

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
TOWN OF SOUTHTON

MARCH 5, 2019

The Planning & Zoning Commission of the Town of Southington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at the John Weichsel Municipal Center Assembly Room, 196 North Main Street, Southington, CT. Michael DelSanto, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

The following Commissioners were in attendance:

Dagmara Scalise	Susan Locks
Paul Chaplinsky	James Morelli
Michael DelSanto, Chair	

Alternates: Joe Coviello, Peter Santago, Stuart Savelkoul & Val Guarino

Ex-Officio: Robert Phillips, Director of Planning & Community Development
James Grappone, Assistant Town Engineer

Absent: Jennifer Clock & Robert Hammersley, Commissioners

The Chair welcomed Stuart Savelkoul, new Alternate, to the Commission.

The Chair seated Mr. Santago and Mr. Coviello for tonight's meeting. A quorum was determined.

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

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to add an item to the Agenda: Business Meeting, Item D: 90-day extension to file mylar, for S 1323 at 115 Water Street. Ms. Locks seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The Chair added that as Item D under the Business Meeting.

MICHAEL DELSANTO, Chair, presiding:

4. MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting of February 19, 2019

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to approve. Ms. Locks seconded. Motion passed on a majority voice vote with Mr. Morelli abstaining.

BUSINESS MEETING

A. Susco Building Group, LLC, site plan application to construct a 3,600-sf building, parking area and outside storage area, property located at 49 Birch Street, in an I-2 zone (SPR #1773) tabled from February 19th

Stephen Giudice, with the office of Harry Cole & Son, 876 South Main Street, requested a table. We are still going through wetlands and we have a meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to table. Mr. Morelli seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

B. Diversified Unlimited, LLC, site plan to construct a proposed 5,400-sf Longhorn Steakhouse Restaurant with associated parking lot, property owned by Executive Too Hundred, LLC, located at 200 Executive Boulevard, in an I-1 zone (SPR #1772), tabled from February 19th

Stephen Giudice, represented the applicant, Longhorn Steakhouse. We presented this application before you two weeks ago at the last meeting. The application is for a 5,465-sf restaurant with associated parking in front of the 200 Executive Boulevard property.

We have a new parking lot proposal. We have a proposed curb cut on the north side and we are utilizing an existing curb cut on the south side of the property located here (indicating). Parking throughout. Handicapped parking in front. We have a direct pedestrian access from the sidewalk that comes to the front of the site to the front door. There are outdoor benches at this location (indicating). And, extensive landscaping proposed throughout the site.

We met with staff last week and we have submitted revised plan. We resubmitted a traffic study with the SPU and we have also submitted an updated letter from the traffic engineer supporting our proposal.

Going back through the history of this site, I do have our original SPU (on the screen) which was originally proposed on the property when we came in for our special permit. Explained it was a restaurant and a financial institution with a drive-thru. We did not have the northerly curb cut and egress was done entirely through a curb cut at this location and this location (indicating).

Through the design process, we revised the plans and came in with the application before you. (Showed on screen.) We are proposing a 5,465-sf restaurant. We are managing stormwater through a series of catch basins throughout the site and two underground infiltration systems, one on the southerly end of the parking lot and one on the northerly end of the existing parking lot. Stormwater would be collected into these systems and then collected and stored and discharged back to the system that goes out in the detention basin at the rear of the property. We are managing our own water on this site and then tying it back into the existing system.

We have a sanitary sewer easement that runs through the property, so our sanitary sewer connection is going to be at the back of the building into the existing sanitary line.

We are proposing a modification to the top of the frame of those structures because we are modifying the grades here and making the grades up a little bit and doing work to those structures won't have a negative effect on that system at all.

Throughout this process, we've met with staff and gone back and forth with a bunch of different changes. I believe we have addressed a majority of their concerns.

I know at the last meeting traffic seemed to be a concern. We did ask Scott Hesketh, traffic engineer, to give a position on it and have him review the traffic on the site and review the accident reports, et cetera.

Our proposal at this time --- at the last meeting we talked about an easement in this area around this corner (indicating) to allow for future expansion of the travel lane, if need be.

We've also proposed softening the radius on this curb. (Indicating) We know cars coming around this corner, we want to give them a nice, clean entrance into the site. We are still proposing to maintain this an enter/exit entrance but we feel the modification here will help solve the problem. I believe staff has comments as far as the traffic pattern along the boulevard here. From our review with Scott and a review of the site and the traffic and police reports, we think the traffic will function properly with what we are proposing here.

The northern entrance was discussed as being exit/entry. It was felt to be a benefit to the site and we didn't think it would be a problem noted Mr. Giudice. All entrance/exit points were discussed.
Discussion.

The softening of the curb cut on one side resulted in a little bit wider width, 24 to 30 feet.
Discussion.

The proposed ROW was discussed. The ROW is 10 feet. The purpose of the easement is it would permit, if the road needed to be widened at some point, they can do that without a taking. Mr. Chaplinsky asked why they wouldn't just make the improvement instead of doing the easement. Mr. Giudice said there are a lot of reasons, obviously, one of them is monetary. We believe the issue with this intersection isn't necessarily the widening of this roadway. We felt this is something we would offer. We think the issue is really more about signage and pavement markings.

Extensive discussion.

Mr. Grappone passed around four photos for discussion from the GIS for the stretch of road between West Street and the left turn lane going into 99 Executive Boulevard.

- Photo #1, coming from West Street down to Executive Boulevard shows a sign on the right that is blocked. That is not the case out there today. There is some clearing that was done. IT says: Left Lane Ends. There is kind of a warning sign as you approach from West Street through the intersection on Executive South. A recommendation would be that now you are seeing more fluorescent green signs for traffic signage. This is an old, yellow regulatory sign. I don't think people notice it. The fluorescent green signs are a little more noticeable.

There are two lanes coming in off of West Street entering toward Target & Lowes. It does show on the top portion where the pinpoint is in relation to the intersection.

- Photo #2 is further down right before the existing driveway that is going to be upgraded with a wider radius. On the bottom you can see there are two lanes. The red VW started off on the left lane and you can see the car is shifting over to the right lane realizing it's in the wrong lane as they did notice the sign.

You've got the intersection merging sign right there. That, in my opinion, should be upgraded. Along the stretch between Photo #1 and 2, there should be pavement markings saying: Left Turn Lane Only. Not only having the signage, but pavement markings, too, warning that this lane is only turning into 99 Executive Drive.

- Photo #3 shows the VW went from the left lane over to the right lane because it is not turning. That is where the first pavement marking is for the left turn lane going toward 99 Executive. It's past the first existing driveway, going toward the left turn lane for the existing driveway entrance for 200 Executive, the second driveway.

Still two lanes.

- Photo #4 is right at the merge that is the second arrow at the bottom for the turn lane. It does give a sign to the right saying: Left Turn, Straight and Right Turn Lane. Another sign.

Again, to avoid confusion, I think if we have Left Turn Only pavement markings that would help.

Traffic patterns were discussed. Mr. Chaplinsky was concerned that we have a problem down around the corner because of that left turn in and now we are going to create another problem with stopping and trying to move over even earlier. Would it be beneficial adding a second lane to the right, a whole second lane coming on from West Street that goes the entire length of this property so there are three lanes coming in. The one on the left is marked Left Turn Only. There are two lanes on the right dedicated to traffic staying straight or turning into this property and those two lanes can then more easily merge down towards the turn as originally designed. Mr. Grappone didn't know if there was enough ROW even with the 10 feet. It would have to be surveyed to see if you can get three lanes of traffic in that area.

Discussion.

Discussion of why there has to be a Left Turn Only lane. Instead of adding a lane, Mr. Giudice suggested restriping the area and allow the cars to go past the entrance. It is not that simple to add a lane.

Mr. Grappone pointed out this application has an existing OSTHA permit. With this new application with a new pad site, they will have to apply for modification. The state is going to review this with the local traffic authority (Chief of Police). Modifications could be made as suggested. My suggestion is to proceed with it if you feel it should go forward.

Discussion.

People exiting this area and taking a left to get to the light is a potentially more challenging issue than the narrowing of the road further in stated Ms. Scaliere. The cars at the light do back up. How do you intend to manage the traffic either through signage or restriping? Would you prohibit a left turn? Mr. Giudice reviewed the traffic numbers submitted by the traffic engineer for peak times as being low. We are not going to have a huge impact at that intersection. Variations between the peak traffic

periods of the various businesses impacted was discussed. The peak hours are complementary from a traffic standpoint.

