

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
JULY 18, 2016**

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andy Kidd, Vice Chairman
 Michael Stebe, Secretary
 Jessica Scorso

Alternate Members Sitting: Julian Stoppelman (Sitting)
 Teresa Ike (Sitting)

Alternates: Patrick Kennedy

Absent: Eric Prause, Chair
 Timothy Bergin

Also Present: Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner
 Matthew Bordeaux, Environmental Planner
 Karen Logan, Recording Secretary

Time Convened: 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Kidd opened the hearing by introducing the members of the Commission and having Mr. Stebe read the legal notice.

WATERSTONE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT, INC – For a development on a site which is four (4) acres or larger in size and for a use which requires automobile parking spaces in excess of 60 to construct a corporate headquarters office building and associated site development at 444 Tolland Turnpike, a.k.a. 434 Tolland Turnpike. – Special Exception (2016-058)

Mr. Robert DeCrescenzo, lawyer with the firm of Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, representing the applicant, introduced the proposal for the project which will locate Bob’s Discount Furniture’s corporate headquarters in Manchester. He introduced Mr. Jim Bernardino of Design Professionals.

Mr. Bernardino described the physical plan for the 9.08-acre parcel located at 444 and 428 Tolland Turnpike. He noted that the address of the parcel at 444 Tolland Turnpike will be changed to 434 in the Manchester Maps & Records Office, pending the Commission’s approval. He began by noting the location of the parcel, including the location and nature of the abutting properties, including zoning. He explained the current physical layout and location of the parcel and showed the proposed lot line revision and how it would create a single property address.

He noted that, if approved, the proposal would include an increase in the number of parking spaces

at the current store and at the new three-story, 103,500 s.f. corporate headquarters. He spoke about the utilities for the project, noting that gas and electric underground service were available from Tolland Turnpike and that water service would be connected to a water main on the south side of the parcel. Public sewer and fire service would connect to the property from that location as well. The project team has coordinated with representatives of the Manchester Water, Sewer and Engineering departments and believes they have met all the requirements from those authorities. Finally, he stated that there was a comprehensive drainage plan for the buildings. There were also plans for a cooling tower with condenser units and an emergency generator on the south side of the parcel.

Mr. Bernardino then described the numerous best practices measures that the project team described in the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan for both sites (application numbers 2016-059 and 2016-060) during construction. These included an anti-tracking pad at the entrance of the construction site, the use of silt fencing around the perimeter of the site, hay bales to protect catch basins, and the proposed location of the temporary topsoil stockpile.

The next presenter was Mr. Ben Wheeler, Landscape Architect with Design Professionals of South Windsor, Connecticut. Mr. Wheeler stated that the proposed landscaping was designed to meet the landscaping requirements in both parking lots, including the use of shade trees, low-growing shrubs, and ornamental grasses. Both access entrances would be lined with flowering pear trees and the perimeter of the building would feature flowering lilac trees. On the north side of the parcel, the abutting property would be screened with evergreen trees. Both the location for the cooling tower and the dumpster site would be screened on three sides with arbor vitae. Near the secondary access road on the western side of the property, the invasive species would be removed. Mr. Wheeler noted that the site lighting plan featured energy-efficient, full cut off, dark sky compliant fixtures with no light trespassing beyond the property boundaries.

Mr. Jim Bubaris of Bubaris Traffic Associates from Wallingford, CT, presented the results of the traffic study his firm conducted. He reported that, as part of the traffic study, he analyzed the levels of service for traffic on the surrounding roadway networks, including during the morning and afternoon peak traffic volume hours. The study concluded that the volume anticipated from the proposed development would not have any impact on traffic.

The next speaker was Mr. Douglas Richardson, Director of Design & Planning for Waterstone Retail Development, Inc., who presented an overview of the architecture for the proposed three-story building, which would be a combination of brick and glass. The corporate campus would have a connector to the existing store, which would house the data center. The proposal called for real, red brick and an environmentally friendly glass curtain wall. The same palette of colors as those used on the retail store would be used to tie the campus together.

Mr. Kidd asked about the type of material that would be used. Mr. Richardson stated that one of the two brick samples that were presented to the Commission would be used, as well as the paint color and the glass shown in the sample piece.

Mr. Stoppelman asked if there would be any more signs on the new corporate building. Mr. Richardson said that there definitely would be signs, but they would come back before the Commission at a later date with a signage package for approval.

Mr. DeCrescenzo noted the special exception criteria applicable to this application, and cited evidence of compliance for each item. He then asked the Commission for their approval and invited questions from the Commission.

Mr. Stoppelman asked about the location of the path around the pond where the northeast corner of the parcel abuts the Town's Northwest Park. Mr. Richardson showed the details of how the parcel abuts the park.

Mr. Stoppelman asked if there were stop signs planned for both the main access driveway and the secondary driveway and Mr. Bubaris confirmed that there would be stop signs at each entrance and exit. Mr. Bernadino said the stop signs would be shown on the final plans.

Mr. Stebe asked if there would be fencing erected between the property and the abutting park. Mr. Bernardino replied that there is presently a 6' chain link fence along that property line.

Mr. Stebe asked about the location of the secondary access driveway in relation to the day care center across the street and how that might impact traffic patterns during peak times. Mr. Bernardino stated that the secondary access driveway would be located directly across the street from the day care center to create a formal intersection. He added that the width of the secondary access drive had been reduced to encourage employees to use the main access drive and that there would also be signage encouraging the use of the main access drive.

Mr. Stebe asked about the level of noise the cooling tower might generate and Mr. Richardson replied that the coolers were designed for low volume and that there were no compressors to create vibrations or noise.

Mr. Stebe asked what dark sky compliance was in relation to the lighting plan. Mr. Wheeler explained that dark sky compliance denotes that there is no light trespass up into the sky.

Mr. Kidd stated that he had similar concerns as Mr. Stebe regarding the secondary access drive and asked how the applicant came up with the figures that 90% of the users would use the main drive and 10% would use the secondary access drive. Mr. DeCrescenzo noted that the main access drive was designed to be wide and a direct line to the campus to encourage its use. Mr. Kidd asked if Mr. Mayer, the Town of Manchester's Traffic Engineer, had reviewed the plans. Ms. Bertotti said that he had and that there were no outstanding comments regarding the secondary access.

Mr. Wheeler stated that with the address change, people using GPS would be directed to the main access drive and that there would also be signage directing traffic into the main access road.

Mr. Tom Gillespie, Vice President of Real Estate & Construction for Bob's, also had a concern regarding the secondary access drive and told the Commission that the secondary drive would be provided mainly for emergency access. He stated that employees would be instructed to use the main access drive only.

Mr. Kidd suggested that the secondary access drive could be considered as emergency access only

and Mr. Gillespie agreed that Bob's would consider it as such.

Mr. Stebe asked where the loading dock addition would be located. Mr. Bernardino responded that the proposal calls for adding two loading dock bays and showed their location on the drawings.

Mr. Kidd asked why the generator location was not on the plans and Mr. Bernardino replied that it would be shown on the final plan.

Mr. Kidd called for public comment and there was none.

Mr. Kidd asked Commission members whether they felt the public hearing should be held open pending additional information from Mr. Mayer regarding the secondary access drive.

Mr. Stebe stated that he felt the applicant addressed his major concern regarding employees using the secondary access drive and he did not see a need to continue the public hearing.

Ms. Scorso commented that she agreed with Mr. Stebe that the secondary access drive had been addressed. She was comfortable with moving forward.

Mr. Kidd concurred with Mr. Stebe and Ms. Scorso.

Mr. Stebe moved to close the public hearing and Mr. Stoppelman seconded. All members voted in favor and the motion passed.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – To revise Art. I, Sec. 2 at the definition for Home-Conducted Occupation to delete language that prevented certain business office from being home-conducted occupations, and Art. II, Sec. 1.03.01 (r) to modify the criteria for home-conducted occupations. - Zoning Regulation Amendment (2016-027)

Mr. Stebe read the legal notice.

