

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
APRIL 3, 2017**

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Andy Kidd, Acting Chairman
Michael Stebe, Secretary
Jessica Scorso
Timothy Bergin

Alternate Member Sitting: Teresa Ike

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman
Patrick Kennedy

Absent: Eric Prause, Chairman

Also Present: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and
Economic Development
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner
Matthew Bordeaux, Environmental Planner
James Mayer, Traffic Engineer
Katie Williford, Administrative Secretary

Time Convened: 7:05 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

CALAMAR, INC. – To remove a condition of approval for application 2016-009 at 188 Spencer Street.

Mr. Kevin Grindle, a landscape architect from Anchor Engineering, represented Calamar Enterprises. Mr. Brent Narkawicz, Development Director for Calamar, was also present. Mr. Grindle explained the applicant's request that a condition previously placed on the approval of their EHD Zone Change and Preliminary Site Development Plan application (2016-009) be removed. The condition required gating the proposed access from 188 Spencer Street across the existing McDonald's access and onto Hillstown Road. Mr. James Mayer, the Town Traffic Engineer, had requested the condition due to accident data for the Hillstown Road intersection. Subsequent to the approval of the applicant's Detailed Site Development Plan, the applicant worked with the State Department of Transportation (DOT), the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA), and Mr. Mayer. At the end of February, Mr. Mayer was satisfied with the accident data that had been collected on the Hillstown Road intersection from the time that improvements had been completed on the intersection, Mr. Grindle said. The applicant is requesting removal of the condition so there will be no remaining conditions once the project is under construction, he said.

Mr. Kidd asked Mr. Mayer to comment. Mr. Mayer said he had expressed concern last year based on accident data for the intersection of the McDonald's driveway and Hillstown Road from March 2016 from the UConn crash data repository, which showed a rash of accidents the

previous September and one in March. In the intervening time since March 2016, there have been no accidents reported at that driveway, he said. Based on that, Mr. Mayer said he saw it as more acceptable to provide the access.

Mr. Kidd asked if the widening of Hillstown Road had positive impact. Mr. Mayer said apparently that was the case, however, no accidents have been reported since March 2016, and that was before the road widening was completed.

In response to a question from Mr. Bergin, Mr. Mayer confirmed there were no accidents involving the McDonald's driveway at Hillstown Road from March 2016 to March 2017.

Ms. Scorso was satisfied with the confirmation that there had been no accidents at the intersection for a year. Ms. Ike agreed that the Commission had wanted a year's worth of data, which they did not have at the last meeting.

Ms. Ike asked when the road widening was completed. Mr. Mayer said it was completed last fall, but he did not know the exact date when the double left lanes were opened.

In response to a question from Mr. Stebe, Mr. Mayer said that school was underway before the road widening was finished.

Mr. Bergin noted that the original traffic study for the application had peak times that did not coincide with school and work rush hour, given that it is for an elderly housing development.

In response to a question from Mr. Kidd, Mr. Mayer confirmed that he recommended removal of this condition. Mr. Kidd said he did not see an issue with that, and it did not sound as though the Commission had any major concerns. He called for a motion to remove the condition.

MOTION: Mr. Stebe moved to approve the removal of the condition of the approval requiring that the driveway connecting onto Hillstown Road be gated as emergency access until the Hillstown Road improvements are completed and the Town Traffic Engineer has evaluated the accident history at the McDonald's driveway. Ms. Scorso seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval was that, after evaluating the crash history data, the Town Traffic Engineer recommended that the above cited condition of the approval be removed.

NEW BUSINESS:

JIN YOUNG PARK – Special exception modification under Art. II Sec. 22.04.08 for changes to previously approved health and recreation facility at 608 East Center Street. – Special Exception Modification (2017-021)

Mr. Jeff Burkhart, an architect with FLB Architecture and Planning, represented the applicant. Mr. Andrew Bushnell, a civil engineer for the project, was also present. He said the applicant was requesting modifications to a previously approved plan to convert the old VFW building to a health and recreation facility. The east wing of the building was no longer proposed to be demolished, and was now proposed to be converted into bathrooms and accessory spaces. An additional parking space would be required due to this proposed increase in square footage. In

order to make the building more energy efficient, the applicant proposed to use EIFS for exterior continuous insulation. Mr. Burkhart passed around a material samples board to the Commission.

Mr. Bushnell, of Bushnell Associates, displayed the original approved site plan and the proposed site plan. The best location for the required additional parking space was the northeast corner, which is currently already paved, Mr. Bushnell said. Two parking spaces are now proposed in that location, as well as an 8-foot landscaped buffer along the street line and some landscaping to separate the parking spaces from the access driveway onto Middle Turnpike East. Additional sidewalk is also proposed. Stormwater flow will not be increased because the landscaping will add pervious area to make up for the additional sidewalk, and the area with the additional parking spaces is already paved, Mr. Bushnell said.

Mr. Burkhart described the proposed architectural details. He displayed a photo of the existing building, which is mostly brick veneer with two side outbuildings. He then displayed the previously approved elevation.

Mr. Burkhart presented the new proposed floor plans and elevations. The new, higher frontispiece will add more square footage for signage and help screen two new rooftop units from the street, he said. There will be a water table of synthetic stone along the entire front of the building and the entire entry area will be sided with this material as well. He noted the location of the proposed EIFS. New windows will be sky gray to match the clear anodized aluminum entrance system. The sides of the building will have exterior insulation and corn silk colored vinyl siding to match the EIFS. There will be signage with a logo below, with red and blue lettering, Mr. Burkhart said.

