

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING**

September 20, 2011

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday, September 20, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wethersfield Town Council Chambers located at Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Harley called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

1.1 ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES (5 members required for a quorum):

Chairman Harley called the roll as follows:

Member Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Thomas Harley, Chairman	✓		
Joseph Hammer, Vice Chairman			✓
Richard Roberts, Clerk			✓
Earle Munroe	✓		
George Oickle	✓		
Anthony Homicki	✓		
James Hughes	✓		
Antonio Margiotta	✓		
Vacancy			
Dave Edwards			✓
Thomas Dean (alternate)	✓		
Angelo Robert Fazzina (alternate)			✓

Also present: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager;
Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner

Chairman Harley noted that there were 6 full members and 1 alternate member in attendance at the time of roll call. All members present to participate.

Members of the Public were present.

2. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business discussed at this meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

3.1 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1745-11-Z: Cumberland Farms Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 6.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations to install a new LED gas price sign at 1855 Berlin Turnpike.

Ms. Carolyn Parker of Carolyn A. Parker Consulting appeared on behalf of the Applicant regarding this Application. She indicated that the Cumberland Farms Corporation is in the process of re-imaging their brand which will include renovating their stores, providing new food choices and changes to their

signage. The blue, orange and white colors used in the signage will be changed to blue, green and white. The wall sign would be replaced with one that is taller but not as wide. External illumination of the sign will continue the canopy will contain a green stripe in place of the orange and blue striping. New decals will be on the fuel dispensers. The existing pylon sign has 4x6 price sign at the top position and a 2x6x6 "Cumberland Farms" sign at the bottom position. The new logo would be placed in the top position (2x6x6) with a LED sign displaying prices at the bottom. Since fuel prices are subject to changes daily, the 4x6 LED sign would have a price changer component allowing an employee to change the pricing from inside the store. Neon lights and animation components are not contained in the signage proposed. The proposed sign conforms to Town Regulations.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Ms. Parker indicated that they are maintaining the square footage of the proposed sign to that of the existing sign and that the proposed LED sign will have red lettering in a black background.

Chairman Harley referred to a Memorandum dated September 15, 2011, from Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner and Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner to the Planning & Zoning Commission which notes the sections that pertain to this Special Permit Application.

Mr. Gillespie noted that no changes to the dimensions of the pre-existing sign are being requested and that the existing sign predates sign regulations adopted in 2004 for gas stations. Those regulations indicate that the freestanding sign should not exceed 12 square feet, and the price sign should not exceed 15 inches in height.

Mr. Gillespie indicated that all price signs for gas stations and all signs with a changeable message capability require a public hearing through the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Chairman Harley inquired and Mr. Gillespie indicated that re-facing and changing the existing signs is considered as conforming to pre-existing signs because the dimensions of the message content and height details of the existing signs are not being changed and that the re-facing and sign changes proposed in this Application are subject to a Special Permit.

Commissioner Homicki inquired and Ms. Parker indicated that the LED brightness can be set to decrease after sunset.

Commissioner Homicki inquired Mr. Gillespie indicated that no provisions exist regarding LED illumination. Mr. Gillespie indicated that in the near future, the Commission may want to establish some standards.

Commissioner Dean inquired of Mr. Gillespie how the size and location of the signs proposed compare to those recently approved at the Valero gas stations. Mr. Gillespie indicated the locations are similar and that the Valero sites may have been somewhat smaller. Ms. Parker indicated that the Valero signs contain two (2) LED pricing statements which result in smaller sized lettering to fit into the same amount of space Valero had in their previous signs.

Commissioner Dean suggested a condition for a special permit in this matter could be that the brightness of the new sign cannot exceed the brightness produced by the existing sign.

Mr. Gillespie indicated that building permit documentation may establish, as a comparison, bulb wattage and other details regarding the illumination of signs proposed.

Chairman Harley suggested Town officials could determine the appropriateness of sign illumination.

Ms. Parker offered to obtain from the sign company the illumination standards of the manufacturer for the signs proposed and suggested that the information could be used for Town Regulations in the future. Chairman Harley indicated that such information would be helpful for matters going forward.

There were no comments made from the Public regarding this Application.

Motion: Commissioner Hughes made a motion to close **PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO.**

1745-11-Z: Cumberland Farms Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 6.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations to install a new LED gas price sign at 1855 Berlin Turnpike.

Second: Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion.

Aye: Harley, Munroe, Oickle, Homicki, Hughes, Margiotta, Dean;

Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Public Hearing was Closed.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Homicki described this Application as thorough and complete. He thanked the Applicant for offering to obtain information regarding illumination standards.

Commissioners Homicki, Hughes and Oickle noted their comfort with sign illumination of similar signs recently approved at similar sites.

Commissioner Oickle reiterated and agrees with Mr. Gillespie's suggestion to pursue LED illumination standards as possible inclusions to Town Regulations.

Commissioner Dean deferred to the expertise of his fellow Commissioners regarding the LED illumination of the signs proposed.

Motion: Commissioner Homicki made a motion to approve, as submitted, **PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1745-11-Z: 1745-11-Z Cumberland Farms** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 6.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations to install a new LED gas price sign at 1855 Berlin Turnpike. Matters concerning the brightness of the signs proposed, including but not limited to the LED brightness, are to be addressed by Town Staff.

Second: Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

Aye: Harley, Munroe, Oickle, Homicki, Hughes, Margiotta, Dean;

Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Application approved as submitted.

3.2 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1746-11-Z: Shireen Aforismo Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.6 to install an additional outbuilding (pergola) larger than permitted at 185 Broad Street.

Mrs. Shireen Aforismo, 185 Broad Street, appeared before the Commission regarding her Application for a Special Permit to install a 19' x 19' pergola which has been approved by the Historic District Commission. She submitted plot plans for where the pergola would be situated.

Chairman Harley referred to the Memo dated September 15, 2011, from Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner and Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner to the Planning & Zoning

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Commission that identifies the 19' x 19' (361 square foot) pergola, notes that zoning regulations allow for 200 square feet or less, and indicates that the Historic District Commission has reviewed and approved this proposal.

Chairman Harley inquired and Mrs. Aforismo indicated that lighting for the proposed structure has not yet been determined.

Chairman Harley and Commissioner Homicki indicated that Mrs. Aforismo would return to Town Staff regarding lighting for the proposed structure.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Mrs. Aforismo indicated that the proposed structure will be constructed above the existing patio. The existing patio, which is made of pavers, was recently extended and will accommodate the proposed structure.

Commissioner Hughes inquired and Mrs. Aforismo indicated that the bushes along the carriage house have been moved and relocated to the front of the proposed structure and that vines may be grown on the top portion of the structure for shade and privacy purposes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Bill Wurts, 49 Robbinswood Drive, appeared before the Commission in support of this Application. He described the proposed structure, as well as the site where it will be situated, as "beautiful".

Motion: Commissioner Homicki made a motion to close **PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1746-11-Z: Shireen Aforismo** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.6 to install an additional outbuilding (pergola) larger than permitted at 185 Broad Street.

Second: Commissioner Dean seconded the motion.

Aye: Harley, Munroe, Oickle, Homicki, Hughes, Margiotta, Dean;
Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Public Hearing was Closed.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Oickle commented favorably regarding the proposed structure.

Motion: Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve, **PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1746-11-Z: Shireen Aforismo** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.6 to install an additional outbuilding (pergola) larger than permitted at 185 Broad Street.

Second: Commissioner Homicki seconded the motion.

Aye: Harley, Munroe, Oickle, Homicki, Hughes, Margiotta, Dean;
Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Application approved as submitted.

4. OTHER BUSINESS:

4.1 APPLICATION NO. 1719-10-Z Julie Mackie – Request for an extension of the timeframe for permit approval in accordance with Section 10.1.D.5 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations at 15+19 Jordan Lane.

Motion: Commissioner Oickle made a motion for a permit approval extension of one (1) year pertaining to **APPLICATION NO. 1719-10-Z Julie Mackie** – Request for an extension of the timeframe for permit approval in accordance with Section 10.1.D.5 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations at 15+19 Jordan Lane.

Second: Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

Aye: Harley, Munroe, Oickle, Homicki, Hughes, Margiotta, Dean;

Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Request for Extension of Time, Granted.

4.2 Status of the Update of the Plan of Conservation & Development.

5. MINUTES – August 16, 2011 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Oickle noted the following corrections to the Minutes from the August 16, 2011 Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting: Page 8 in the last full paragraph and in the second to the last line, the words “headlight, into the restaurant” are to be deleted, and the words “drive-up” are to be inserted. Pages 4-6, 9, 12, 14 and 15 in the voting sections, “Vote: 11-0;” should be changed to “Vote: 9-0;”, and Commissioners Dean and Fazzina should be removed from the vote. Pages 11-14 in the voting sections, “Vote: 10-0;” should be changed to “Vote: 9-0;”, and Commissioner Fazzina should be removed from the vote.

Motion: Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve the minutes, as corrected.

Second: Commissioner Homicki seconded the motion.

Aye: Harley, Munroe, Oickle, Homicki, Hughes, Margiotta, Dean;

Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Minutes approved as corrected.

6. STAFF REPORTS:

Mr. Gillespie mentioned Town Council approved two (2) referendums for addition to the November 2011 ballot. He noted site preparation work is underway at the Silas Deane Shopping Center for the Panera Restaurant, and a new Thai restaurant is opening in the shopping center. He also noted a chain

restaurant may be opening at the site formerly occupied by Humphrey's Bar & Grill, but paperwork has not been filed.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING:

There were no public comments made at this meeting relative to general matters of planning and zoning.

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

8.1 Connecticut Conference of Municipalities – Municipal Management Bulletin regarding New Requirements for Subdivisions and Site Plan Bonds.

9. PENDING APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT FUTURE MEETINGS:

9.1 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1747-11-Z Town of Wethersfield Seeking a Zone Change in accordance with Section 10.1.G of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations from B Residence to TC (Town Center) Business District Corner of Somerset and Silas Deane Highway (Savage Park).

Commissioner Homicki spoke in recognition and fondness of Attorney Frederick E. Petrelli, Jr., former Planning & Zoning Commissioner, Board of Education Member, and Town Councilor, who passed away on Tuesday, September 6, 2011.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn at 7:50 PM – by Commissioner Oickle.

Seconded – by Commissioner Hughes.

Aye: Harley, Munroe, Oickle, Homicki, Hughes, Margiotta, Dean;
Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary