

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

January 15, 2008

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday January 15, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wethersfield Police Department Meeting Room, 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

CALL TO ORDER

As Chairman Joseph Hammer was not in attendance, Vice Chairman Richard Roberts called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Clerk Knecht called roll as follows:

Member Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Joseph Hammer, Chairman			X
Richard Roberts, ViceChair	X		
Philip Knecht, Clerk	X		
Thomas Harley	X		
Robert Jurasin			X
Earle Munroe	X		
Dorcas McHugh	X		
Frederick Petrelli	X (7:10)		
James Hughes	X		
Anthony Homicki			X
George Oickle	X		
David Drake	X		

Also present: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner
Denise Bradley, Assistant Town Planner

Vice Chairman Roberts stated that all the members present would be participating and voting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

3.1 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1594-07-Z. Town of Wethersfield Seeking Zoning Text Amendments for proposed sign regulation changes. ---CONTINUED FROM 1/2/08.

Peter Gillespie noted correspondence that had been added to the record since the 1/2/08 public hearing as follows:

- An email dated January 2, 2008, from Martha Mayer, President of the Executive Board of the Griswoldville Preservation Association to Peter Gillespie.
- A narrative from the Wethersfield Little League outlining the Outfield Signs Proposal.
- A letter dated January 9, 2008, from Tom Ragonese, Chairman of the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board to Joseph Hammer.

Mr. Gillespie than highlighted revisions made to his memo dated January 11, 2008, relating to the sign regulation amendments.

Vice Chairman Roberts called upon the public for comments.

Craig Macgovern, 36 Somerset Street stated that he was in support of the outfield signage proposal and he sees it as a good way for Wethersfield Little League to raise funds. Commissioner Knecht asked where the revenue from the sponsorship signage would go. Mr. Macgovern responded that the revenues would be used for the maintenance and upkeep of the fields. Commissioner McHugh asked how many children participate in Wethersfield Little League. Mr. Macgovern responded that approximately 800 children participate.

Paul Letendre, 780 Wolcott Hill Road stated that he was in support of the outfield signage proposal.

Mark Fishman, 115 Straddle Hill stated that as a volunteer for Wethersfield Little League he fully supports the outfield signage proposal. He noted that Little League cannot continue to raise fees without additional fundraising. Mr. Fishman noted the importance to establish a permanent source of income.

Tom Ragonese, Chairman of the Advisory Parks and Recreation Board described the outfield signage proposal as being a solid cooperative effort to help maintain the fields at no cost to local taxpayers. He noted that many of the sponsorship signs he had seen in other municipalities were impressive and would improve the overall aesthetics of the fields. Commissioner Oickle asked what the anticipated revenue from the sponsorship signage was. Mr. Ragonese responded that they expect revenue to be \$4,500 - \$6,000 per year. Mr. Oickle asked if this would be a key source of funding to maintain the fields. Mr. Ragonese responded that it would be. Mr. Oickle asked if other funding sources had been explored. Mr. Ragonese responded that Little League has raised dues, hosted charitable events and dances, participated in Rock Cats games and has received equipment grants. Commissioner Drake asked how the outfield signage would improve aesthetics. Mr. Ragonese noted that in his opinion, the signage used at the Newington and Rocky Hill fields was an improvement to the fields. Commissioner Hughes asked if Mr. Ragonese would support the installation of shrubs for visual screening purposes. Mr. Ragonese responded that he would. Commissioner McHugh asked for an overview of the budget process in how it pertains to what is proposed to Town Council. Mr. Ragonese responded that the Advisory Board compiles a list of items they would like to see funded and then prioritizes it. He noted that their requests are never guaranteed and fall short of the funding levels necessary.

Pete Mozzicato, 23 Wells Farm Drive stated that he was in support of the outfield signage proposal.

Ray Demonte, 64 Randy Lane stated that he is a Wethersfield Little League volunteer and a supporter of the outfield signage proposal.

Bill Bishop, 246 Windmill Hill stated that he is a supporter of the outfield signage proposal and noted that it would be a great advertisement for local businesses.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Recreation and Parks noted that field maintenance was in the Physical Services Department budget and that there was never enough. She commented that funding has leveled off or decreased at the same time costs are rising. Due to this situation she noted that the town has had to provide fewer services and is always playing catch up with field maintenance. Commissioner Munroe asked where the signs would be stored at the end of the season. Ms.

