

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 6, 2025
FROM: Greg Tocci, 508-395-3945, gtocci@cavtocci.com
TO: Dr. Michael Klemens, Chairman Planning & Zoning Commission
Town of Salisbury; 27 Main Street Salisbury, CT 06068
SUBJECT: Response to Cross-Spectrum Acoustics Letter dated August 1, 2025 re:
PZC Application #2025-0287: Wake Robin Inn Redevelopment

Introduction

The Wake Robin Inn is an existing hotel and event facility located at 104 & 106 Sharon Road and 53 Wells Hill Road, Salisbury, Connecticut. The application before the Commission is for its redevelopment and would include improvements to the property, renovation, expansion, and an acoustically designed indoor facility for future events. Historically, the property has hosted outdoor tented events with both amplified and live music both during the day and into the evening. The property is allowed, under current Salisbury Zoning Regulations, to host outdoor tented events; however, the proposed expansion is to include an indoor event space.

As requested, Cavanaugh Tocci prepared a report dated April 29, 2025 presenting an analysis of sound potentially produced by Wake Robin Inn activities and equipment under its proposed redevelopment plan. The report concluded that, as required by the Salisbury Planning and Zoning Commission Special Permit Use Section 803.2 Relation of Buildings to Environment, sound produced by the proposed Wake Robin Inn redevelopment will “...not create a nuisance to neighboring properties...”

Herbert Singleton, Cross-Spectrum Acoustics (CSA) has been retained by the Town of Salisbury to peer review the Cavanaugh Tocci April 29 report. The executive summary of the peer review report states that CSA agrees with the Cavanaugh Tocci conclusion that project activity and equipment sound will comply with the State of Connecticut Noise Control Regulation, but questions whether the design will create a noise nuisance as we have determined. This memo responds to comments raised in the CSA August 1, 2025 peer review report, adopts CSA recommendations to revise the method for setting a design goal for music that avoids creating a noise nuisance, and re-emphasizes our conclusion that the project will not create a noise nuisance.

Detailed Comments on the Sound Study

Sound Monitoring

CSA observes that sound monitoring conducted by Cavanaugh Tocci was during early March 2025 when indigenous insect sound was absent, unlike times of the year when most of the Wake Robin Inn events would be hosted. Because of the time of year, the peer report suggests that monitored sound levels are conservatively low. Accordingly, design goals recommended for music in the Cavanaugh Tocci report are lower than they might have been were sound monitoring to have been conducted during warmer times of the year when most events would be hosted.

Computer Modeling of Sound at Receptors

Modeling of the facility, its sound sources and topography are noted as reasonable and consistent with common practice.

Music Sound Source Reference

The CSA report requests a reference for music sound levels expected in the event room. The music spectrum used was measured during performed music at a wedding reception under a tent awning measured on May 8, June 5, 12, and 26, 2021 at a facility in Western Massachusetts. That level averaged 86 dBA. Wake Robin Inn hosted entertainment is expected to also be live performance rather than recorded music. However, to protect the community, an event room music sound level of 95 dBA has been used for facility sound isolation design. Accordingly, the CSA report indicated that predicted music levels were reasonable.

Automobile Horns

In previous Town discussions concerning the Wake Robin Inn, automobile horns were cited as a potential source of loud sound. Cavanaugh Tocci classified the brief sounding of an automobile horn as an impulse sound. We indicated the Connecticut sound level limit would be 80 dBA; CSA indicated that a tonality penalty of -5 dB should be applied to this limit lowering it to 75 dBA. Mr. Singleton notes that horn use is not common in venue parking lots. §22a-69-1.1(u) of the Connecticut Noise Regulation includes “horns” in its definition of “safety and protective devices”, and in §22a-69-1.7(f) excludes them from its regulation. Hence, it is appropriate to drop them from the acoustical analysis as they are not commonly heard in venue parking lots and are exempt from the Connecticut Noise Regulation.

Design Goal for Music Based on the 90th Percentile Sound Level

The CSA peer review recommends that the 90th percentile sound level (LA₉₀) should be used in lieu of the energy average sound level (LA_{eq}) as has been done. As a goal for music, Cavanaugh Tocci determined the average of the lowest energy average sound levels (LA_{eq}) in dBA measured at the eight monitoring locations and selected the lowest, 32 dBA, as a design goal for music. Measured levels and corresponding design goals are listed on the right-hand side of Table 1. CSA recommended that the corresponding 90th percentile levels be used instead, with an added margin of 5 dB. Table 1 below also includes the 90th percentile sound levels and the corresponding lowest design goal. Coincidentally, the lowest design goal for music is also 32 dBA.

Wedding Music Design Goal Determination			
Average of Lowest Measured Daily LA_{eq}, 1hr.	Design Goal (Leq-5dB)	Average of Lowest Measured Daily LA₉₀, 1hr.	Design Goal (L₉₀+5dB)
43	38	33	38
42	37	29	34
37	32	27	32
40	35	29	34
41	36	29	34
54	49	29	34
41	36	29	34
41	36	30	35
<i>Minimum:</i>	32	<i>Minimum:</i>	32

Table 1. Comparison of music design goal based on use of the energy average sound level (LA_{eq}) and the 90th percentile sound level (LA₉₀) Wake Robin Inn, Salisbury, CT

Demonstration of Music Sound Conformance with Design Goal

The CSA report also comments on a demonstration of music sound emissions from the Wake Robin Inn event facility. In discussions, this comment was refined to be for a demonstration by playing music sound at 95 dBA in the event room after construction and measuring emitted music sound at the property line to verify achieving the 32 dBA design goal or lower.

Signage

The applicant has agreed to post signage throughout the property to minimize unnecessary noise, in line with the CSA recommendation. This is also supported by Cavanaugh Tocci to help inform Inn guests and reduce impacts on nearby residences.

Contractual Penalties

Contractual penalties for exceeding sound limits were not addressed in the Cavanaugh Tocci report, as this is a business matter rather than a matter concerning site plan special permit approval or engineering design. It is important to note that, in addition to concerns for music sound transmitted to the community, music sound for patrons in the restaurant, bar, and event space within the main Inn building are also a concern of the management and ownership teams who will treat sound control as a top priority for all parties involved. Limits on sound within the event room are discussed below.

Neighborhood Notifications

Mr. Singleton suggested that the neighborhood could be informed of Wake Robin Inn events through a website sharing event dates and times. The submitted acoustical study, project plans, and this response demonstrate that event sound will not constitute a nuisance. As also recommended, Wake Robin Inn will conduct testing upon completion of construction to verify achieving the recommended design goal and compliance with the Connecticut Noise Control Regulation. The activities of the Inn and its business practices are important and merit protection. It is the opinion of Cavanaugh Tocci that facility acoustical design and post-construction testing, and any further improvements in sound isolation needed, would provide conditions meeting recommended design goals. However, Inn management is sensitive to the needs of the community and will respond to all inquiries.

Interior Sound Level Monitoring

Sound monitoring systems are available to alert venue management when noise levels exceed a set threshold—in this case, 95 dBA within the event space. Cavanaugh Tocci supports the CSA recommendation, and the applicant had already intended to conduct interior sound measurements during events to ensure levels remain below 95 dBA. As noted, noise above this threshold would directly impact Inn guests—arguably more than neighboring properties—making it a top priority. The applicant has informed Cavanaugh Tocci that they will manage indoor sound levels by conducting periodic decibel readings during events and adjusting the volume as needed in real time.

Permit Renewal

This is a business matter, rather than an engineering issue, and falls under the jurisdiction of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Construction

We recommend that, prior to the issuance of a zoning permit, the construction manager prepare a Construction Noise Control Plan for the Wake Robin Inn project. Such a plan is used as a means to identify and manage noise impacts during construction. The plan would be developed based on the project schedule, specified construction activities, their start and end times, the equipment to be used and their locations. The Construction Noise Control Plan would estimate anticipated sound levels at nearby receptor locations throughout the construction timeline, detailing how noise would be managed and mitigated.

The applicant has agreed that exterior construction activities will be limited to 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. No blasting, heavy equipment operation, or site work would be permitted outside these hours, nor on Sundays, and on the following federal holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

Section 22a-69-1.8(h) further states that blasting not related to construction activities is exempt provided it occurs between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., at specified hours previously announced to the public, or with a proper permit from local authorities. The applicant commits to complying with these regulations and will provide advance notice to the community for any blasting activities.

Both the contractor and ownership will notify the community regarding the timing of the noisiest construction activities, such as rock removal and excavation near residences. Cavanaugh Tocci recommends that the contractor establish a dedicated construction noise complaint hotline for community use.

For reference, during the recent construction of the cell tower on the property (late 2024 to early 2025), which involved substantial blasting, on-site rock crushing, and heavy machinery use, no noise complaints were received. Notification protocols were strictly followed, and the construction was completed without incident.

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We would be pleased to discuss any of the above topics further. Thank you.

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