

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

**April 1, 2008**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday April 1, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wethersfield Police Department Meeting Room, 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Joseph Hammer called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**1.1 ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Phil Knecht, clerk called roll as follows:

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Excused</b>
Joseph Hammer, Chairman	X		
Richard Roberts	X		
Philip Knecht	X		
Thomas Harley	X		
Robert Jurasin			X
Earle Munroe			X
Dorcas McHugh	X		
Frederick Petrelli			X
James Hughes	X		
Anthony Homicki	X		
George Oickle	X		
David Drake	X		

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

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**2.1 APPLICATION NO. 1604-08-Z CREC-Soundbridge Seeking Site Plan & Design Review for additions, renovations and site improvements at 123 Progress Drive.---Continued from the 3/18/08 meeting.**

Commissioner Knecht noted that he would be not be voting on this application. Chairman Hammer stated that there had been several outstanding questions raised by staff and Commission members at the previous meeting and asked if the applicant wanted to respond.

Steve Dewey of Quisenberry Arcari Architects noted that there had been some confusion at the last meeting and that they had been short on information especially with regards to the proposed addition not warranting any additional parking. Mr. Dewey then discussed a memo that the applicant had drawn up for the record dated March 18, 2008 which detailed the construction phasing into a narrative.

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Elizabeth Cole Director of Soundbridge, explained to the Commission that Soundbridge is both a school and an Educational Resource center. She then stated the main reasons for the request for expansion. One of the reasons would be to expand the number of typically developing pre-school children. Ms. Cole then detailed the increase as reflected in a document entitled CREC Soundbridge Expansion which was distributed. Ms. Cole noted that the audiology services have grown tremendously without the proper accommodations. Additionally, the Birth to Three services have doubled in number since the building was completed. She stated that staff are doubling up in offices. Ms. Cole noted that many of the staff come to Soundbridge infrequently because the children are accommodated in their home schools across the state. These students only come to Soundbridge approximately ten times per year for testing.

Ms. Cole stated that with the expansion, there will be a need for an additional six teachers and one on-site audiologist. She then went on to describe the proposed use of the auditorium. She noted it will be by students and staff on site during the day and after regular school hours for staff training and meetings, parents meeting in the evenings and also Saturdays, during vacations and for a theatrical production once a year. Ms. Cole then detailed the current parking and circulation situation.

Steve Dewey stated that he had received memos from both Peter Gillespie and Mike Turner and discussed the applicant's response to the comments and noted that the changes were reflected in the revised plans.

Chairman Hammer asked Peter Gillespie if he had a chance to review all the additional submissions. Peter Gillespie noted that the Commission should have a memo dated March 26, 2008, from Mark Fisher detailing the applicant's response to previous departmental concerns. He stated that his only comments were that cut sheets for the exterior lighting be provided in order to demonstrate compliance with the full cut-off regulations, and that the Fire Marshal must be provided with details of the phasing of the construction.

Commissioner McHugh asked how the school provides services all over the state and then commended the facility.

Elizabeth Cole noted that audiologists are sent to approximately 37 towns in the Capitol Region.

Commissioner Oickle asked if the town staff is satisfied with previously outstanding issues. Peter Gillespie noted that aside the lighting and construction phasing he had just spoken about, that the town staff be involved in the final details of the proposed landscape buffering in order to minimize the visibility of the addition to the neighbor on Goff Road. Commissioner Oickle stated that he hopes the applicant can screen the two houses closest to the disturbance. Commissioner McHugh commented on her concern that many large trees have been cut down but the tree stumps were never removed. She noted that it may be hard to plant anything new then stated that she agrees with Commissioner Oickle in that a few additional evergreens should be added to the plan.

Chairman Hammer reminded the Commission that this is not a public hearing but noted that there was someone in the audience who wanted to comment on this application.

Joan Biagioni, 217 Goff Road stated that she has resided at that location since before the facility was constructed and noted that she was not there to speak in opposition to their current proposal. She asked that CREC honor the August 1992 easement agreement entitled Restrictive Covenant and that the town enforce it. Ms. Biagioni also voiced concern over the proposed auditorium being used at night and on weekends.

Elizabeth Cole stated that events during the weeknights would not run past 9 or 10 p.m. and Saturdays by 2 p.m.

George Oickle the applicant to address the three entrances and general building circulation. Steve Dewey indicated on the plans the proposed access points. Mr. Dewey then submitted a spec for the proposed full cut-off lighting and noted that he had met with the Fire Marshal to discuss phasing the construction process. In reference to the Restrictive Covenant, Mr. Dewey noted that the owner and design team have been given a copy and that the 40 f. t. buffer will remain untouched. He also noted that they are adding deciduous and evergreen plantings around the auditorium area.

Chairman Hammer noted that technically speaking the Restrictive Covenant was out of the Commission's purview as it is between two private parties and subject to private enforcement. That being said he noted that he would like to see the applicant try to address the neighbors' concern. Based on the testimony, he asked if the applicant was able to accommodate some of the concerns.

