-24 application (PL-23-8) for the sale of a portion of the property to Project LEARN. This portion contains approximately 15.36 acres and is the subject of this site plan application. The remaining land of approximately 4 acres is retained by the Town of Waterford. An existing cellular tower is located on the parcel of land to be retained by the Town of Waterford.

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing school building and construct a new school facility building. Site improvements associated with the building include access driveway, grading, stormwater management and landscaping.

The application has been reviewed and approved by the Waterford Conservation Commission through the issuance of Inland Wetland Permit #C-25-06. A copy of the Conservation Commission Action has been submitted into the record.

BACKGROUND

Pertinent Regulations

CGS 8-3(g)

Section 5 – Low Density Residential (R-40)

Section 5.1.3 – Public or private parks and playgrounds, subject to the approval of a site plan under the provisions of Section 22 of these regulations

Section 22 – Site Plans

Section 22b – Design Review of Site and Building Requirements

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

The required action date for this application is July 17, 2025.

An extension for Commission action on the application to July 22, 2025 was granted by the applicant on July 14, 2025.

DISCUSSION

In order for the Commission to approve a site plan it must find that the plan is consistent with the Town of Waterford Zoning Regulations. The Commission must act on the plan initially submitted for review and can find that the site plan is either compliant with the Zoning Regulations or it may approve the plan with modifications that are required to be implemented on the plan prior to filing on the land records.

Activity associated with the construction of the proposed facility will impact approximately 1,000 square feet of the upland review area for the construction of a sidewalk. Discharge from the treated stormwater runoff upgradient of the offsite wetland area #3. As a result, an application for Inland Wetland Permit #C-25-06 was submitted to the Waterford Conservation Commission. Inland Wetland Permit #C-25-06 was approved with conditions by the Conservation Commission to conduct authorized regulated activities associated with the construction and operation of the regional school facility. In accordance with CGS §8-3(g) a report of the Conservation Commission action was submitted into the record.

The applicant submitted a Stormwater Management Report into the record. Due to the complexity of the Stormwater Design and the potential of offsite impacts, the Commission determined that a third party peer review of the proposed stormwater system and report submitted by the applicant be conducted in accordance with Town of Waterford Ordinance 16.08.050(B). A copy of the Stormwater Management Report and the site plan was provided to the Town of Waterford's "On- Call" engineering firm SLR. After a review of the documents and plans, SLR provided a peer report on June 26, 2025, which was forwarded to the applicant on June 30, 2025. The applicant reviewed the report and provided revised plans and responses on July 15, 2025. On July 16, 2025, the applicants revised plans and responses were forwarded to SLR for confirmation as to whether the responses adequately address the items in the peer report. At the time of the drafting of this Staff Report, SLR's review of the responses from the applicant

has not been received. The Commission may consider in its action, a condition of approval that the final plans and stormwater drainage reports adequately address any of the items identified in the peer report prior to filing the final plans on the land records.

The Traffic Impact Study and internal vehicle circulation plan was reviewed by the Town's traffic authority and found to adequately address traffic and vehicle circulation patterns.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

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

Findings:

1. The application is for a use subject to a Site Plan approval, pursuant to Section 5.1.3 of the Waterford Zoning Regulations.
2. The application meets the criteria for site plan approval, pursuant to Section 22 of the Waterford Zoning Regulations, subject to modifications and conditions listed.
3. The Waterford Conservation Commission issued Inland Wetland Permit# C-25-06 for regulated inland wetland activities.
4. The Waterford Conservation Commission issued a report of its action on application #C-25-06 in accordance with CGS §8.3(g).
5. This application has been reviewed by the Town of Waterford Design Review Board in accordance with Section 22b of the Waterford Zoning Regulations and which Board submits a positive report to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

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

1. Any of the outstanding items referenced in the Peer Review- Site Plan and Stormwater Management report provided by SLR dated June 25, 2025 be adequately addressed prior to filing the final plans on the land records.
2. All conditions of approval for Inland Wetland Permit #C-25-06 shall be incorporated into this decision as if fully set forth herein.

Proposed Motion

To approve with modifications and conditions, the Site Plan for the Project LEARN proposed school facility application #PL-25-8 located at 51 Daniels Avenue, with modifications and conditions 1 & 2 and to adopt the findings 1 thru 5 of the staff report dated July 22, 2025.