

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
OCTOBER 19, 2004**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, October 19, 2004, in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members present:

Joseph L. Hammer, Chairman
Philip Knecht, Clerk
George Oickle
Peter Leombruni
John Adamian
David R. Edwards
Richard Roberts

Members absent:

John Hallisey
Earle R. Munroe
Theresa Forsdick
Robert P. Jurasin
Scott Murphy

Also present:

Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner

Chairman Hammer asked for a roll call.

Clerk Knecht read the roll call. Chairman Hammer indicated that at least five of the seven members present must vote in the affirmative in order to approve an application.

Clerk Knecht then read a description of the first application into the record:

APPLICATION NO. 1439-04-Z Site Development Plan Review. Interior improvements, Friendly Fitness (Work Out World), Westwood, Massachusetts - Joseph Mazzotta, Change of Use from Retail to Health Club Facility, 1390 Berlin Turnpike, Jordan Lane Shopping Center

Clerk Knecht read the following correspondence into the record:

- Application for Change of Use dated October 15, 2004
- Plan named Proposed Interior Layout prepared by Randy Jarvis Architects dated September 16, 2004
- Memo from Peter Gillespie to PZC dated October 19, 2004

Clerk Knecht read the memo from Mr. Gillespie into the record.

Steve Borghi, Friendly Fitness Mr. Borghi, presented the proposed plan for change of use. He said that he was proposing an open workout facility for all types of people, especially families. He owns thirteen other clubs, but this is the first club in Connecticut.

Chairman Hammer asked what the hours of operation would be. Mr. Borghi answered that the club would be opened 365 days a year and that the hours would be 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends. He added that depending on the community they may extend the hours a little bit, but that they would come before the Commission to ask for this extension.

Chairman Hammer then asked if membership would be required at the club. The applicant answered that it would be. Chairman Hammer then asked if there was anything that would be done on the inside of the building. Mr. Borghi answered that the proposed changes were mostly cosmetic with non-structural walls. There would also be a 2,000 s.f. daycare section of the facility with a playground structure including a slide.

Mr. Borghi stated that 60% of the club members are women. The workout space is intended for all types of people, not body builder types. It is a place for people to bring their kids and workout.

Chairman Hammer asked if the other clubs are in Massachusetts and how long he has been in the business. Mr. Borghi replied that the other clubs are in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island and that he has been in business for six years.

Commissioner Roberts asked where in the Jordan Lane Shopping Center the business would be located. Mr. Borghi answered that it would be next to the Chinese Restaurant. Commissioner Roberts asked if it was on the long side of the mall and Mr. Borghi said that it would be.

Commissioner Oickle asked if the club would take all the vacant space in the mall. Mr. Borghi said that the facility would occupy approximately 20,000 s.f. and that 20,000 - 40,000 s.f. is typical for his facilities.

Clerk Knecht asked if 5 a.m. is typical for his clubs. Mr. Borghi replied that at 5 a.m. he may see the same 20 to 25 people working out before they go to work. His busiest time, however is Monday, Wednesday and Fridays after 5 p.m.

Commissioner Adamian asked about the type of equipment that would be used in the club. Mr. Borghi described the 30 state-of-the-art treadmills with built-in plasma television sets. Each member can purchase a headset to plug into the treadmill and watch each set individually. There are four different brands of equipment that he uses. He also talked about the proposed aerobics classes that start at 6 a.m. including beginner classes. He said that about 40% of the people that walk into the club have never been to a health club before and he tries to make it a comfortable experience for them. He also caters to people who may have been members of clubs in the past, but hadn't utilized the club. He charges \$19.99 per month and the average person comes in three times a week with an emphasis on cardio. He also has elderly members that are looking for a place to maintain their health.

Clerk Knecht asked if there would be a staff to assist the members with the equipment. Mr. Borghi responded that each membership includes a free session with a personal trainer. He also talked about a chart system that each member would be using to keep track of the exercises that they are doing.

Commissioner Oickle said that he does not see a noise issue with this application and actually would probably be less noise than a retail facility that would have deliveries. He asked the applicant about the length of the lease. Mr. Borghi said that he had a 20-year lease.

