

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Wednesday, September 4, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wethersfield Town Council Chambers located at Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Roberts called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

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

Clerk Margiotta called the roll as follows:

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

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

Chairman Roberts noted at the time of roll call there were six (6) full members and two (2) alternate members in attendance. 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 APPLICATION NO. 1803-13-Z: Wethersfield Seed Gardens LLC Seeking Site Plan and Design Review for parking and site improvements at 263 Main Street.

Oswaldo Torres, P.E., Torres Engineering, Inc., 63 Reed Drive, Wethersfield, CT, appeared before the Commission on behalf of the Applicant, Wethersfield Seed Gardens, LLC. The Applicant plans to make improvements to the parking area of the site. Approximately, 1.2 acres of the property consists of broken pavement, gravel, and grassy portions of this parking area (some of the area is striped for parking). The proposal is to remove the broken pavement and concrete and to replace that area with a plaza type of pavement made of porous brick. The brick will be secured by a stone and heavy gravel

mixture that will be used between brick throughout the design to a depth of approximately one (1') foot or so below the surface until the existing soil is reached. No drainage plan is being submitted, as water will be continued to be absorbed due to the history of the site's known topography as being sandy with very good drainage.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Mr. Torres indicated he is not aware of the proposed design being utilized anywhere else in Wethersfield. Mr. Torres indicated the proposed design worked very well at a magnet school project he completed in Bridgeport, CT.

Commissioner Fazzina inquired and Mr. Torres noted the proposed design can accommodate heavy emergency vehicles, as it is as good as pavement.

Mr. Torres mentioned the proposal will contain large garden lawn areas in the front of the site to accommodate the display of large planting plants, and the remainder of the front area will contain the plaza type pavement described above. There will be striped parking spaces in a portion of the front of the site (Main Street) and on the westerly end of the site only.

Mr. Torres indicated twenty six (26) parking spaces are needed for the site based on the three (3) proposed use areas noted on the chart: office and seed museum, the regular retail space, and the retail furniture space. Two (2) of the twenty six (26) spaces are designated for handicapped parking (containing wheel stops) with one (1) of those two (2) spaces large enough to accommodate a van.

Mr. Torres indicated the Town Fire Marshal approves the traffic pattern plan proposed for the site, including turning radius information pertaining to emergency vehicle access. Dumpsters will be placed at the far end of the site near the barn and in proximity to the striped parking area (west end of site).

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Mr. Torres indicated that screening/fencing of the dumpster area will meet the requirements made of Town Staff.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Mr. Torres indicated it is unknown as to who owns the existing fence separating the site from abutting property owners. Mr. Torres indicated that the property owners and the Applicant agree the fence should remain, as it is in good condition. Mr. Torres noted there is an existing driveway that will be relocated so that it does not cross the abutting property on Church Street, and said relocation of the driveway to make that abutting property become completely separate will be appropriately noted in the land records upon completion.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Mr. Torres indicated there mixed shrubs are planted along the south side of the site to display variety while keeping vehicles from hitting the existing fence (and to avoid installing wheel stops).

Vice Chairman Harley inquired and the Applicant indicated the mixed shrubs would be planted directly into the ground (rather than in individual pots) along the fence described above.

Chairman Roberts inquired and Mr. Torres indicated winter plowing should not adversely affect the mixed shrub plantings, and that any damage to those shrubs could easily be addressed by replanting.

Mr. Torres indicated there are no plans to change and/or increase lighting for the site, and there is a silt/erosion control plan for the site.

Commissioner Fazzina inquired and Mr. Torres indicated the pavement portion of the project can be completed this fall with planting in the spring of next year.

Commissioner Vassel inquired and Mr. Torres indicated there is a quarter of an (1/4) inch separation on the brick. Good drainage at the site will provide for a long lifespan of the material, and there is no type of edging planned for this proposed pavement due to the brick being flush to the ground's surface. The garden areas, however, will have a lawn raised edge.

Chairman Roberts referred to the Staff Memorandum dated August 30, 2013 from Peter D. Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner and Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner.

Mr. Torres indicated the Applicant will comply with Town Staff and Wethersfield Historic District Commission review of dumpster screening.

Mr. Torres mentioned the Applicant will defer to Town Staff regarding Section 6.7 (Outdoor Lighting) and the requirement of full cut-off or fully shielded lighting.

Mr. Torres indicated there is a lot of space in the building that is used solely for storage. Parking spaces were not tallied for this Application. Mr. Gillespie indicated the front area will be used for garden area, display area and for a fire lane, which would make that area out of the equation for parking calculation. Mr. Gillespie noted that when also factoring in the existing parking along the residential property line, there is a reduction in the parking currently available. He noted, however, that given the activity proposed for the site in this Application and the calculation data provided in this Application, the Applicant is demonstrating the parking spaces intended for use, plus the off-street parking available, is adequate. Mr. Gillespie noted the caveat that additional activity other than what is proposed currently in this Application would change parking calculations completely, and that the opportunity to revisit the parking adequacy issue at the appropriate times. Additionally, there would have to be an agreement that when revisiting the parking issue, the Applicant would either: 1) have the consent from the Town that no additional parking plan is needed from them, or 2) the Applicant would have to come up with alternative parking plans. Mr. Gillespie suggested that the existing Application's plans/drawings reflect which areas (spaces) of the site the proposed parking plan reflects, as a large amount of square footage at the site is excluded in the parking space calculation for this Application.

Chairman Roberts mentioned a parking table could also be added to the plans/drawings to explain, for example, the provided parking in this Application is based on 5,022 square feet of retail space.

