

WETHERSFIELD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

PUBLIC HEARING UNOFFICIAL MINUTES UNTIL VOTED UPON

July 25, 2016

The Wethersfield Zoning Board of Appeals held a public hearing on July 25, 2016 at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109.

PRESENT: Thomas J. Vaughan Jr., Chairman
Daniel Logan, Vice Chairman
David Gustafson, Alternate, Acting Clerk
Mary Pelletier, Alternate
Michael Vieira

ABSENT: Morris Borea
Bassia E. Dellaripa

ALSO PRESENT: Justin LaFountain, Zoning Officer and Mary Lou Wall, Recording Secretary

Chairman Thomas J. Vaughan called the meeting to order at 7:03 p. m. He explained the procedures of the meeting and the hearing. The Chairman further explained that there are four affirmative votes necessary to approve an application. There are five voting members present.

The Chairman asked Clerk Gustafson to read the first application.

1. **Application No. 6176-16 CF C/O Carolyn Parker**, Seeking to amend a previous variance to allow for an additional 6 square feet for a freestanding gas price sign (total proposed square footage of 45 square feet) at Cumberland Farms, 1855 Berlin Turnpike, RC Regional Commercial Zone (§6.3F).

Chairman Vaughan indicated that Zoning Officer Justin LaFountain received an email dated Tuesday, June 12, 2016 requesting the hearing move to August 22nd. Said application was previously moved from the June meeting. Zoning Officer LaFountain suggested to table the Application.

2. **Application No. 6177-16 J. E. Shea Electric Inc.** Seeking a variance of 247 square feet to permit the installation of a 372 square foot wall sign (125 square feet of wall signage permitted by right) at 176 Cumberland Avenue, O Office District (§6.3.F).

Mr. Robert Kuszpa Sign Pro, Inc. representing J. E. Shea Electric, a handout was given to the Commission. Mr. Kuszpa gave an explanation of each page of the handout showing a day and

night view of the sign to illustrate the illuminated sign, the dimensions of the sign, a picture of the school with an aerial view. The handout also showed the various logos of the CREC Magnet Schools. In referencing the Design Review Advisory Committee's suggestion regarding the logo, an inside picture with the logo was shown from the handout. He explained the importance of the main symbol, which must be kept intact and not changed. He explained the lack of visibility creates a hardship for the CREC Discovery Academy. By installing a 372 square foot sign on the north side of the building, it will provide visibility to Wilbur Cross Highway (Route 5), in an effort to attract more students to the academy. Since Capitol Regional Education Council (CREC) is not a public school where you have a pool of students from the town, but a regional magnet school, it is necessary to enroll people from surrounding towns. A larger sign will provide safe visibility from passing motorists.

Chairman Vaughan asked for clarification of the letter from Design Review dated 5/17/2016 to J. E. Shea Electric from Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner and asked what the actual size of the sign is. Mr. Kuszpa responded that Design Review would give a letter of support, if the Commission approved the sign. Commissioner Pelletier was not sure if this was an approval letter. Zoning Officer LaFountain confirmed to the Chairman that the sign must have a box around the entire area, which the 372 square feet includes the box and the wall signage cut off is at a maximum of 125 square feet regardless of the linear frontage.

Chairman Vaughan asked if signs were posted around the area. Mr. Kuszpa did not know since that part was not handled by him. Commissioner Gustafson asked if there was any other signage on the building and Mr. Kuszpa replied that there was not. Commissioner Logan asked what the linear frontage was. Officer LaFountain indicated that frontage along the Wilbur Cross Highway is 400 feet. Also, Zoning Officer LaFountain indicated he does have proof that notice did go out to the neighbors.

Commissioner Vaughan asked if that sign is in sight of the neighbors and Commissioner Gustafson questioned the amount of time the sign lights will be on. Mr. Kuszpa indicated that the sign faces north and he imagines the sign will be on a timer and probably will not run during the daytime; he is not sure the lights will be on all night.

Chairman Vaughan asked if there was anyone in favor or opposed to this application.

Julie Wolfe, 215 Cumberland Avenue, Wethersfield stated she is pleased that the CREC is going in but would like to see pictures since she has some concern with the sign and the size. Ms. Wolfe stated she is not for or against but would like to see pictures. The Commission provided her with the handout and after reviewing the handout felt that what she was seeing, will not affect any views and therefore, is not in opposition to the sign.

Chairman Vaughan Closed the Hearing and asked Commissioner Gustafson to read the application.

Commissioner Logan made a **Motion to table Application No. 6176-16 CF C/O Carolyn Parker**, Seeking to amend a previous variance to allow for an additional 6 square feet for a freestanding gas price sign (total proposed square footage of 45 square feet) at Cumberland Farms, 1855 Berlin Turnpike, RC Regional Commercial Zone (§6.3F) to next month's meeting.

Commissioner Gustafson **SECOND**

AYE – Commissioners David Gustafson, Daniel Logan, Mary Pelletier, Thomas Vaughan, Michael Vieira

NAY – None

ABS. – None

Motion to Table passed 5-0

Commissioner Logan made a Motion to Approve as Submitted **Application No. 6177-16 J. E. Shea Electric Inc.** Seeking a variance of 247 square feet to permit the installation of a 372 square foot wall sign (125 square feet of wall signage permitted by right) at 176 Cumberland Avenue, O Office District (§6.3.F).

Commissioner Gustafson **SECOND**

Some discussion ensued

Commissioner Logan was concerned with the letter from the Design Review Advisory Committee, which partly states as follows:

1. The applicant should consider apply for a larger sign to achieve intended visibility. If the applicant requires the submittal of a variance for exceeding the maximum square footage allowable, the Design Review Advisory Committee would submit a letter of support to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
2. The applicant should consider removing the words "Discovery" and "Academy" from the sign and enlarge and center the letters CREC".

Commissioner Logan commented that DRAC stated it should be larger without stating a size range and regarding the latter, stating should consider to enlarge and center CREC. Chairman Vaughan commented that it would have been prudent on their part to have seen the new design and then submit a letter; they are making suggestions without seeing the final design. However, we are approving the square footage.

Zoning Officer Justin LaFountain stated that essentially DRAC approved it and was offering suggestions.

Chairman Vaughan stated it looks proportionate for the size of this building and the Commission can go with what we have in front of the Commission now. As far as illumination, as long as it is not effecting the neighbors, we can keep it informal since the gentlemen said he would work with the town. Commissioner Vieira and Commissioner Pelletier agree that illumination of the sign is acceptable.

AYE – Commissioners David Gustafson, Daniel Logan, Mary Pelletier, Thomas Vaughan, Michael Vieira

NAY – None

ABS. – None

Motion Passed 5-0

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF: January 25, 2016

Commissioner Vieira made a **Motion to Approve January 25, 2016 Minutes.**

Commissioner Gustafson **Second**

AYE – Commissioners Gustafson, Vaughan and Vieira

NAY – None

ABS. – None

Motion Passed 3-5

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF: April 25, 2016

Commissioner Logan made a **Motion to Approve April 25, 2016 Minutes.**

Commissioner Gustafson **Second**

AYE – Commissioners Gustafson, Logan, and Vaughan

NAY – None

ABS. – None

Motion Passed 3-5

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF: May 23, 2016

Commissioner Gustafson made a **Motion to Approve May 23, 2016 Minutes.**

Commissioner Logan **SECOND**

AYE – Commissioners Gustafson, Logan, Vaughan and Vieira

NAY – None

ABS. – None

Motion Passed 4-5

6. OTHER BUSINESS

None

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35

Respectfully Submitted By,

Mary Lou Wall.

Recording Secretary.