Commissioner Oickle then asked Mr. Gillespie what the conditions of the sidewalk were in front of the facility and if the club would be part of a signage program at the mall. Mr. Gillespie responded that there is no signage program, but that the applicant would be proposing a new sign with channel letters in their own colors. Also, the sidewalk in front of the complex is in good condition. Finally, Mr. Gillespie said that there are no exterior changes proposed for the building.

Commissioner Roberts commented on the mall in general. He said that there are usually between four and ten cars parked in the fire lane, also that the management does a very poor job of picking up the trash, especially in the corner by the bank. He realizes that the applicant cannot do anything about this issue, but wanted to bring it up for the record. Commissioner Roberts asked Mr. Gillespie if the application would comply with the new regulations.

Mr. Gillespie responded that this application would have required 200 parking spaces less than what is required now. He also commented that the mall has a vast amount of excess parking that maybe could have been used for landscaping under the new regulations.

Commissioner Oickle commented that it is difficult to deal with the maintenance issues. He is also disappointed that

the northern side to the Berlin Turnpike was closed at that mall. He also asked if the club would be like a medical center for rehabilitation. Mr. Borghi replied that they are planning to be a step above that. His clients need more than rehabilitation, they need to continue the exercises on their own, not under the doctor's orders.

Commissioner Edwards asked if the proposed mezzanine would be enclosed. Mr. Borghi said that the mezzanine would be enclosed with a stairway and a door. Commissioner Edwards asked about the transformer in that section of the building. Mr. Borghi answered that the walls exist, but he does not know how big the proposed transformer would be. Commissioner Edwards said that it is not clear from the plan where the storage area and electrical area are located. Mr. Borghi said that he was not sure about the details of the electrical equipment, but that if a three foot buffer were required, that he would be willing to provide it. Commissioner Edwards also asked if parking would be designated for the club, especially on Saturdays. Mr. Borghi said that it would not be specifically designated, but that there is ample parking in the lot, so he didn't think that parking would be a problem. Saturdays are not a busy time for the club.

Commissioner Leombruni asked for clarification on the hours of operation. Mr. Borghi apologized and said that the proposed hours were weekdays 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. and weekends 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. He said that extended hours would only be proposed if the clients asked for them and he came back before the Commission to get permission. The extension of hours would be for weekdays.

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve the application. He asked the Commission if anyone had any conditions to add to the motion with regard to the hours.

Commissioner Leombruni seconded the motion. He said that the applicants were not asking for extended hours of operation, so he was not sure that the approval needed conditions.

Commissioner Roberts suggested that the Commission approve the application as presented and specify the proposed hours of operation.

Commissioner Leombruni seconded the motion with the following specification:

- The hours of operation on weekdays would be 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- The hours of operation on weekends would be 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Any change to these proposed hours of operation would require the applicant to appear before the Commission requesting the change.

Chairman Hammer asked for a vote on the matter. All members voted in favor of the proposal (7-0). (Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Oickle, Roberts, Adamian, Leombruni, Edwards)

Clerk Knecht then read a description of the next application into the record:

Pre-Application Review 245 Main Street, (Masonic Hall). Restoration and Use for Griffith Academy, Peter Benson and Mary Beth Griffith.

Chairman Hammer asked if anyone was able to present this matter. The applicants were not present.

Commissioner Leombruni asked about the content of a pre-application review. Chairman Hammer explained that it was the opportunity for the applicant to get some non-binding information and preliminary feedback from the Commission on an informal basis. Commissioner Oickle added that the state statutes changed and allowed for this type of preliminary review and that the applicants the opportunity to get a response from the Commission members before they submit an application.

Chairman Hammer asked if there were any members of the public present on the matter. He noted that two members of the public were present, however they would not be able to ask questions since the applicants were not here. Commissioner Leombruni said that if the applicants do not show, then there would be no pre-application review.

Mr. Gillespie, when asked, suggested that he was hesitant to present this matter, as it is intended to be more of a

question and answer period with the applicant. He reminded the Commission that the following correspondence was submitted:

- Letter from Peter Benson and Mary Beth Griffith to Peter Gillespie indicating their plans for the building.

