

WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING December 6, 2016

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Wethersfield Town Council Chambers located at the Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Thomas Harley called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. welcoming all to the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. He explained the process and procedures of the meeting and the clerk, Commissioner Richard Roberts commenced the roll call.

1.1 ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES (5 members required for a quorum).

Member Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Thomas Harley, Chairman	√		
Antonio Margiotta, Vice Chairman	√		
Richard Roberts, Clerk	√		
James Hughes			√
George Oickle	√		
Joseph Hammer**	√		
Anthony Homicki	√		
Thomas Dean*	√		
Ryan Allard	√		
David Edwards, (alternate)	√		
Daniel Silver (alternate)	√		
Yolanda Antoniak (alternate)	√		

There were 10 Commissioners present. Also, present Mr. Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager, Ms. Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner and Mary Lou Wall, Recording Secretary.

*Commissioner Thomas Dean arrived late

**Commissioner Joseph Hammer left early

2. OLD BUSINESS

NONE

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1 Pre-Application Review Lexington Partners LLC 1178 Silas Deane Highway

Attorney Peter Alter of Alter & Pearson, LLC requesting a pre-application discussion of the initial planning for the construction of a proposed mixed-use development known as “The Borden,” providing the Commission with a Power Point Presentation. Attorney Alter introduced the team for this endeavor stating they will speak individually on this pre-application. He indicated that he has met previously with staff and provided materials to them.

Mr. Martin “Marty” Kenny, President, Lexington Partners, LLC 30 Lewis Street, 4th Floor Hartford, stating he is a 30-year resident of Wethersfield and feels the town is very underrated and is very excited about bringing a housing alternative to this town. He said 1178 Silas Deane will be a quality, market rate property with parking and great amenities and great architecture describing what they will do at the Fun Zone site, formerly Borden Dairy Farm. Mr. Kenny is an active developer and this is his first project in Wethersfield. He expressed his enthusiasm for this project and told the Commission about Lexington Partners LLC and the projects they have successfully completed.

Some of the projects are Trumbull on the Park with 100 apartment units and a very successful restaurant called Salute. He stated that dynamic of linking a restaurant at the base of the building is something they want to do on this property. He showed what they did on Lewis Street with two buildings keeping the historic bones and bringing it back to life and stated the pride of what they did. In 2009, they completed Addison Mill in Glastonbury a challenged property turned into 55 Luxury apartments showing before and after pictures and stating it is also a pet friendly community, which they want at The Borden as well. Pet friendly communities are necessary for empty nesters and millennials. Mallory Ridge in Bloomfield is another successful project that they sold after it was developed in 2014. Mallory Ridge also had a fitness center; amenities being of great importance to them.

Mr. Kenny described the new site and all the amenities it will have in detail, void of a pool. He mentioned Windsor Station a 130-apartment unit in two buildings in the Center of Windsor across from a train station. This project called Windsor Station he feels will put a jolt in the town. It is not completed but expressed great excitement for the project. He also discussed the Tannery in Glastonbury, a renovated old mill, they are doing now, with 250 apartments in eight buildings, all amenities and a 6000 s.f. restaurant, opening in 2017.

Attorney Peter Alter described how they start the project; looking at the regulations and directions a community is given to develop a plan that is acceptable. A plan that addresses the intentions of the Boards and Commissions that make policy. Therefore, they studied the Silas Deane Vision Reinvestment Plan and feel they accomplished the vision in this plan that was set forth and detailed those visions.

Mr. Matthew Koenig, Architect Barton Partners, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Existing Condition – former Fun Zone and Existing Amenities and Services was discussed and the Site Plan was shown. Mr. Koenig indicated that Mr. Kenny will face environmental challenges when demolition of the building commences, age being a factor. Mr. Kenny is familiar with these

issues and has experience in dealing with them. He discussed why 1178 fits into the Silas Deane corridor plan. It offers the kinds of amenities people are looking for parking, shopping, public transit, banking, fitness, walking distance to those amenities and easy access to major highways I-91 North and South. He described an L-shape building and about 13 parking spaces upfront to service the retail. Close, Jensen and Miller have been working on the grading and draining and flood storage. They have reached an agreement with 1160 to link up to 1178 and integrate those parking lots, which offers several benefits. They will prohibit left hand turns. They will exit the site on Mill Street to avoid traffic problems on the Silas Deane. Discussion continued prohibiting left hand turns onto the Silas Deane and the building materials.

Mr. Mark G. Vertucci, P.E., P.T.O.E. Senior Transportation Engineer Associate with Fuss & O'Neill, 146 Hartford Road, Manchester spoke of a shared parking analysis that was performed for 1160 and 1178 Silas Deane (Shared Parking Analysis 1160 & 1178 SD). The parking lots will be integrated and discussed the benefits of this proposal.

There will be two entrance points proposed along the Silas Deane prohibiting left hand turns onto the Silas Deane, which will permit drivers to exit from Mill Street. Mr. Vertucci presented the Shared Parking Analysis prepared by Fuss & O'Neill and discussed it in detail. The current plan proposes a total combination of 277 parking spaces. The regulations require 250 parking spaces (**Table 1: 1178 Silas Deane Highway Parking required by Zoning Regulations – Urban Land Institute (ULI) Based Shared Parking Analysis**). Parking utilization counts on 1160 were taken on Wednesday, November 16, 2016 and vacancy rates were taken as well. Mr. Vertucci discussed **Table 2 – Observed Parking Demand** and **Table 3 Shared Parking Calculations for 1160 and 1178 SDH** and **Table 4 Parking Usage by Location**.

A letter dated November 29, 2016 to Mr. Martin J. Kenny of Lexington Partners, LLC from Mr. Matthew Skelly, PE Transportation Engineer, and Mr. Mark G. Vertucci of Fuss & O'Neill, RE: Shared Parking Analysis of 1160 and 1178 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield was presented to the Commission (six pages). Said report concluded the proposed supply of parking meets demands of the development.

Mr. Matthew Kane Principle at Barton Partners specialist of Residential and Mixed Use Design. Showed Perspective from Silas Deane Highway and described the building in detail. He described the building as an L-Shaped building which lends itself to be more contemporary, more modern in design with a flat roof, bay windows, balconies etc. This is a four-sided building same façade treatment on all sides with a mixture of materials such as concrete masonry, wood grain panels, balconies are metal panels and glass, all durable materials commenting, the building should last. Mr. Kane showed all the elevations with explanation of each elevation. He showed the floor Plan Stories 2,3,4,5 – 30 units per floor consisting of 15% Studios, 52% one bedrooms and 33% two bedrooms. Approximately 10,000 square feet of proposed retail space in front. Discussed the First-Floor Plan, two drive thru and covered parking in the back of the building, which will be prime parking spaces and parking will be screened from the Silas Deane Highway.

Attorney Peter Alter summarized the Borden Benefits. Highlighting the following:

Redevelopment of Town Eyesore (Fun Zone)

Implement SDV for Reinvestment Plan

20 Million Project

Real Estate Taxes 46,961/year

Mixed Use Level

Smart Growth

Provides Diversity Housing

Provides incubator space for Millennials before buying out of Town

Also, noting the impact on jobs, bringing workers to buying gas, using restaurants/services, and producing jobs when the project is completed.

Chairman Harley asked the Board Members and Town Members in public seating to introduce themselves.

Commissioner Oickle asked if any tax abatement, state grants or Section 8 or assisted financing will be used and what rent range do they anticipate. He also inquired what was the basis for the number of units proposed.

Attorney Alter said this will not qualify. This is designed to be luxury styled apartments and at the top of market rates. Mr. Kenny said the Studios will be 1200-1300, one bedrooms 1400-1800, two bedrooms 2000 per month. He specializes in market rate housing. There is state funding. State Senator and the Mayor shared the vision of quality living option in Wethersfield; five million dollars going in, 2.5 million will be administered by CRDA into site and to Town, the other 2.5 Junior Equity, the market rate investor dollars.

Since the development is not finalized, they do not know if there will be a tax abatement on the property. However, the town will do much better with taxes on cars and personal property, fitness equipment etc. Mr. Kenny explained to make the economics work, there must be at least 100 units. The best way was to do a five story which afforded the necessary yield. He wants the development to pencil out and be healthy.

Commissioner Harley asked to run through the flood storage.

Cory Garro, Close Jensen and Miller, Wethersfield. Said that most of site is within the 100-year flood plain. We will be grading down and the net result will be zero fill. Once finalized they will tweak it here and there.

Chairman asked Attorney Alter if they were in receipt of the Memo dated December 2, 2016 from Planning and Zoning. Mr. Alter indicated he was. Chairman Harley noted the project modifications that will be necessary from Mr. LaFountain, Zoning Enforcement Officer as so noted in his staff memorandum dated November 29, 2016 to the Town Planner/Economic Development Manager. Chairman Harley commenting to be sure they meet the landscape regulations and some of the parking on 1160.

Attorney Alter indicated that he has not had time to look at the Easterly driveway to Mill and the package at 1160. He will still have to be sensitive to that.

Commissioner Allard you may be forcing everyone to go into Mill Street and Attorney Alter indicated he was aware and Mark will continue to do that part of the analysis as they move forward. Commissioner Roberts stating the left turn is tough so there needs to be discussion on the challenging traffic matters.

Chairman Harley asked if they have had dialogue with the Department of Transportation. Mr. Matthew Kane indicated they have not at this point.

Commissioner Silver discussed the shared parking and had concern about apartment parking so he would like them to look at the comfort of the tenants and lighting and asked if thought was given to valet parking. Mr. Kane stating they have done similar, Harbor Point in Stamford and showed a table of allocation dedicated parking for apartment and restaurant.

Mr. Kenny suggested that the concept is that 30% of the residents are not there during the day and designated parking tightens things up and becomes very tricky, using a development in Glastonbury on Addison as an example. Chairman Harley thought that they may find it difficult to fill the spots in the back and therefore, in some cases, it is easier to park at 1160. Discussion ensued regarding parking, lighting, and safety.

Mr. Joseph Hickey Design Review Accessory Committee for the Town of Wethersfield. He provided a list of six (6) items and read them to the Commission and team Borden. He stated the Borden was an imaginative and attractive proposal to use a site with physical constraints and should be encouraged to proceed further. He indicated that his comments were not meant to be negative but rather to raise issues to be addressed. The comments follow as written by Mr. Hickey:

1. Apartments to be market rate? Not Section 8?
2. Building site proper apparently filled to reach 100-year flood level (Altho 28' contour seen in eastern, parking area is a question).
3. In event of a 100-year flood, will vehicular access be significantly limited to a primarily residential building?
4. Bank along southern border – what treatment, stability, etc.?
5. Dog Park location may periodically at least be wet, boggy, esp. with sustained usage.

6. Treatment of streambelt/wetland area. To be natural (as is) semi-natural or landscaped? Plan implies diversion of brook immediately east of Silas Deane Hwy. Possible erosion impact?

A speculative thought – If landscaped option chosen, in view of question of brook channel gradient & need to avoid impact on flowage capacity of culvert, consider possibility of low 2'-3' weir to provide pool as visual amenity to the development. [Signed] Joe Hickey 12/6/16.

Mr. Kenny indicated he wants to see the water. Mr. Hickey commented whether there was enough grading and the engineers should look at that.

Mr. Bret Owen Member of Board Inlands/Wetlands town of Wethersfield. He was speaking from notes titled James Kulpa review comments 12/6/2016. These comments were outlined on paper as follows:

Overall

1. Verify the need for a variance for the reduction in required parking. Has the parking analysis accounted for snow storage/loss of parking due to snow build up during the course of winter?

Site Plan- Sheet 1 of 2

2. Provide volume computations for the proposed compensatory flood storage area to demonstrate a no net fill within the floodplain. Have the soil scientist/wetland biologist determine if this area is appropriate for wetland plantings. If found appropriate, restore the area with plantings recommended by the soil scientist/wetland biologist.
3. Provide additional details for proposed dog park including but not limited to surface treatment and fencing. Consider winter snow removal operations when siting the location of the dog park.

Grading Plan – Sheet 2 of 2

4. Provide computations for impervious area and peak rates of runoff comparing pre-development versus post development conditions. Provide stormwater management measures as necessary.
5. Is the intent of the stormwater drainage to sheet-flow off of the edge of the parking areas, if so provide a stone filter strip or some other means to slow/filter the stormwater and protect the edge of pavement and embankments from soil erosion.
6. Provide appropriate erosion control fabric on 2:1 slopes.
7. When preparing erosion control plans, include a means to treat dewatering waters per the 2002 DEEP erosion control guidelines.

8. Obtain and add additional existing topography along the southern property boundary and graphically depict the tie-in of all proposed grading and include proposed grading for the dog park.
9. Graphically depict all proposed utility connections, closed drainage systems (if intended), and plantings.

[END OF COMMENTS]

Commissioner Homicki was interested in other comparable buildings occupancy and rental rate comparables. Urban Land Institute – shared elevations – height requirements for restaurants and retail – dumpsters seem small – loading docks how does that play into the residential – parking – lighting – night time building lighting and what is your build out time line. Are you having any roof top mechanicals.

Mr. Kenny projecting 18 to 24 months once demolition and site work is complete; 24 months being the outside number. The idea is to get them out of view and looking at Solar Panels as well.

Vice Chairman Antonio Margiotta suggesting that it should be pedestrian friendly and the driveway can be configured a little differently. Also, parking projections concerns – 14% empty vacancy rates and % of retail seems low to the Commissioner. Vice Chairman thanked them for considering Wethersfield.

Mr. Kenny Trumbull on the Park project was eight thousand square feet of retail, Glastonbury was six thousand square feet of retail. Retail provides people/tenants amenities, a service, which makes living more enjoyable and convenient.

Commissioner Margiotta had a concern with the pump station and the material for the building.

Commissioner Allard asking if the entry and exits from the Silas Deane are they both two lanes suggesting that it would be better to be farther from the intersection and safer.

Commissioner Roberts asking if it was a market study or analysis. Mr. Kenny replying that they survey on a weekly basis and will be happy to do that. Commissioner Roberts supports shared parking portion of the residential component but is concerned that there will be adequate parking. The Commissioner just wants to be sure it is accurate, seems to be twice as dense as any of the other apartments in town.

Attorney Megan Hope from Alter & Pearson, quoted statistics on some of the other units in town such as 554 S. Deane 39 units an ac., Wolcott Hill 33 units an ac., Millpointe 30 units an ac., Executive Square 20 units an ac.

Commissioner Edwards was in favor of parking in back. Discussion on the building materials ensued from the Design Board Committee members.

Matthew Kane stating that the materials will be steel and concrete, wood frame and transfer slab.

Mr. Kenny stating the charge is let's make this exciting, not to go cheap, but we want it to look cool and light it properly.

Commissioner Oickle feels you should study Mill Street intersection more and pavement in 1160 is in bad shape and asked about the slope of the driveway.

Mr. Kenny said they will be shallower and they plan on resurfacing 1160; it will be striped and new and 1160 and 1178 will maintained it together. He added that it has been worked out jointly as well as liability insurance.

Commissioner Oickle referred to Justin LaFountain's, Zoning Enforcement Officer memo and asked what Smart Growth is.

Attorney Alter indicated he has had a good discussion with the staff and will provide appropriate reasons for the waivers. Smart Growth is the use of existing infrastructure that do not create sprawl and use open space. To create housing opportunities going back to Existing Amenities and Services, whereas you reduce emission to gas; they have all they need in walking distance to services and amenities providing a quality of living and use. All smart growth is much more urban rather than rural.

Mr. Kenny stating that using solar panels provides covered parking as well. In new communities, they are doing bikes with codes, because these are communities close to centers.

Commissioner Dean discussed the importance of site access in and out in a safe and reasonable way to handle the traffic that this site will generate. He suggests looking at that in more detail. Site security, lighting is another issue. The Commissioner is pleased the team is looking at energy conservation & energy co-production, carbon footprint of building and going to wood frame structure. There are good strong laminated stress products that are stronger than steel the Commissioner commented. Also, the building envelope and how secure that will be from weather, cold and heat buildup. Final issue of abatement whether or not it will be needed. He felt that should be determined in advance of the actual proposal and it will be relevant to know the extent of abatement, how many years as well as the useful life of the building.

Chairman Harley wanted to draw attention to Planning and Zoning and Engineering Memo and to Justin LaFountain, Zoning Enforcement Officer's Memo dated November 29, 2016 particularly number five to refer to in your application. Chairman Harley referred to Section 5.10.D of the Zoning Regulations, which lists nine criteria for the Planning and Zoning to consider when granting a Special Permit for Mixed Residential and Commercial uses. This criteria should be reviewed by the applicant to ensure all are met.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 A discussion regarding Equipment Screening at 411 Wolcott Hill Road.

Christine Fortunato, Committee Chairperson is looking for feedback and direction from this Commission. The school has completed the major construction work but the major outstanding items are the rooftop mechanical equipment. The rooftop equipment is very pronounced from the street view. They are studying different ways to camouflage the units. The committee would like Mr. Malik to speak to the Commission on the options.