Ms. Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner for the Town of Manchester Planning Department, presented the proposed amendment to the zoning regulations regarding home-conducted occupations. Currently, zoning regulations contain limitations on certain types of businesses that are permitted for home-conducted occupations. Additionally, the proposed amendment seeks to amend the criteria the Zoning Enforcement Officer uses to determine whether a business is appropriate for a home-conducted occupation.

Currently, regulations prohibit certain professionals, such as attorneys, real estate agents and insurance agents, from having an office in their home. In recognition of modern communications and computer networks, which have made it possible for a broader range of professionals to work efficiently from home, the proposed amendment will eliminate the language banning those professions. The amendment would also limit the home office area to no more than 25% of the house, which is standard among surrounding communities which were surveyed. Finally, the amendment would limit the business to a maximum of two vehicles per hour, excluding employee parking.

The proposed amendment could benefit the town by adding to household incomes, allowing small businesses to become established before growing into a larger location and preserving the value of homes.

Mr. Stebe asked if the 25% of the house included accessory structures. Ms. Bertotti said the 25% of the house did not include businesses conducted in accessory structures.

Mr. Stoppelman asked what the sign regulations would be for a home-conducted business. Ms. Bertotti looked at the sign regulations and replied that the regulations for a home-conducted business limit sign size to two square feet.

Mr. Kidd asked if the proposed amendment would prohibit someone from running an eBay-type business from their home. Ms. Bertotti replied that the regulations do not prohibit that particular type of business, but would limit the business to occupy no more than 25% of the house and only allow two cars per hour. Mr. Kidd asked if, in Art. II Sec. 1.03.01(r)(9), the term “stock in trade” would be considered inventory. Ms. Bertotti answered that it would. Mr. Kidd expressed concern that people would be having construction equipment or items for sale dropped off at their home business. Ms. Bertotti said that any such items would have to be enclosed in the house or an accessory structure.

Mr. Kidd expressed support for the proposed amendments as presented, but noted his concern with the statements in Art. II Sec. 1.03.01(r)(9).

Mr. Kennedy pointed out that Art. II Sec. 1.03.01(r)(9) is not part of the proposed amendment and stated that he felt it did not need to be changed, and he supported the amendment as proposed.

Mr. Kidd went along with Mr. Kennedy’s sentiment.

Mr. Kidd called for public comment and there was none.

Mr. Stebe moved to close the public hearing; Ms. Ike seconded and all members voted in favor.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – To revise art. II, Sec. 18.03.02 to allow breweries and brewpubs as special exception uses in the Historic Zone. – Zoning Regulation Amendment (2016-074)

Mr. Stebe read the legal notice.

Ms. Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner for the Town of Manchester Planning Department, presented the proposed amendment to permit breweries and brewpubs in the Historic Zone as a special exception use. She provided the background of the proposed amendment, citing a recent zoning regulation amendment which allowed breweries and brewpubs as a permitted use in the Industrial Zone.

The current definitions of breweries and brewpubs would remain unchanged under the proposed amendment. Because the beer brewing process is essentially industrial in nature, the amendment proposes to add breweries and brewpubs to the list of commercial and technical uses which are

permitted in the Historic Zone.

Mr. Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning and Economic Development, recently presented the proposed amendment to the Cheney Brothers National Historic District Commission. The Commission recommended approval of the proposed amendment.

Ms. Bertotti stated that the proposed amendment is consistent with the Manchester Plan of Conservation and Development, especially with the goals and objectives of Growth Management Principle 3, which cites investing in desirable industries, investing in adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized sites, and promoting vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.

Since there were no questions from the Commission, Mr. Kidd called for public comment. There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Stoppelman moved to close the public hearing; Ms. Scorso seconded and all members voted in favor.

The Chairman closed the Public Hearing at 9:07 p.m.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

September 19, 2016
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS PUBLIC HEARING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.