Mr. Gillespie told the members of the public present that they could contact him during the week with any questions about the property.

Commissioner Leombruni asked if it was clear to the applicant that they were supposed to be present. Mr. Gillespie said that he spoke with the applicant and they did know that they needed to be present.

APPLICATION NO. 1433-04-Z. Town of Wethersfield Comprehensive Revisions to the Town of Wethersfield Zoning Regulations (Continued from October 5, 2004).

Chairman Hammer reminded the public and the Commission that this has been a lengthy process and asked if there was any new correspondence.

Mr. Gillespie briefly outlined the memo dated October 15, 2004 that he submitted to the Commission with final changes to the proposed regulations. These changes were to the following sections:

- Section 3.2.1 Congregate Residential Development
- Section 3.7.B.4 Building Overhangs
- Section 6.2.C Parking
- Section 6.3 Sign Regulations
- Section 6.12 Design Review

Commissioner Oickle asked about the building overhangs and if Mr. Gillespie had discussed this with the staff. Mr. Gillespie replied that the staff did discuss the issue and found that there was an amendment originally proposed by the developer LaCava for a development that was being built a while ago. The staff found that the ten foot (10') overhang allowed in the existing regulations was excessive and presently they are recommending a six foot (6') overhang in the new regulations.

Chairman Hammer noted that a few of the members who have participated in the discussion of the regulations were absent and asked if the members who were present would be prepared to vote on the new regulations tonight. Commissioner Oickle said that he would be prepared to vote and noted that this is a major overhaul of the regulations and that the matter has to be decided at some point, the Commission cannot keep putting it off.

Chairman Hammer noted that he would like to make sure that he has five members who are willing to vote on the matter. All of the present members indicated that they would be prepared to vote.

Commissioner Leombruni asked about the regulations concerning signs for special events. He saw a number of special event signs that popped up over the weekend that were located along the Silas Deane Highway for one day. Mr. Gillespie said that these special event signs are not permitted and it would be up to the Police Department to enforce the regulations.

Commissioner Oickle asked about the traffic control signage. Mr. Gillespie told him that it does say no as he had discussed. Commissioner Oickle was pleased that it said no.

Chairman Hammer asked how quickly the Town Council could vote on the appointment of the Design Review Committee. Mr. Gillespie said that potentially the Council could vote at their next meeting. Chairman Hammer then asked what the effective date of the regulations would be. Mr. Gillespie said that fifteen days are required, but anything after that is fine. Chairman Hammer noted that the new regulations would not apply to an application that is submitted prior to the effective date.

Commissioner Oickle asked about the advantages or disadvantages of setting the effective date sooner rather than later.

Mr. Gillespie said that there are a few developers were waiting for the new regulations to take place, but nothing urgent. Commissioner Oickle was concerned about coordination between the effective date of the regulations and the Council's approval of the Design Review Committee. Mr. Gillespie reminded the Commission that there were five people already selected and interested to serve on the Committee.

Chairman Hammer asked for any other questions on the proposed regulations.

Commissioner Oickle asked about the list of amendments to the regulations. Mr. Gillespie did not have the list available but briefly discussed rear lots, lighting and outdoor seating as some of the issues. He said that he would be doing research and putting that together for the Commission to discuss and review.

Chairman Hammer called for a motion.

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve Application No. 1433-04-Z.

Chairman Hammer recommended that the motion reference the proper documents as follows:

- Wethersfield Zoning Regulations Final Draft dated June 23, 2004 for Public Hearing on July 29, 2004 and Revised to October 1, 2004
- Addendum in the form of a Memo from Peter Gillespie to Planning and Zoning Commission dated October 15, 2004. Re: Modifications to Zoning Regulations referencing the following sections:
 1. Section 3.2.1 Congregate Residential Development
 2. Section 3.7.B.4 Building Overhangs
 3. Section 6.2.C Parking
 4. Section 6.3 Sign Regulations
 5. Section 6.12 Design Review
- Proposed Zoning Map dated August 2004

Commissioner Roberts recommended that the new regulations become **effective November 15, 2004**. Chairman Hammer confirmed that this was a weekday. Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion.

Commissioner Oickle stated that Mr. Gillespie should publicize this major undertaking.

Chairman Hammer said that Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Chalder, the Commission and Town Staff have done their best to make sure that a job of this magnitude was as complete as possible, however he asked that if there are a few bugs in the regulations that they be brought to the attention of the Commission as soon as possible. Mr. Gillespie agreed that there might be supplemental changes to the regulations. He confirmed that the August 2004 zoning map was the final version. Commissioner Oickle commended Mr. Gillespie. Clerk Knecht complimented the Commission and Mr. Gillespie on the changes that have been made to the image of Wethersfield due to the activities of the Commission.

Chairman Hammer saw a motion and a second and asked for a vote on the matter. All members present voted in favor of the new zoning regulations (7-0).

(Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Leombruni, Oickle, Roberts, Edwards, Adamian)

Pre-Application Review 245 Main Street, (Masonic Hall). Restoration and Use for Griffith Academy, Peter Benson and Mary Beth Griffith.

The Commission revisited this issue. The applicants still were not present, so they officially passed on the pre-application review. Mr. Gillespie discussed with the Commission that a number of proposals have been discussed since this property has become available. He indicated that there might be a parking problem.

Commissioner Oickle remembered a proposed use that never was built. Commissioner Roberts told Mr. Gillespie that a number of people who wanted to develop that property wanted the Town to give up the land that they own at the intersection. He would not like to see the Town give up their land in the event that further improvements to the

intersection must be completed.

Commissioner Oickle agreed and said that he would not like parking allowed on the side or the expansion of parallel parking.

MEETING MINUTES

He then moved onto the next item on the agenda, approval of [minutes from the October 5, 2004 meeting](#). He asked for a motion.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Gillespie said that he had noticed an error on p.6. The speaker should be listed as George A. Ruhe.

Clerk Knecht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0) with Commissioner Adamian abstaining, as he was not present at that meeting.

(Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Oickle, Leombruni, Roberts, Edwards)

(Abst: Adamian)

OTHER MATTERS

Chairman Hammer then called for a discussion on other matters. Mr. Gillespie said that the Town Manager is hoping to get a meeting together with the Zoning Board of Appeals, Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and the Conservation Commission. Commissioner Oickle and Roberts both agreed that this was a great idea whose time had come.

Commissioner Roberts asked if Mr. Gillespie would like to see the Commissioners attend the next Town Council meeting as they were planning on taking up the issue of the Design Review Committee. Mr. Gillespie said that would be a good idea and recommended that the Commissioners be available both to testify and answer questions. Commissioner Oickle asked if the matter was introduced at the Council. Mr. Gillespie said that they have to hold a public hearing on the matter and it is expected that they will vote in order to be coincident with the effective date of the new zoning regulations.

Mr. Gillespie also suggested that some Commission members get together with the proposed members of the Design Review Committee in order to make sure that they are up to the job. He also reminded the Commission that five regular members and one alternate are to be appointed and discussed the background that is required as specified in the proposed regulations.

Commissioner Oickle recalled that originally the Committee was to contain only architects and landscape architects, but that this was expanded to include other areas of expertise as useful.

MEETING MINUTES- Reconsideration

Chairman Hammer asked the Commission to reconsider the vote on the meeting minutes as he noticed another error. Commissioner Roberts made a motion to reconsider the vote. Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion. The Commission voted to reconsider (6-0) with John Adamian abstaining.

Chairman Hammer read the error on the top of p.9. The sentence should read "He appreciates that members of the public have..." this is a correction of the word Commission that is in its place.

He asked for a new motion and vote on the minutes. Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes with the change. Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0) with Commissioner Adamian abstaining, as he was not present at that meeting.

(Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Oickle, Leombruni, Roberts, Edwards)

(Abst: Adamian)

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hammer asked if there was any other correspondence or other business. Seeing none, Chairman Hammer asked if there was motion to adjourn.

Chairman Hammer made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Leombruni seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

(Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Oickle, Roberts, Adamian, Leombruni, Edwards)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Philip Knecht, Clerk