Mr. Gillespie suggested a condition for this Application that this approval is for this phase of the development, and future activity levels in the other spaces that might be subject to activity down the road need to be evaluated at that time.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Mr. Torres indicated there are no additional buildings requested in this Application and that the existing gazebo will be moved over slightly on the site.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Store Manager, Pam McGraw, indicated the business will not be open on Saturdays, as the owners observe their Sabbath.

Commissioner Edwards inquired and Mr. Torres indicated the plan complies with ADA accessibility.

Clerk Margiotta inquired and Mr. Torres indicated signage at the site (including an exit only sign) will be added.

Commissioner Oickle inquired and Mr. Gillespie indicated there is adequate parking for this particular business. Conversations involving shared parking need to occur for multiple events on Main Street. Some plans for additional on-street parking in the Marsh Street/Main Street vicinity are forthcoming.

PUBLIC COMMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION:

Betty Standish, 278 Hartford Avenue, appeared before the Commission and noted this plan conforms to the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, the Village Business Zone, and the recent consultant recommendations for the area f/k/a the Masonic Home up to and including the Comstock Ferre property. She indicated this Application promotes business, residential zoning, and historical tourism and concluded that this plan would be a true asset to the agricultural history of Wethersfield.

Vice Chairman Harley made a motion to approve, **APPLICATION NO. 1803-13-Z: Wethersfield Seed Gardens LLC Seeking Site Plan and Design Review for parking and site improvements at 263 Main Street, with the following conditions:**

1. The dumpster locations depicted in the plan shall be screened in compliance with Section 6.8 (Refuse Storage) of Wethersfield Zoning Regulations. The screening shall be subject to

satisfaction of Town Staff and/or approval by the Wethersfield Historic District;

2. Outdoor/Exterior lighting shall comply with Section 6.7 (Outdoor Lighting) of Wethersfield Zoning Regulations and shall be of full cutoff or fully shielded light fixtures. The details of the fixtures and a photometric plan shall be submitted to and approved by Town Staff (and/or Wethersfield Historic District Commission) prior to installation;
3. The parking plans shall be revised to show the portions of the buildings that were considered for compliance with Section 6.2 (Parking & Loading Regulations) of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations and provide parking spaces shown on the parking chart to the satisfaction of Town Staff; (Note: Any future uses that are more intensive and/or require additional area, are subject to Planning & Zoning Commission approval in order to determine adequate parking provisions.)
4. Any adjustment to the Lot #3 configuration must comply with the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations;
5. A landscape waiver to Section 6.1 (Landscaping Requirements) of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations was granted as submitted;
6. The 'One Way' signage on the property and the 'No Entry' signage at Church Street shall be shown on the plan;
7. The landscaping along the Stockade fencing shall be fruit bushes, blueberry or similar types subject to Town Staff approval; and
8. The six (6') foot fence which is located to the rear of the abutting residential properties on Church Street shall be maintained.

Second: Commissioner Fazzina seconded the motion.

Aye: Roberts, Harley, Margiotta, Oickle, Edwards, Fazzina, Vasel;

Nay: None;

Vote: 7 – 0;

Commissioner Standish recused himself from the Discussion and Voting of this matter.

This Application was approved with conditions.

4. OTHER BUSINESS:

4.1 A discussion regarding PA 12-55 – An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana.

Mr. Gillespie provided the Commissioners with examples of articles and public act language from other communities regarding the palliative use of Marijuana. There have been inquiries of how the two (2) uses (growers or dispensaries) will be handled in this Town. The State of CT has discussed permitting three (3-10) grow facilities in the State, and three to five (3-5) dispensaries in the State. Grow facilities would likely be in indoor, industrial spaces. Dispensary facilities would likely be retail/pharmacy locations. The State would have a permitting process that would be competitive. Factors such as proximity to churches, schools, etc. have also been considered as variables as Applications are received at the State level. There was discussion of having legislation in Town that is akin to that of Newington. The special permit route in addressing an Application or adopting a simple text amendment were ideas also mentioned. Mr. Gillespie indicated the Town Manager and Police Chief will be involved in further discussions of this matter. Mr. Gillespie indicated that a GIS analysis mapping Wethersfield sites will

be prepared and provided to the Commissioners at the next meeting.

5. MINUTES – August 20, 2013 Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

The Minutes from the Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting held August 20, 2013 will be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting.

6. STAFF REPORTS:

Mr. Gillespie and the Commissioners briefly discussed a proposed dealer and repairer operation in a vacant space at 61 Arrow Road. Mr. Gillespie indicated **the proposed business** (Application not yet submitted) **is located in a different vacant space from that of PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1786-12-Z**: [Leonard Sande III Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.7 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for a General Repairer’s License and outside storage yard at 61 Arrow Road] **and does not include an outside storage yard.**

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

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

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

There were no items of correspondence discussed during this meeting.

9. PENDING APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT FUTURE MEETINGS:

9.1 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1805-13-Z: PDS Engineering & Construction Inc. c/o Chris Eseppi Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.2 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations to construct a church on Russell Road.

Mr. Gillespie indicated a Pre-Application Review may be forthcoming regarding a residential unit development on property located on the Berlin Turnpike.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: Vice Chairman Harley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Second: Commissioner Oickle seconded the motion.

Aye: Roberts, Harley, Margiotta, Oickle, Edwards, Fazzina, Vasel, Standish;

Nay: None;

Vote: 8 – 0;

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary