

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
December 2, 2014

The Planning & Zoning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 2nd, 2014. Chairman Michael DelSanto, called the meeting to order at 7:00 o'clock, p.m.

The following Commissioners were present, viz:

Jennifer Clock	Kevin Conroy
Steve Kalkowski	Paul Chaplinsky
Susan Locks	Michael DelSanto, Chair

Alternates: Anthony D'Angelo

Ex-officio members present were as follows, viz:

Robert Phillips, Director of Planning & Community Development
Keith Hayden, Town Engineer
Mark Sciota, Deputy Town Manager/ Town Attorney

Absent: James Macchio, Commissioner
James E. Morelli, Jr., Alternate
Joe Coviello, Alternate

The Chair seated Mr. D'Angelo for Mr. Macchio. A quorum was determined.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited by everyone in attendance.

MICHAEL DELSANTO, Chair, presiding:

Approval of Minutes

Regular meeting of November 18, 2014

Mr. Kalkowski made a motion to approve. Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed on a majority voice vote with Mr. Conroy abstaining.

5. Appointment of PZC Alternate

Ms. Locks made a motion to have Steve Leggett join us. He has lived in Southington for 27 years with his wife. He has 2 children and three grandchildren. He lives in Plantsville. He is a retired teacher of history and government & politics from SHS. Mr. Conroy seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Steve Leggett was sworn in by the town attorney.

(Sworn, sworn)

Congratulations!

(Applause, applause)

6. Business Meeting

A. Queen Street Medical Associates, proposed medical office building, 462 Queen Street (SPR #1683).

Attorney Chris Smith from Shipman & Goodwin out of the Hartford office. I am here this evening on behalf of the applicant, Queen Street Medical Associates, LLC.

With me is Phil Doyle, our landscape architect and urban planner from LADA, Simsbury CT.

Our civil engineer, Kevin Clark from Clark Engineering.

Michael Galante, traffic engineer, with Frederick P. Clark Associates out of Fairfield, CT.

I'd like to thank you for putting this matter over for us from the last meeting to address three issues that came up during the meeting.

1. The alternative pavement. We'll from Phil Doyle in a moment on that.

2. Left turn, only prohibition that was considered. Michael Galante will address that specific issue.

3. Potential access and providing an easement to the property to the north of the subject property. That's owned by the Barberino Family through different entities. It is immediately to the north of the subject property.

With regard to the traffic, one thing you'll hear from Mr. Galante - and he was just pulling information in his report that's already been filed with the commission, but what he did when we met with staff and had a number of discussions with them since the last meeting, he performed an analysis and basically is going to provide you with a summary of his findings and conclusions relative to the traffic associated with the existing hotel use of the property. Obviously, it is not being used 100 percent, but if it were to be a viable hotel use for which it has approved, it does traffic associated with that.

We asked him to focus on doing a comparison of the traffic that's associated with the approved existing hotel use of the subject property relative to the proposed professional office use. You'll be surprised at his findings and conclusions relative to that.

Mr. Doyle will address the alternative pavement and the access to the property to the north.

Mr. Doyle addressed the question which was if there was a way we could take a portion of the parking and take the surface for that and do a separate surface treatment. The question was: were we really providing more parking than we really needed for this medical office use. The answer is probably. We are providing additional parking. He explained they were in to modify the regulation previously, but even given that, we believe that 20 percent of the parking will never be used.

After meeting with town staff, the back row of parking, we've agreed there are about 25 parking spaces in there and we'll work with the town staff and take that area and turn it basically into green parking. That would not be a hard surface area. This is probably the parking that'll be least used on the lot.

The other point is the access to the north. We have shown on all of our plans a dotted in area that is 24 feet wide. We have actually positioned the trees in that fashion so we could build a connection to the north. Your regulations suggest in situations like this that that is what you desire to see. Interconnections. We've planned for that. And, as indicated to Rob, we certainly are willing to offer the cross easements necessary to effectuate that. If we could achieve an agreement, we would do that.

Jay Morris, a partner in this development, has been reaching out to the owner actively working on that. If we can make an arrangement, it will take some time to effectuate that. That is in process.

The green overflow parking spaces were discussed further in response to a question by Mr. D'Angelo. Mr. Doyle pointed out that truck turning movements would not affect it. The area where the Cape Cod curb is proposed was discussed again. It should work out very well.

Mike Galante advised they prepared the traffic study submitted earlier in the process. The full analysis of intersections along Queen Street, the different time periods and peak hours.

Tonight I have handed out a report with a couple of graphics and a table summarizing everything.

The main topic of discussion last time was the left turn movement from the site on to Queen Street going towards the interchange. It is appropriate to compare the medical use we are proposing to the motel use ---not the one that is there today that is not really generating much traffic, 11 cars in the afternoon peak hours --- if that was a fully occupied, running motel it could be generating 85, 90 or 100 cars during an hour. Comparison to today's condition is not appropriate to compare to the future medical use itself.

He explained graphic 18-A is a distribution of traffic for both the motel use and the medical building itself. The different uses have different traffic patterns and different levels of traffic he pointed out. With a motel use today that is active, the majority of traffic is going to the interstate interchange. Explained.

The medical use is serving the community so it is a different pattern. The level of traffic turning left from this site is different.

Morning and afternoon peak patterns were shown.

He then referred to the Table in the front. Table 1 was discussed as being a summary of the left turn movements from the site itself.

Explained.

He noted that the medical use generates less traffic during the peak than a hotel/motel use and the critical left turn movement from the site.

Explained.

From a perspective of locating the driveway, we were very fortunate to be midway between two signalized intersections.

My opinion is that the left turning movement that is there today could still be there tomorrow with an improved motel use without any changes or approvals from this commission. But the simple comparison is the motel use does generate more traffic overall during the key peak hour conditions. He explained the simple table and graphics he had prepared to support that.

It is my opinion that the left turn should remain.

Discussion of how the numbers for comparison were arrived at.

Mr. Conroy discussed with Mr. Galante the distribution numbers coming out of the site and how they were arrived at. They also discussed the left hand turns out of the driveway.

The Chair brought up queuing north or south on Queen Street. How often do the cars queue from the light in front of the Price Chopper all the way back to the gas station by the site, southbound? Mr. Galante said at the peak hour in the afternoon, he has seen it back up to the John Weichsel Crossing intersection. The one going northbound, I don't think I've seen it back up that much, he stated.

Discussion.

Mr. Chaplinsky said his focus was how do we continue to cut down on the number of ins/outs on Queen Street. Curb cuts. If we can eliminate a curb cut and stop people from going in both directions, those are the types of things we're trying to do.

Discussion.

The cross easement on the plan is important pointed out Mr. Chaplinsky. I understand negotiations.

Discussion.

For clarification, added Mr. Chaplinsky, we are talking about keeping the easement they have on the plan and the agreement you spoke about was when the adjacent property owner agrees to make the cross easement happen, you guys will make that cross easement happen on this property. Is that correct? Mr. Galante said that was correct.

If there is no agreement stated Mr. Chaplinsky, then the next business that comes in on that property, this commission will have the opportunity to try to review a site plan and say you guys deal with your site. Attorney Sciota interrupted stating that if you don't come to an agreement and the site plan to the north comes in and is in front of this commission, now we can require it to happen to the north. Part of this is you agree financially to make your connection

to your property line and then the next property owner who will be in front of us at that time; we then require it at that point. Is that my understanding?

Mr. Smith stated that was correct, Mr. Sciota.

Mr. Chaplinsky said that is a reasonable accommodation. He asked staff to have a voice in making this safe and working for both properties.

The back property for the greener parking is there an idea about what type of parking or services you might do? Comes to mind for me, continued Mr. Chaplinsky, is the pavers with the grass growing in the middle of it. It is still a firm surface, easier to maintain but still allows parking.

Mr. Doyle said they have looked at three things: porous pavement, asphalt or concrete. The other system is the concrete block pavers that have the holes in it. It supports the cars well but it needs some over irrigation as it tends to dry out.

Discussion.

The Chair brought up if this site gets developed, it's not in the best condition now and eventually if it gets developed, no matter what goes there, it'll make the surrounding area much more marketable, as well.

Weichsel Crossing is in our plans. Discussion.

Attorney Smith thanked the commission for their attention with regard to this application and in particular thank you for continuing it and affording us the opportunity to generate this information. On behalf of the applicant and the team we'd like to respectfully suggest to the commission that the application does comply with your site plan requirements and we respectfully request that you approve the application.

It's very important for us with respect to the tenant that we not have that left turn prohibition.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

The Chair asked for staff's comments.

Mr. Phillips referred to his written comments provided which are in the record. We met and talked about the alternative parking surface and the access agreement with the adjacent property to the

north. I've provided you with references: Section 9-09.1 and Section 4-00.6. They address access to a site and between sites. I believe the intent here is to provide interconnection between sites along with any required access to existing public streets.

As to the hotel use, I would argue that the existing hotel there could potentially refurbish or reconstruct the building in the same footprint and it would only require departmental permits. It wouldn't come before you.

The left hand traffic flow out of the site with the full utilization should be something considered here because we won't get another look at that if they refurbish that existing use.

The applicant has demonstrated that the left turns will be less with the medical office use than the current use when fully utilized.

You take improvements as they're given by an applicant.

I think it is an improvement to the community and it is something that will set the standard for future development in that area of Queen Street.

Keith Hayden, Town Engineer, offered his comments. I reviewed this quite a bit and I really couldn't support the left turn restrictions for the following reasons:

- There's large distances to the signalized intersections. If you made the interconnecton to the liquor store you would come past the driveway which there is no left turn restriction. And, to the south, John Weicshel Crossing, again no left turn restriction.

If you did prohibit the left turns out of this location, people're going to go to the next closest, north or south, so you're putting an inconvenience on the users then just moving the left turns north or south.

You are not going to eliminate the left turns. You are just going to relocate them.

If the drivers went to Price Chopper, across from John Weichsel Crossing, you are putting traffic in a high pedestrian zone. To the north you would put the traffic past the liquor store entrance and also on the pharmacy entrance. Those parking lots were not designed for thru movement. If they were designed together, they'd probably put a center aisle down the parking lot and not put it directly right in front of the entrance.

I reviewed the accident history and didn't see a lot of existing history on left turn accidents.

Discussion.

The last reason, on this chart, the combined peak hour is actually a less intense turning movement.

For those reasons, I wouldn't support it.

Discussion of the accident history reviewed.

When John Weichsel Crossing opens, there'll probably be a left hand turn out of that noted Mr. Chaplinsky. He then explained the left turns on Queen Street. We are trying to minimize the number of curb cuts in close proximity that are turning in both directions. Driving more people to one intersection for that turning movement, I think would be favorable.

Discussion.

Access management off a main route was discussed. Easier to do in the design phase and then at the last minute.

Mr. Kalkowski felt the topic warranted further discussion amongst the commissioners especially for Queen Street. I don't think we are all on the same page quite yet.

Mr. Chaplinsky clarified he is comment was not to prevent left turns but to encourage cross easements between parcels.

Mr. Phillips pointed out the recommended stipulations, one thru three carried over from the last meeting.

Mr. Kalkowski made a motion to approve with the four stipulations just indicated as well whatever language needs to be put in for the easement guarantee.

Attorney Sciota said to acknowledge the fact that the owner has put on the plan the easement and stated on the record they would be financially responsible when and if that happens.

Mr. Kalkowski would add that, as well.

Mr. Phillips added it would be subject to staff review and finalized plans incorporating engineering comments dated 11-14-2014, acceptance of the suggested stipulations by the applicant indicating there will be no emergency department with this approval and that a pre construction meeting is required.

Mr. Chaplinsky seconded the motion.

Stipulations are on the planning & zoning memorandum dated December 1st and revised December 2nd, 2014 with number four being replaced with what the Town Attorney mentioned.

Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

B. DC Development & Construction, LLC request for reduction of subdivision bond from \$122,000 to a new amount of \$20,000 Meriden Avenue, Meadow Wood Estates (S#1286).

Ready for action. Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to approve and Mr. Kalkowski seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

7. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Clock reported the last meeting was basically a meeting to discuss trends in town. Specifically, demographic and population trends. Everything is available on the website and I highly encourage you to review the documents.

Glenn is providing some really, really interesting data. A highlight is that we're finding that an item is housing for 55 and older. And, housing for one or two people. That's what we'll be needing in the future.

Businesses are trending towards utilizing less space and we're seeing that.

All good. We're discussing this in the meetings and understanding the data so that we can formulate a plan that makes sense and we can move forward.

A wonderful group of people. Our next meeting is Monday, December 15th, 2014 at 7:00 pm in the back room right here. I encourage you to attend if you'd like to. If you can't, documents are posted on the website.

8. ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

None. But just note we will probably be having the RV and the signage regulation revisions on for the first January meeting.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

None.

10. RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

- Exec West, LLC site plan modification for construction of a 61,250 sf building. It is a site plan modification.

I do have one thing to add to tonight's Agenda:

- Annual Regional Planning Commission Appointment for CROG.

Mr. Kalkowski made a motion to add that agenda item. Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Mr. Phillips explained the appointment. This group is charged with reviewing regional policies and any kind of zoning amendments/zone changes that come before CROG by member towns.

Mr. Conroy said he would volunteer to be the representative.

Mr. Leggett volunteered to be the alternate.

Mr. Phillips will notify the Agency with the updated information.

Mr. Conroy said CROG has completed their regional plan, their update. That is available on their website. Unfortunately, with the timing of the realignment they do not have Southington's information with their plan. We'll have to have that added as an update.

Discussion.

The hazardous mitigation plan is also not incorporated. CCRPA will do a fast update so we can be covered.

Mr. Conroy explained the benefits of being in this group.

As there are no applications for the 16th of December, the suggestion was to cancel the meeting by the Town Attorney. If

something of an emergency nature does pop up we can schedule an emergency meeting.

The Chair cancelled the meeting and asked staff to notify the Town Clerk to put on the website.

The Chair advised the next meeting is January 6, 2015 with a couple of public hearings. However, I want to wish everyone a very happy and healthy holiday season.

Review of the outline for RV public hearing item. As needed, there is a new definition proposal. And, then also there is a removal of the existing regulation and possibly the incorporate of the new regulation as discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Kalkowski seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 o'clock, p.m.)