Mr. Amr Rusty Malik AIA, Leed Ap – BD&C, Quisenberry Arcari, Architects LLC with a power point presentation. He explained that they created a buffer of Arborvitaes because they were moving tennis courts on the Northside of the property. He gave a history of the construction development stating they had to move the units due to state regulations for acoustics and several issues arose. Mr. Malik showed the elevation pictures. After 9' to 10' elevations requirements for screening change and the other challenge is the age of the building, a 1950 structure.

Chairman Harley asked the height of the screen. Mr. Malik stated the height of the screen is 10' and is raised off the ground. Also, they looked at the option of creating a steel frame on the top of the roof but the challenge is the cost. Also, the concern is placing holes and creating leaks. There is also the cost to maintain.

Mr. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager Wethersfield. When the town budget was prepared, they set aside a bond premium in case we ran over the budget so we do have 300K but it can only be used for screening.

Commissioner Silver thought the painting looked good and although screening sounds good I think the painting was fine in his observation.

Commissioner Dean have you looked at a long-term maintenance costs for all options.

Mr. Malik, about four thousand per unit, which is a special paint probably a ten to fifteen-year window to paint. The screens could get damaged in a wind storm and eventually they will need painting as well.

Commissioner Dean asked if he can explain the roof penetration. Mr. Malik stated they will require at least 230 penetrations on a new roof. These connections are designed to be waterproof.

Ms. Fortunato stated the principal and superintendent support the painting.

Commissioner Edwards asked for a three-dimensional picture of painting without screens.

Paint colors were discussed with agreement that the color used was the best.

Mr. Bruce Bockstael Design Review Member a 27-year architect for the state of Connecticut an experienced. He stated that the last thing you want to do is penetrate a roof. You will get a leak. You need to attach it to a wall do not try to retrofit. Whoever is deciding as to whether you do screening or not, if it is not don't to it. If you can work off the dunnage it may be a solution. Discussion ensued on water penetration.

Chairman Harley is under the opinion to just paint it.

Commissioner Homicki suggests screening in front and feels the first look is important.

Christine Fortunato dunnage will still create holes.

Commissioner Allard suggests leaving as painted – If you are screening you are never going to completely conceal it.

Commissioner Roberts it is the biggest investment this town has made and we have been told too late so live with it.

Vice Chairman Margiotta would not like to spend these kinds of dollars on screening would rather spend it on safety issues such as traffic.

Commissioner Antoniak it's a disappointment, mechanically it does not look good – issue of construction and it is unfortunate. However, even though she agrees with Commissioner Homicki and would prefer the screen, the impact and integrity of the roof is more important, just live with it.

Commissioner Dean indicated that the integrity of the roof is most important. He is extremely leery of endorsing anything that is going to add to the risk of the integrity of the roof and adding, with any building moisture is the enemy.

Chairman Harley requested a straw vote from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Oickle and Homicki and Edwards are in favor of screening. All other Commissioners are not in favor of screening and prefer just painting.

Commissioners straw vote was 7 to 3 in favor of just painting the building.

Commissioner Homicki made a motion to cancel the next meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Commissioner, Vice Chairman Margiotta **SECOND**

AYE – Commissioners Allard, Dean, Edwards, Harley, Homicki, Margiotta, Oickle, Roberts, Silver

NAY – None

ABS. – None

Motion passed 9-0

5. MINUTES – November 1, 2016 & November 15, 2016.

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve November 1, 2016 Minutes with correction that Commissioner Edwards was present and Commissioner Homicki was excused.

Commissioner Allard **SECOND**

AYE – Commissioners Allard, Dean, Edwards, Harley, Oickle, Roberts, Silver

NAY – None

ABS. - None

Motion passed 7-0

Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve November 15, 2016 Minutes with correction that Commissioner Dean was excused.

Commissioner Homicki **SECOND**

AYE – Commissioners Antoniak, Harley, Homicki, Margiotta, Oickle, Silver

NAY – None

ABS. - None

Motion passed 6-0

6. STAFF REPORTS

None

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING

None

8. CORRESPONDENCE

None

9. PENDING APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT FUTURE MEETINGS

None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Homicki made a motion to adjourn the December 6, 2016 meeting.

Vice Chairman Commissioner Margiotta **SECOND**

AYE – Commissioners Allard, Dean, Edwards, Harley, Homicki, Margiotta, Oickle, Roberts, Silver

NAY – None

ABS. - None

Motion passed 9-0

Respectfully Submitted By:

Mary Lou Wall,
Recording Secretary.