Bagley responded that they would be stored on site.

Mark Cavasino, 48 Randy Lane remarked that there is a great deal of pressure in fundraising and that advertising signs are typical of ball fields.

Craig Macgovern, 36 Somerset Street noted that currently only the minimum maintenance is being performed. Commissioner Hughes asked if proper maintenance was necessary to reduce hazards and improve safety. Mr. Macgovern responded that it was. Mr. Macgovern noted that the Mill Woods was re-turfed through fundraising.

Doug Shipman, Director of the Wethersfield Historical Society expressed his support for the Special Events – Temporary Signs, Open Signs – Business Zones, Off Premises Events – Temporary Signs, Historic Organizations terminology, Seasonal Banners on Streetlamps and Portable Signs – Business Zones. Commissioner Oickle asked if the proposed Open Signs with a maximum area of 12 s. f. was too large. Mr. Shipman responded that 12 s. f. (3' × 4') was a standard size.

(TAPE ONE – SIDE B)

Commissioner Oickle asked how approval of the signage proposal would enhance or improve the community. Mr. Shipman responded that it enhances the community especially since it highlights the importance of area history. Mr. Shipman added that the signage would promote visibility and that signs that are too small can become significant hazards.

Vice Chairman Roberts asked if there were any additional comments from the public. There being none, Commissioner Hughes made a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Monroe seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #1. Municipal Fields – Temporary Signage.

Commissioner Petrelli seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (7-2-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli

Nay: Harley, Oickle

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #2 Wall Sign Area – Business Zones.

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley, Oickle

Nay: None

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #3 Flashing Signs,

to be known as Section 6.3.I.8., as modified.

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley, Oickle
Nay: None

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to table Application No. 1594-07-Z, #4 Special Events – Temporary Signs.

Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley, Oickle
Nay: None

(TAPE TWO – SIDE A)

Commissioner Harley made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #5 Open Signs – Business Zones, with the condition that they require a permit.

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (8-1-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley
Nay: Oickle

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #6 Off-Premise Events -Temporary Signs, as modified.

Commissioner McHugh seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (8-1-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley,
Nay: Oickle

Commissioner McHugh made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #7 Historic Organizations, as modified.

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley, Oickle

Nay: None

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #8 Seasonal Banners on Streetlamps.

Commissioner Petrelli seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (8-1-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley

Nay: Oickle

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #9 Portable Signs – Business Zones, as modified.

Commissioner McHugh seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley, Oickle

Nay: None

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve Application No. 1594-07-Z, #10 Temporary Signs – Tag Sales, as modified.

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley, Oickle

Nay: None

3.2 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1596-07-Z. Audrey Booker Seeking a Resubdivision for the creation of one (1) new lot and a Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.9 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the creation of a rear lot at 114 Willow Street.---CONTINUED FROM 1/2/08.

Vice Chairman Roberts noted correspondence that had been added to the record since the 1/2/08 public hearing as follows:

- A letter dated January 7, 2008, from Audrey Booker to Peter Gillespie indicating that the applicant has agreed to limit their use of the rear lot to construct a single story dwelling.
- A memo from Mike Turner, Town Engineer dated January 11, 2008.
- A memo from Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner dated January 11, 2008.
- A memo from Gary Santoro, Fire Marshal dated January 15, 2008.
- A letter dated January 15, 2008, from Mark and Louise Priest of 17 Rhodes Circle.
- A letter dated January 15, 2008, from Wayne and Elizabeth Prunier of 11 Rhodes Circle.

- A letter dated January 14, 2008, from Matthew O'Keefe.

Harold Booker described his intent to reside on the rear lot if approved. As reflected in his letter, he noted that in response to the concerns of the Fire Marshal, he has proposed limiting the use of the rear lot to construct a single story dwelling.

Mr. Booker then described changes that had been made to the site plan including the installation of a french drain and an earthen berm along the eastern property line. Mr. Booker then noted that in a revised memo dated January 11, 2008, Michael Turner, Director of Physical Services gave an opinion that the addition of the earthen berm on the rear lot would reduce run-off from reaching the homes on Rhodes Circle but will not correct or eliminate the existing ponding and drainage issues. Mr. Turner noted in the letter that the improvements recommended would not exacerbate the situation.

Jim Sheehy, surveyor noted that the revisions of the plans would allow for additional percolation. Commissioner Oickle asked Mr. Sheehy to explain the drainage impact of the proposed construction on Rhodes Circle. Mr. Sheehy described the run-off of a residential lot and noted that there would be only minimal surface water that will come across the berm. Mr. Sheehy then outlined measure's that the abutting property owners could take to alleviate their existing drainage issues.

Vice Chairman Roberts called upon the public for comment.

Jack Quinn, 120 Willow Street questioned what effect the construction would have on his property. Jim Sheehy noted that there would be neither a negative or positive drainage impact on Mr. Quinn's property due to the development of the rear lot.

Peter Borayko, 20 Rhodes Circle noted his objection to the application. He stated that the proposed dwelling would block all views, that there is a refuse dump in the rear of the lot that needs to be addressed and he then suggested a fence along the rear property line for screening.

Mark Priest, 17 Rhodes Circle read into the record a letter dated January 15, 2008 from himself and his wife Louise Priest outlining their objection to the approval and their concern regarding the existing drainage issues. Mr. Priest than entered into the record a letter from Cory Garro of Close, Jensen & Miller dated January 14, 2008.

(TAPE TWO – SIDE B)

Jim Sheehy noted that the refuse area would be removed as part of the development of the rear lot. Commissioner Oickel asked if the applicant would consider the installation of additional screening. Mr. Sheehy responded that they would.

Commissioner Drake then noted that the opinion from Cory Garro of Close, Jensen & Miller indicates that that proposed berm should improve the present drainage issues of 17 Rhodes Circle most of the time.

Elizabeth Prunier, 11 Rhodes Circle responded to Mike Turner's revised memo and thanked him for coming out to the property to reassess the area's drainage. She noted that although Mike Turner has offered an opinion that the excavation of the rear lot would not exacerbate the Rhodes

Circle ponding, she does not support the approval of this special permit.

Jim Sheehy noted that an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan would be filed with the Engineering Department once building permits are submitted.

Commissioner Drake noted that the new construction would not make the drainage issues worse and if anything it might actually improve the situation. He remarked that he didn't like rear lots but the applicant isn't responsible for correcting the existing drainage problem.

Vice Chairman Roberts asked if there were any additional comments from the public. There being none, Commissioner Hughes made a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Petrelli seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Commissioner Hughes asked if a house could be built in the same location as the proposed rear lot dwelling if the existing lot was undeveloped without a special permit approval or coming before the Commission. Peter Gillespie responded that it would be possible.

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve Application No. 1596-07-Z as submitted.

Commissioner McHugh seconded the motion.

Commissioner Harley offered the following conditions as an amendment to the motion:

1. The applicant shall limit their use of the rear lot to construct a single story dwelling,
2. The plans shall be revised to highlight areas for potential screening along the north, east and south sides of "Parcel 42 – B" for effective screening with approval of town staff; and
3. The applicant shall construct an earthen berm and french drain along the eastern property line.

Commissioner Hughes accepted the motion as amended.

Commissioner McHugh seconded.

The members voted as follows (7-2-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Harley

Nay: Drake, Munroe

3.3 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1600-07-Z. 61 Arrow Road LLC. Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.2.H.4 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations to construct a storage facility with exterior access to storage bays at 61 Arrow Road.

No one representing the applicant was present. The public hearing was not opened.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

MINUTES

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve the minutes from December 4, 2007.

Commissioner Harley seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (6-0-3)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Oickle, Petrelli, Harley

Nay: None

Abs: Drake, Munroe, Hughes

STAFF REPORTS

No staff reports.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING.

There was no public comment.

CORRESPONDENCE

A memo from Brian O'Connor to Peter Gillespie regarding 35 Arrow Road (Almar Motel).

An letter from Robbin Cabelus of the State Traffic Commission dated December 19, 2007, regarding Phoenix Medical Center (1260 Silas Deane Highway).

A notice regarding a public meeting in Rocky Hill on January 25th regarding the DEP proposal to re-open the dump on Meadow Road for a composting and recycling facility.

PENDING APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT FUTURE MEETINGS

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hughes made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Knecht, McHugh, Munroe, Hughes, Drake, Petrelli, Harley, Oickle

Nay: None

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley
Assistant Planner