

Grace Property Holdings / Grace Farms Foundation
 Planning and Zoning Quotations
 Then and Now

Presentation at 2012/2013 Hearings	Presentation at 11/29/16 Hearing
<p><i>Atty Hammer:</i> This application is for “the development of church facilities for Grace Community Church and related improvements on the property at 365 Lukes Wood Road”. 10/23/12 at 4:12-15 “the use of the property...[has] been carefully determined by the court and cannot properly be revisited in this proceeding...” 10/23/12 at 5:5-12. [At the October 23, 2012, hearing at which the project was introduced, the only substantive reference to Grace Farms Foundation was as manager of the construction project.]</p>	<p><i>Mrs. Prince:</i> “Although the fundamental vision for Grace Farms was inspired by the Christian faith, the Foundation explained in 2012 that we were not simply designing a Church building, but creating a place for the foundation to operate on the same site.”</p>
<p><i>Mrs. Prince:</i> “Over the past decade Grace Community Church has been meeting at the auditorium at Saxe Middle School, and we’re grateful to have that space to use. However, you can imagine we are really excited to be able to move forward at this time with this project. Five years ago in 2007 and 2008 you granted us a special permit to build on the stunningly beautiful 48 acres that you’ll see in our presentation and that Joe described is exactly where that is. We’re keenly aware of the conditions and the parameters that you established for us and are to remain within those boundaries and that we’ve been granted in order to create something of significant value here in our community.” 10/23/12 at 10:17 to 11:7</p>	<p><i>Mrs. Prince:</i> “Just as the site design was carefully articulated not to emphasize the site as Church-centric, the special permit use characterization should also clearly reflect both entities. Just as important that the familiarity of Grace Community Church in the eyes of the community has obscured the Foundation’s role as owner/operator and separate entity, ...”</p>
<p><i>Atty Hammer:</i> “We are not seeking to expand the uses that are allowed on the site beyond what is in the scope of the permit we already have and what other churches are allowed to do in similar circumstances. ...What the court said it is not the job of the Planning and Zoning Commission to speculate as to those kind of what ifs. It’s not being done. It’s not before you. We assume that people will comply with permits, not that they won’t. If they don’t, then we address it. We address it through enforcement action.” 11/27/12 at 14:10 to 15:3</p>	<p><i>Mr. Redman:</i> “We thought we were approving use as a religious institution.” <i>Mr. Ward:</i> “It’s very simple” <i>Atty O’Hanlan:</i> “Use by a foundation under a religious special permit use. But that that special permit you authorized you -- you issued recognized the foundation was going to operate there in pursuit of the initiatives that we just described to you.”</p>

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<p><u>Atty Hammer</u>: “And very briefly, because they have raised it, they spent a lot of time, they’ve submitted some materials from the website of Grace Farms Foundation, I just want to address that as well. ...All of the activities that are going to be conducted on this property are going to be consistent with the permits that you have previously granted and again, with some nonprofit use just like other churches in New Canaan do. ...I also just want to mention that the Board of Grace Farms Foundation is primarily comprised of members of the church, and the foundation supports a number of nonprofit organizations, and again, you’ve been given lots of pages from the website, you know, the implication somehow being that these organizations will be taking over the site. The fact of the matter is Grace Farms Foundation provides financial support to these organizations, all of which are headquartered and operated elsewhere.” 11/27/12 at 16:2 to 17:21</p>	<p><u>Atty O’Hanlan</u>: “What this application seeks to do is not to expand anything that Grace Farms Foundation is doing. We seek to refine the uses Grace Farms Foundation is operating under because in its first year of operations it has discovered that it falls more appropriately under a philanthropic institution and/or club or organization use than under the religious institution use.” ...“Grace Farms Foundation is, as was shown to you in 2012, a independent philanthropic organization. It is not a religious institution.” ...“It’s coming to you and asking for a special use that invites your oversight in a way that a religious use does not. And the reason it is doing that is <u>because that’s the truth of what’s going on at Grace Farms</u>. And that’s what Grace Farms Foundation is about and that what was – one of the reasons for the application in 2012.” [Emphasis added].</p>
<p><u>Mr. Prince</u>: “Grace Property Holdings still owns the property and the permits. The permits are for Grace Community Church, and the usages are related to religious services and ancillary activities of the church. So the only thing that changed [since 2007] is that the owner of the property shifted from individuals to a foundation.” 12/18/12 at 15:8-14 “So we anticipate that our activities will be very normal in relation to what churches do, and they have not changed since we originally filed our application.” 12/18/12 at 15:16</p>	<p><u>Mrs. Prince</u>: “You will recall in 2012, Grace Property Holdings LLC, which was clearly owned by Grace Farms Foundation was the applicant. Not Grace Community Church. The vision expressed for Grace Farms in 2012 remains unchanged.”</p>
<p><u>Comm. Goodwin</u> to <u>Mr. Prince</u>: “you’re not necessarily bringing groups in. You’re not necessarily having conferences etcetera, etcetera. It’s been implied that you would do that. Is that correct or not?” <u>Mr. Prince</u>: “We would only do it, we would only do that as a facilitator for the church, because we are there –the church doesn’t have the ability to operate this property. We are doing this on behalf of the church. ... And so we would only do that with, in conjunction with the church.” <u>Comm. Goodwin</u>: “so activities specific to the church, but you wouldn’t be doing a conference where, I don’t know, third world –“ <u>Mr. Prince</u>: “That’s not the point of what we’re doing.” 12/18/12 at 19:11 to 20:21</p>	<p><u>Mrs. Prince</u>: “From the beginning we anticipated a degree of separation between Grace Community Church and the work of the Foundation would be necessary. Too close an affiliation could restrict the Foundation’s ability to serve its philanthropic goals, because many of the recipients are local not for profit organization or, in the case of the social justice initiatives programs, are government institutions.”</p>

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<p><u>Atty Hammer:</u> “that the applicant intends to live within the scope and bounds of the permit you’ve already granted when it comes to uses and ancillary uses ... we’re not asking you for some other type of permit that we don’t have. We’re not asking you for a philanthropic organization permit or any other type of permit, and ...if anybody wants to perform a use on this property that is not within the scope of the existing permit, whether it be Grace Farms Foundation or anyone, any individual or any entity, if anybody wants to do something that needs a new and different permit, then either that permit is sought of that activities doesn’t get done.”</p> <p>12/18/12 at 57:7 to 58:11</p>	<p><u>Mr. Radman:</u> “So then in 2012, why was the application made for a church as opposed to a philanthropic organization and club?”</p> <p><u>Atty O’Hanlan:</u> “I don’t think it was made for a church. First of all, it was made to develop the building that included a sanctuary. But that application was made by Grace Property Holdings LLC, which is Grace Farms Foundation. The application was not made by Grace Community Church.”</p>
<p><u>Atty Hammer:</u> “I want to just reiterate Grace is not proposing any new or different use than they contemplated in 2007 and 2008 when they were before you. They’re not proposing any new or different use than what you contemplated when you approved the application, and they are not proposing any new or different use beyond what other churches throughout the Town of New Canaan do on a daily basis.”</p> <p>“I want to be clear we’re not asking you for any new or different permit. We’re not asking you to expand the existing permit. If in the future there was a desire by anyone, whether its Grace Farms Foundation or anyone, to conduct any activity that’s not within the scope if the existing permit, then either additional approval would be obtained or that activity would not take place.”</p> <p>1/23/13 at 69:2-9 and 71:4-12</p>	<p><u>Mr. Ward:</u> “We – or at least I -- always understood that Grace Property Holdings – you could have called it Grace Foundation at the time – you were speaking – really -- in my mind on behalf of Grace Community Church.”</p> <p><u>Atty O’Hanlan:</u> “I can assure you that wasn’t the case. And I’m sorry you had that misunderstanding, but the document speaks for itself ...”</p>
<p><u>Mrs. Prince:</u> “Also, the question about 365 Lukes Wood Road operating as a foundation out of there. I think Joe mentioned there’s one person there who has to be on site, because we’re trying to, you know, do the design. As you can tell, it’s been an enormous amount of effort. We have someone on site to meet with all the contractors, the design team, and its been years and years of planning, and we need someone to do that. We need someone on site to preserve security of the site, too.”</p> <p>1/23/13 at 51:8-17</p>	<p><u>Mrs. Prince:</u> “We understand, however, that it was not until we opened in 2015 and the Foundation began fully operating with a working staff and programs, that many people in town could fully appreciate and understand the purpose of Grace Farms and the work of the Foundation. In fact, Grace Farms Foundation in 2012 only had one part time employee and no specific programming.”</p>