

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2005**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a regular meeting on Wednesday, January 5, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members present:

Joseph L. Hammer, Chairman
Theresa Forsdick, Vice Chair
George Oickle
Peter Leombruni
Earle R. Munroe
David R. Edwards
Richard Roberts
John Hallisey

Members absent:

John Adamian
Robert P. Jurasin
Phil Knecht

Also present:

Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner

Chairman Hammer called the public meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pre-Application Review - Special Residential Development; Harris Property - Old Reservoir Road/Back Lane.

Attorney John Harvey was present with Pat Snow and Kevin Johnston of Close, Jensen and Miller. Attorney Harvey summarized the proposed 39 unit, single family style, age restricted housing development. Mr. Harvey stated that the project would include a combination of public and private streets and a significant area of public and private open space. Mr. Harvey noted that meetings had been held with Town Staff and the applicant intends to work closely with the Wetlands Commission and the Fire Marshal. An emergency access way is proposed onto Back Lane with a security gate.

Attorney Harvey noted that in order to further pursue the project certain sections of Section 3.4 of the Zoning Regulations (Special Residential Development District) must be modified. Mr. Harvey distributed draft language to Sections C., G., and H. which would clarify if single family units are permitted, minimum lot area, lot frontage and would permit flexibility with the open space requirements.

Commissioner Oickle suggested that the neighbors should be contacted early on in the review process by the applicant.

Commissioner Leombruni questioned the value of the proposal to establish a series of small isolated open space properties in the development and whether the Town should encourage this. Mr. Johnston responded and referred to the minimum required open space regulations in the zoning code and that the entire outside lawn area will all be considered as public space maintained by the homeowners association. Mr. Gillespie stated that the regulations do allow lawn and patio areas to be included in the open space requirements.

Commissioner Roberts suggested that some of the proposed road layouts may not meet the turning radius required for emergency vehicle access. Mr. Harvey will review the plans with the Fire Marshal.

Mr. Gillespie noted the potential need to upgrade the drainage improvements on the south side of the property and that

at certain times drainage problems already exist.

Mr. Harvey suggested that about 3 acres of open space around the Reservoir could be set aside and dedicated to the Town to continue the past practice of protecting the Reservoir. Mr. Harvey also noted that the property contain several wetland areas including an area with a large amount of peat that must be removed in order to construct the road. Permitting with the Wetland Commission will be necessary.

Mr. Harvey asked if he should initiate the necessary proposed changes to the regulations or would it be appropriate to have Mr. Gillespie add the changes to the list of suggested changes that he has been accumulating. Mr. Gillespie was directed to work with Mr. Harvey on the proposed language and include a list of other proposed changes as identified by Town Staff.

Review of 1995 Strategic Plan

Copies of the December 21, 2004 Information Package from the 1995 Strategic Plan were reviewed. Commission members suggested that the Committee should closely review the 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development and include the recommendations in the Strategic Plan.

Specifically the following comments were made:

1.10 Economic Development,

1.12 The Plan of Development was updated in 2000 and new zoning regulations were adopted in 2004 which attempted to address many of these recommendations.

1.13 See above.

1.14 Recommendation no longer relevant since Town Hall is being renovated. Modify recommendation that suggests selling Town Hall. Recommend alternative uses for DMV site if it becomes available.

1.20 16- Many have been accomplished already.
19

1.40 1.42 Responsibility should rest with PZC to initiate Master Plan
Recognize recent rezoning of area to Village Business District.

General comment No reference to needs of the Silas Deane Highway. Town Planner has too many responsibilities which is unrealistic.

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Mr. Gillespie was directed to prepare a memorandum and forward to Strategic Plan Committee regarding these comments.

Pre-Application Review - Proposed Dunkin Donuts at 486 Silas Deane Highway at the corner of Church Street.

Mr. Manny Pine was present to discuss the 2 conceptual plans for the construction of a Dunkin Donuts Restaurant. Mr. Pine stated that he is the owner of 3 Dunkin Donuts on the Silas Deane Highway in Wethersfield and Rocky Hill and he is present to get feedback from the Commission regarding the preferred plan. Mr. Pine stated that he would keep all of the other donut shops open since there is enough demand for this additional shop. The donuts would be made at a location on Airport Road in Hartford.

Chairman Hammer stated that he had concerns with the design that proposed drive thru in the front of the building due to a potential traffic safety concern and the possibility of traffic backing out onto the Silas Deane Highway.

Commissioner Roberts noted that their was an opportunity for a significant amount of landscaping at this site in front of the building.

Commissioner Leombruni stated that he felt that the plan with the drive thru located in the rear of the building would

be a safer design with more room for queuing.

A general discussion ensued with regard to traffic safety and the preferred location of the building and drive-thru. Mr. Pine was directed to retain a traffic engineer to prepare an analysis as to the safest design. Mr. Pine was directed to meet with the State DOT traffic staff and Town Staff to determine the preferred design.

Commissioner Edwards noted that the Silas Deane Highway Advisory Committee views this site as a very important element of the Town Center concept and the idea was to have a 2 story building located as close to the streetline as possible. The Commission members debated the merits of this idea and the relationship and reality of this concept.

Mr. Pine was encouraged to come back to the Commission with the revised plan prior to submitting a final application.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2004 meeting, Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion with all members voting in favor.

Commissioner Roberts motioned to approve [the minutes of the October 19 meeting](#). Commissioner Oickle stated that the language on page 3, paragraph 5 should be modified to read "Commissioner Oickle referred to the original plan for the shopping center which contained an additional curb cut on the Berlin Turnpike and that he was disappointed that it had been removed." Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion with the noted change. Commissioner Forsdick and Commissioner Hallisey abstained from the vote with all other members voting in favor.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 7 meeting, Commissioner Forsdick seconded the motion, the vote showed all members in favor with the exception of Commissioner Hammer who abstained.

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

Correspondence

Chairman Hammer reviewed correspondence in regards to Application No. 1427-04-Z Cumberland Farms, 1855 Berlin Turnpike. Mr. Gillespie explained that ConnDot had requested slight modifications to this site plan by moving the pump island canopy 10 feet to the south in order to open up the internal travel lanes for this parking lot. Mr. Gillespie presented a highlighted copy of the revised plan. Mr. Gillespie stated that this change will be considered minor in nature and will be handled by Staff.

Chairman Hammer referred to a training opportunity for Commission members to be held on Saturday, March 5 and Commission members were encouraged to attend compliments of the Town. Commissioner Forsdick stated that she had attended this session in the past and that it was very valuable. Commissioner Leombruni expressed an interest in attending.

Other Business

Mr. Gillespie noted that on January 21 he was planning on attending a workshop on Design Review and he was going to try and have members of the Design Review Committee in attendance.

Mr. Gillespie also noted that the Mila Fabric project is scheduled to open in the next few weeks and the façade improvements will not be completed until later in the year. Commissioner Oickle suggested that the work should be done as soon as possible, hopefully this spring.

Commissioner Roberts brought up the CT River Community Bank sign application and the Starbucks sign application and was concerned as to whether these applications should have been presented to the Commission or whether it should have been submitted to the ZBA for a variance. Commissioner Roberts expressed his interest in ensuring that all administrative remedies are properly exhausted before matters are referred to the ZBA. Mr. Gillespie thought it may

be valuable to coordinate a meeting or discussion with the ZBA in the near future.

Mr. Gillespie stated that the Design Review Committee was scheduled to have their first meeting on Thursday, January 13 and that the Committee members will attend the next PZC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Philip Knecht, Clerk