Discussion of the benefits of this being a three-way intersection as opposed to a four-way intersection. The traffic will clear. The queuing here from the backup does not reach the applicant's intersections.

There is a proposal for a 10-foot easement down around the corner. How does staff feel about that? Mr. Grappone agreed with that. It's nice to have if we ever need it.

Mr. Chaplinsky agreed that having the 10-foot extra is a benefit, then we should think about doing something about it. If there is no need for a 10-foot buffer for the future, then this is a nonissue. The issue is we have an applicant with property there that could do this improvement as part of this application. If we do a 10-foot buffer then it goes to the taxpayers, or another site owner which could be 15 or 20 years from now. Mr. Giudice said this application isn't going to address that issue because that issue is created by the southerly intersection. (Indicating) It is not the same site.

Discussion.

Mr. Giudice reiterated it was his opinion that all that is needed is some restriping. We would restripe the area, he added. That's the best solution.

Discussion.

The STC ultimately decides what works and what they want.

Mr. Chaplinsky queried Mr. Grappone: You are comfortable with an easement, comfortable with the applicant doing the restriping as to what you agree on and the pavement markings following a review by the State and what their final recommendations are? You are comfortable that will improve this road and the safety of the road.

Discussion of the accident report provided by the Chief of Police.

Mr. Phillips noted a professional engineer submitted his opinion and we have staff's opinion, as well. I want to bring to light this is a good example that the PZC should be wary of the impact of this development and off-site improvement needs to be equal weighted to the impact that this development brings and it has to be something that's kind of attached to it. The applicant brings up a good point that this is kind of at the front end where the issue is more of the merging at the back end to a different site. They're offering off site improvements and I think it is a good offering.

Mr. Phillips further advised this application is ready for action.

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to approve with the stipulation for the easement to be provided and staff can work out the exact location and the road markings per the agreement with staff. Mr. Morelli seconded.

Mr. Morelli said he was surprised to see that you offered the easement. I thought it would be a nonissue for you. I applaud for coming back with that. I do agree that that is probably not your cross to bear.

Mr. Chaplinsky noted it is a difficult situation and a tough area. Each time we have to try to make things better and safer than it is today.

I appreciate you guys doing that.

Ms. Scalise asked about the review of the signage. The Chair responded staff does that. They have to get a sign permit and staff will sign off on it. This not a SPU, but site plan, only.

The Chair said the entrance is not perfect, but hopefully these minor changes will work. I'm happy when businesses come to town. I do applaud you and thank you for making these improvements. We appreciate it and we welcome you to Southington and we are looking forward to a new business coming to town.

Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

C. John J. Roncaioli, floodplain filling application for a proposed addition to house, 62 Echo Valley Road, in an R-20/25 zone (FF #259), tabled from February 19th

Mr. Phillips recommended a table. We are meeting with the applicant Thursday to work out the issue.

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to table which Mr. Morelli seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

D. 90-day extension to file mylar, S#1323, 115 Water Street.

Ready for action. Mr. Phillips noted adding this to the Agenda is really accommodating the applicant. This is one of the most fast-tracked applications we've had to accommodate this new business that is relocating to Southington. We will be showcasing this process. They are even going to present a quick little presentation at the Council meeting next Monday.

The Chair added this applicant is purchasing the building and they're relocating a lighting warehousing from New York.

Motion to approve by Mr. Chaplinsky. Mr. Morelli seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

A. Open Space and Land Acquisition report

Nothing to report this evening.

ITEMS TO SCHEDULE FOR PUBLIC HEARING

A. Town of Southington, Amendment to Section 13 (signs) of the Zoning Regulations (ZA #599) March 19th

B. Mark Lovley, application for Zone Boundary Change from R-20/25 and R-40 to Age Restricted Cluster Housing Zone (ARCHZ) property located at 792 South End Road (ZC#561) March 19th

Both can be scheduled.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

Mr. Phillips noted one just came in today that is not on the list but it is on the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike.

ADJOURNMENT

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

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 o'clock, p.m.)