David Preston, Project Manager of CREC commented that by looking at the existing canopy, he thinks there is a lack of natural light and he is not certain that any understory species could grow there. As far as the tree stumps, Mr. Preston commented that more damage may be done to the existing trees trying to remove the stumps. He noted that he would look to further to see what can be done. Chairman Hammer asked if the applicant would be willing to discuss the details with town staff. Mr. Preston responded that they would.

Commissioner McHugh noted that educational events seemed to not be of concern to neighbors and suggested limiting the use of the auditorium to educational uses only. Elizabeth Cole stated that the auditorium will only be used for educational purposes.

Chairman Hammer asked if the applicant or Commission had anything else to add.

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. All exterior lighting shall be full cut-off
2. Final landscaping details for the area adjacent to the auditorium be approved by

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Town Staff

3. The applicant shall make a good faith effort to remove fallen brush and stumps within the buffer to the satisfaction of Town Staff
4. The rental of the auditorium be limited to educational and professional development purposes, and
5. Details of the construction phasing plan be worked out with the Fire Marshal.

Chairman Hammer asked if there were any questions or comments.  
Commissioner Homicki seconded the motion.

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

Aye: Roberts, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Homicki and Drake

Nay:

Abs: Knecht, Harley & Hammer

APPLICATION APPROVED.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**3.1 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO 1608-08Z. John & Shireen Aforismo**

Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.6C.2 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the construction an accessory building (tool shed) within the front yard setback and larger than permitted in a residential zone at 185 Broad Street.

John Aforismo stated his request to construct an accessory building and commented that it would be a mini version of the existing carriage house consisting of a slate roof and matching color. The purpose of the tool shed is to store lawn equipment, summer lawn furniture and a vintage car they are planning to purchase.

Commissioner Oickle asked if the Historic District Commission was satisfied. Mr. Aforismo responded that Application 3565-08 was issued on February 26, 2008.

Chairman Hammer noted the receipt of correspondence dated April 1, 2008, from Tom & Holly Landers objecting to the proposal because it would be visible from the street and not in keeping in character with the residential neighborhood. There objection to the installation of electrical service to a tool shed was also noted.

Chairman Hammer asked if John Aforismo had sent out the required certificates of mailing to the neighbors within 300 ft. John Aforismo responded that he had. Mr. Aforismo then read into the record the letter he had sent to the neighbors. Commissioner Oickle asked if the HDC had approved the application as submitted. Mr. Aforismo responded that they had.

Commissioner Drake asked if the tool shed would be on a permanent foundation or slab.

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John responded that it would be on a slab.

Commissioner Oickle asked if it was a separate building and not attached to the back of the existing garage. John Aforismo said it would be separate. Commissioner Oickle asked if this would ever be for residential purposes even though there would be an electrical service. John Aforismo responded that the tool shed would be used for storage only.

Ken Sokolowski, 79 Main Street stated the location of the proposed tool shed seemed appropriate and is set back far enough. He acknowledged the need to have lights and water. He noted that he endorses this application fully.

Chairman Hammer asked if any additional members of the public wished to speak on this matter. There being none, he motioned to close the public hearing.

Dorcas McHugh seconded the motion.

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

Aye: Roberts, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Homicki, Drake, Knecht, Harley & Hammer  
Nay:  
Abs:

Commissioner Homicki motioned to approve the application as submitted. Phil Knecht seconded the motion.

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

Aye: Roberts, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Homicki, Drake, Knecht, Harley & Hammer  
Nay:  
Abs:

APPLICATION APPROVED.

4. OTHER BUSINESS - There was no other business.

5. MINUTES

5. 1. Minutes of the March 4, 2008 meeting

Commissioner Oickle commented that on page 3, the encroachment on the neighboring property to be removed should be indicated as being on the east not west as stated.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Harley seconded the motion.

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

Aye: Roberts, McHugh, Hughes, Drake, Knecht & Harley

Nay:

Abs: Hammer, Oickle and Homicki

Minutes APPROVED

6. STAFF REPORTS – There were no staff reports.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING & ZONING.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

**8.1** A memo dated March 26, 2008 from Peter Gillespie & Denise Bradley to Anees Rana regarding Application No. 1603-08-Z/Rana Automaster 1652 Berlin Turnpike.

9. PENDING APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT FUTURE MEETING

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1601-08-Z. Sharon Carducci** Seeking a Change of Zone from AA Residential to AAOS Residential at 361 Two Rod Highway.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1603-08-Z. Rana Automaster** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.2.E.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for a General Repairer's License and to display and rent U-Haul's at 1652 Berlin Turnpike.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1605-08-Z. Joe Pierz** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.5.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the use of an accessory apartment at 99 Prospect Street.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1609-08-Z. Paul Randazzo** Seeking a Zone Change from the Office (O) Zone to the General Business (GB) Zone for properties located on the easterly side of the Silas Deane Highway as depicted on a plan prepared for RANDEV LLC and dated November 15, 2007.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1611-08-Z. Town of Wethersfield** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 6.7 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the installation of outdoor athletic field lighting at 411 Wolcott Hill Rd. (Wethersfield High School – Cottone Field).

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hughes motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner McHugh seconded the motion.

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

Aye: Roberts, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Homicki, Drake, Knecht, Harley & Hammer

Nay:

Abs: