

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
TOWN OF SOUTHTON

OCTOBER 17, 2017

The Planning & Zoning Commission of the Town of Southington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at the John Weichsel Municipal Center Assembly Room, 196 North Main Street, Southington, CT. Chairman Michael DelSanto called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The following Commissioners were in attendance:

Paul Chaplinsky	James Sinclair
Robert Hammersley	Jennifer Clock
James Morelli *	Susan Locks
Michael DelSanto, Chair	

Alternates: Joe Coviello, Ross Hart & Ted Cabata*

(Arrived where noted.)

Ex-Officio: Robert Phillips, Director of Planning &
Community Development

James Grappone, Assistant Town Engineer
Mark J. Sciota, Deputy Town Mgr/Town Attorney

Absent: Peter Santago, Alternate

The Chair seated Mr. Coviello for Mr. Morelli. A quorum determined.

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

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Hammersley made a motion to approve which Mr. Sinclair seconded. Motion passed on a majority voice vote with Ms. Locks, Ms. Clock and Mr. Coviello abstaining.

(* Mr. Cabata joined the meeting.)

5. Business Meeting

A. Mariani Construction, 12 lot subdivision application, 1681 Mount Vernon Road, in an R-2025 zone (S#1318) tabled from October 3.

Sev Bovino, Planner with Kratzert, Jones & Associates represented the applicant.

At the last meeting there were two issues that we needed to address.

- (1) Open Space
- (2) Maintenance of the detention area.

The applicant has provided letters from the neighbors indicating that the neighbors will maintain the detention area.

The open space, we eliminated one lot and provided the open space at this location (indicating). The maps in front of you have that lot eliminated.

The area will be demarcated with signs, planted with some trees, wild flower and seed mix. And, a large oak on this property will be preserved.

There are some comments from Jim Grappone and if you are interested in stipulating, that's fine.

Ms. Clock addressed the open space and who was responsible for that. Mr. Bovino responded that the two owners on either side of the area will have the property and there'll be a conservation easement indicating that area not be disturbed and be kept in its natural state. (Notes on the plans) There will be signs and it will be in their deed.

Mr. Phillips stated the requirement for this particular subdivision is a half-acre of open space. We've discussed with the applicant the different forms of dedicating the open space. It's up to you. We discussed with the applicant their preference to do a conservation easement on the open space. I would suggest making it clear that monumentation to delineate where the conservation easement is should be used. (Stone monuments)

And, the detention basin which is on the formerly known as Acre Way stub that was basically deeded back to the abutting property owners. We have on file letters that they acknowledge and understand the maintenance responsibility. We asked the applicant to make the basin shallower so that it's simple mowing which makes it easy for the property owner to maintain. They've done that, as well.

From staff's perspective we are pretty comfortable with everything.

Mr. Chaplinsky discussed ideas about conservation easement with the property owners. How do we envision the property being used? Would the rest of the neighborhood be allowed to use the open space property if it was split between the two property owners?

Mr. Bovino responded the conservation easement idea is to leave the untouched and let it grow naturally back to a wooded area. It will be on the deed of the property owner when he buys, he'll have his area and then an additional area encumbered by an easement.

Mr. Chaplinsky discussed a different concept for the open space area after a walk on the property. Would we consider with the applicant making it a space that could be enjoyed by the entire neighborhood such as having a small community garden or a butterfly garden or a combination of butterfly garden and rain garden.

Discussion.

Mr. Bovino made the point the conservation easement would have to be made subject to the rest of the neighbors going there and enjoying either a butterfly garden or a community garden. Like an agricultural easement where they can plant vegetables, et cetra.

Extensive discussion about the idea of a butterfly garden, community garden or rain garden as pollinators are in high demand. There's problem with bees. The numbers are down. Fruit trees are suffering. Flowers. Any little bit we can do to help here. Mr. Chaplinsky explained he reached out to a friend who is willing to help with all of this, as is he.

Mr. Bovino said that is fine if the commission wants to go that route and we will work with staff on it as to the plantings, et cetra.

Different scenarios were discussed.

Private property with an easement as opposed to a homeowners' association was discussed. Attorney Sciota advised the conservation easement has to be very specific as to what is going to go there and more importantly who gets to go on the property.

Discussion about how workable this idea is followed in response to a query by Mr. Sinclair.

Mr. Chaplinsky said this does not need to be a regulated activity and just an agreement between this board and the applicant in that he would be willing to put something like that in. We create the language on the deeds and then we try to make something like this happen. It is new and I think worth trying added Mr. Chaplinsky.

Mr. Phillips said if this can be done legally, it's not a problem. In the notations on the plan, I think it is supposed to be a

wild flower mix which would in theory work for pollinators. Mr. Chaplinsky suggested if the applicant were agreeable, we have some meetings when we get closer to next year and look at some of the documents provided to us as to the specific types of plants and wild flowers mix. Shade and sandy soil on the property need to be considered.

Mr. Phillips this is ready for action with the suggested stipulation:

- The final design of the detention basin is to be approved by the town engineer.

- The maintenance of the detention basin shall be the homeowners' responsibility per the subdivision plan and notes.

And, if talking about plantings, I would be most comfortable knowing what we're doing up front. How do you want to approach that? Discussion.

Mr. Bovino said the applicant is willing to agree to plant some pollinating plants. Suggestions on file in the Town Planner's Office.

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to approve with the town planner's stipulations and the agreement we had on the plantings. Ms. Locks seconded.

Mr. Sinclair clarified he didn't ask questions because he was against it but because this is new territory. I want to be sure the town attorney thinks it is workable. The town planner seems to be okay with it, so I am all in favor of it.

Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

B. Festival Fun Parks, LLC, Earth Excavation application to remove 61,000 yards of material for potential amusement park expansion, parking area or picnic area, 2304 Mount Vernon Road, in an R-40 and R-80 zone (EE #144) tabled from October 3.

Withdrawn by the applicant.

C. Calco Construction, site plan modification to site access and parking area in association with 3 new buildings, 775, 785, 801 & 811 Queen Street, and 2,4, & 6 Upson Drive, in zones B and R-12/BOZ (SPR #1716.2)

John Schmidt, civil engineer with BL Companies, Meriden, CT represented the applicant.

Our plan is for a modification to the existing approval of the site. The bulk of the modifications are changes in uses of Pad #1 and #2.

Pad #1 is the southerly most pad previously approved. It is the existing building that has been there for quite some time. It was previously approved as a 3500-sf retail space. We are now proposing to convert that to a medical office building. Based on the parking count, it still remains the same number of parking spaces for that building. The location of the building stays the same to be reused.

Pad #2 currently under construction was previously approved for two uses: a 5200-sf retail use and a 2240 sf restaurant use. It is being modified to split up the 5200-sf retail paid into a 2,000-sf retail and another 3200-sf restaurant. The restaurant will be located at the north end and the retail in the middle with the other restaurant at the south. We'll be adding an outdoor patio (indicated).

We modified the parking. Explained.

Showed the location of the dumpster.

The requirement for parking for the new restaurant increased the total to 114 spaces.

Those were the only changes to the site plan. We do have a change with the parking(indicating) as we are proposed to realign the driveway and to push it a little further to the east and extend our landscape buffer along the east side.

There is currently a fence and a landscape buffer to Aldi's (indicating) and we will be extending that buffer to the south along this side (indicating) and creating a fence along Upson Terrace (sic).

Those are the modifications and I'll be glad to answer any questions.

Hours of the medical building are regular business hours. It is not 24-hour emergency.

The loading area for medical building was discussed.

The dumpster use and location was discussed.

Parking spaces on the east side where the proposed addition of the landscape buffer is was discussed and changes suggested. Vehicle headlights would have to be shielded.

The 7' high fence along the landscape buffer was pointed out and noted it would cut down on the headlights.

The berm installation under the fence was discussed. On the grading plan there is no berm is proposed. Landscaping on both sides of the fence to address the buffering was noted.

Parking requirements were discussed. They need 265 based on the different pad calculations. They can get 10% more, so they're at 292 per regulations. They're proposing 289. You could cut back 10.
Discussion.

The Town Planner said you could eliminate the 10 up against the landscape buffer for aesthetics, privacy and safety.

The Town Planner asked about the northern most entranceway. When is that to be completed? Aldi's is open and the people that are heading south on Queen Street --- there is only one way for them to get there and that's through the southern entrance and it's not clear at night when it's dark where they need to go. Maybe you could put some exit signs for direction. That would be at the westerly side of the Aldi site.

John Senese, Calco Construction, 222 Talcott Notch, Farmington spoke. He agreed to put exit signs.
Discussion.

We're going to be coming in with the AAA building and I think they needed additional parking on this site, as well. So those ten spaces would be used for AAA employees.
Discussion.

The Town Planner advised this is ready for action if you want to stipulate the installation of temporary exist signs facing Aldi's directing southbound to the southern entrance/exit. And, the elimination of the ten parking spots, a two-foot berm and 7' high fence.

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to approve with the above stipulations. Second by Mr. Sinclair. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

D. Release of \$3,400 Erosion and Sedimentation Bond, 120 Industrial Drive (SPR #1552)

Ready for action. Motion to approve by Mr. Sinclair. Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

E. Release of \$4,100 Erosion and Sedimentation Bond, Ductworks, 175 Spring Street (SPR #1695)

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

6. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Authorization of Administrative review and approval - Diversified LLC, SPR modification to revise the shape and aesthetics of multi-family buildings at Forgione Drive.

They're proposing a slight change to the geometry of the large building, the 41-unit multifamily building.

And, aesthetic changes.

They're clearing the site and asphalt plants are closing soon. Going through the formal process will drag out the project. After looking at the aesthetic changes that I saw, I personally think that at the very least it is equivalent if not better than what we had originally seen.

My feeling is I am okay with an administrative approval if the commission is okay with it.

The Chair agreed with Mr. Phillips.

(Mr. Morelli joined the meeting and was seated for Mr. Coviello.)

Everyone agreed with what was proposed in the email last week.

7. REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE

Mr. Cabata said the November 16th is the next meeting. Paul Chaplinsky would like to attend to talk about West Street. And, the traffic. It was suggested going to the Regional Planning Commission meetings and that may start something. We need Regional Planning's help to get the West Street Corridor Study and a traffic strategy for West Street, a state road.

Discussion.

Mr. Phillips advised there has been a solicitation for transportation oriented projects and a corridor study for West Street may be something that would score relatively high. It's competitive. They're only giving out one award. But, the town would be on the hook for 10% of the cost of the study. And, with the budget situation, I am not sure where we're at. We haven't moved forward on a submission at this point in time because of that.

The Chair said this is real important. Development is slowing down up there because the traffic is not a good situation.

The legislative delegation has already been contacted.
Discussion.

Mr. Hammersley said he would be happy to circle back with them and remind them.

8. ITEMS TO SCHEDULE FOR PUBLIC HEARING

- None

9. RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

1. F & F Concrete has a modification to the building previously approved. They want to recenter it on Atwater.

2. And, the one mentioned tonight for administrative approval. Eden Avenue / Forgione Drive.

The Chair stated this may be the last meeting for some of us. We have an election coming up and I wish everyone the best of luck. We could have some new faces onboard next time around. Good luck!

If things are not successful for me, I want to say it has been a pleasure serving the Town these last 16 years, the last 8 years as Chair with staff. Thank you all for your support.

Mark, thank you especially for your support these last 16 years. I've learned volumes sitting next to you for the first eight of them and beyond. Thank you very much for your leadership and your support.

It's been a pleasure serving the town and if things work out, I'll see everyone at the second meeting in November. The third Tuesday of November.

Mr. Chaplinsky brought up the topic we discussed last meeting. There was a discussion regarding the municipal use of the Derynoski School parking lot. A presentation was made. We received some communication from the BOE that the parking lot was reviewed by the BOE and a letter was given to us as part of the presentation and that it was supported by the BOE.

We heard he presentation and sent back a favorable 8-24 to the council on this.

We recently heard about some comments that there is new information new to all of us. The Chair of the BOE indicates there is new information between the BOE and the school staff about some concerns and that was not available to any of us here last time we heard this and town staff who helped make the presentation on behalf of the BOE.

In my discussion with the BOE Chair, we agreed that --- I want to clear the air here at the PZC, this is something I would have liked to have heard if that info was available to us.

It is important that the PZC hear this and send back to the BOE a message we think that the topic should be heard at a BOE meeting, which the Chair has agreed to do, and then consider all the different avenues and take them into consideration before making their final decision before sending this back to the Town Council for a final disposition.

Ms. Clock asked about the new information. Mr. Chaplinsky responded in the memo that came out to us it said it was reviewed by the BOE and that the only stipulations out there were that they were related to the parking lot, maintenance of the parking lot, sealing, cracks and things like that.

The information out there is that there may be some disagreement or concerns by some within the school about safety. About the use of the lot for safety purposes because of school activities during the day.

The BOE should work with school staff and come to an agreement about the use of that lot and the disposition as there maybe, I think, some misalignment there. Then if there is some new concept it will come back as a revised 8-24.

Mr. Sinclair stated in an 8-24 all we are saying is we think it is appropriate to have a municipal lot in that area. It is not dealing with a site plan or an SPU. If there were concerns it would come then. The Chair corrected the statement by saying, not even if it is appropriate. An 8-24 is saying the PZC looked at it and it is in line with the regulations and the POCD.

Attorney Sciota said Chairman Riccio at last night's meeting at the town council said it will not be part of the council agenda until it is reviewed, if at all, by the BOE. So, it is now back at the BOE. If it comes back in a modified form, it will come back to you, if it comes back at all.

Ms. Clock didn't feel there was the necessity to put anything on record further.

The Chair stated the PZC acted accordingly through our regulations.

Mr. Sinclair thanked the Chair for his leadership and we wish the best to you who are running for election.

Attorney Sciota said on behalf of the administration and the public, I want to thank you all for serving. None of you get paid for this. It is a very thankless job a lot of times. But a job that is vital to the people of Southington. On behalf of those people as well as the town administration, we thank you all for serving and wish you all the best of luck in two weeks.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to adjourn which Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 o'clock, p.m.)