Ms. Scorso asked if the changes to the facade were based on the need for insulation. Mr. Burkhart said that was correct. There was almost no insulation when the building was built, and using EIFS is the only way to get close to current efficiency standards, he said.

Mr. Bergin asked for clarification of the reason for the change in siding. Mr. Burkhart said the most effective way to improve the thermal efficiency of the building was to use exterior insulation.

Mr. Bergin said he was surprised that the proposed changes to the exterior of the building were this drastic. He also expressed surprise that the applicant had not anticipated that the thermal efficiency would not be achievable with the plan that was originally approved. Mr. Burkhart said the life cycle costs of heating and cooling the building would be drastically reduced as a result of these proposed changes.

Mr. Stebe asked for more information about the proposed signage, and particularly whether the sign would be back-lit. Mr. Burkhart said the sign will not be back-lit, but downlights will light both the sign and the logo. The proposed sign would be less than 150 sq.ft. in area, he said.

Ms. Scorso asked staff why this application did not require a public hearing. Ms. Bertotti explained that this application is for a modification to a previously approved special exception, and special exception modifications do not require a public hearing. She said changes to approved special exception plans can be signed off on by the PZC Chairman and Planning Director if they are considered minor changes, but in this case the Chair and Planning Director did not feel these changes were minor.

Ms. Scorso said she had reservations about the proposed changes, which she felt were dramatic. She said the VFW has sentimental value for the Town, and while she understood the need for building updates, she found the proposed changes shocking for this building. She said she thought the public would have comments about this application.

Mr. Burkhart said the building has a dedication stone from 1938 that would be left exposed. He said the property owner understands concerns about the sentimental value of the building, but the brick has been neglected over time, and repairing it would be a major job.

Ms. Scorso asked if other members shared her sentiment. Mr. Bergin said he did to some extent. He asked what adding EIFS would do to the underlying brick, and whether the EIFS could be removed later if someone else acquires the building. Mr. Burkhart said the EIFS could be taken down and the adhesive could be removed by sandblasting.

Mr. Kidd said he also shared Ms. Scorso's concerns. He said the shape of the parapet in the front is a defining feature of the VFW building, but it is proposed to be replaced with an area for a bigger sign. He asked the reason for that. Mr. Burkhart said raising the parapet would allow the sign to be higher up and therefore more visible. The higher parapet would also help screen the new rooftop units, he said. Mr. Burkhart noted that the parapets would be covered up and held in place so that feature could be uncovered in the future.

Mr. Kidd asked if the rooftop units would still be visible even with the higher parapet. Mr. Burkhart said they would be visible from a high enough vantage point.

Mr. Kidd asked if any neighborhood compatibility criteria apply to this application. Ms. Bertotti said all special exception criteria apply, as well as the purpose of the Special Design Commercial Business (SDC) zone. Ms. Bertotti read into record the SDC zone's purpose, which includes "to enhance the quality of new development or redevelopment and when appropriate preserve and enhance the special character of existing neighborhoods."

Mr. Kidd said the loss of the unique parapet feature merited further discussion.

Ms. Ike asked what would elevate this application to a public hearing. Mr. Anderson said this application is asking to change a special exception that the PZC approved previously; the Commission can choose not to approve the changes. Ms. Bertotti said the original special exception application related to the proposed use for the building. Therefore, if the applicant applied to change the use of the building, that would elevate it to a public hearing, she said.

Mr. Bergin asked if the Commission was interested in trying to change one feature of the design to maintain the character of the existing building, or if the Commission wanted public input. Mr. Kidd said he did not see this proposal going to the public, but he asked whether the parapet feature was worth changing. He said he was leaning towards not approving all the design changes.

Mr. Stebe said he did not think the Commission could condition the approval to require the central parapet to incorporate the existing unique shape, because that does not have anything to do with compatibility or special exception criteria. He said he did not see anything out of the norm enough for the Commission to have a cause to deny the changes.

Mr. Kidd asked Ms. Bertotti to reread the SDC zone purpose and she did so. Mr. Kidd noted that the definition refers to enhancing the character of neighborhoods. He said he interpreted “neighborhoods” to include the building itself. He said he was acquiescing on the EIFS and vinyl, and asked if just maintaining the unique shape of the parapet would be enough to maintain the building’s character.

Mr. Kidd said the Commission has the option to table the application and think about it further.

Mr. Burkhart clarified that there will not be any vinyl siding on the front of the building. The sides will have vertical siding, but the front of building will all be synthetic stone and synthetic stucco. The sides of the building currently have siding that is in poor condition, Mr. Burkhart said.

Mr. Anderson asked if the rectangular shape in the front is necessary, or if the unique existing shape could be extended upward. Mr. Burkhart said there is no reason that could not be done, but that would mean raising it close to the top of the existing chimney. Mr. Kidd said raising it higher would not be good from an aesthetic standpoint.

Mr. Kidd suggested the sign could fit where the VFW sign has been for years, within the existing design, without raising the height. Mr. Kidd asked if conditioning the approval make sense, or if the Commission should get updated elevations. Ms. Bertotti said the Commission could do either, and there was time to table the application if they wished.

Mr. Kidd asked for a motion to approve the application, noting that a motion could also be amended to include the notion of maintaining the building’s existing character.

Ms. Bertotti said there are minor staff comments that she believed were about to be addressed in plans to be handed in to the Planning Department. The Commission could approve the application with those modifications, she said.

Mr. Kidd asked if there would be any problem with conditioning the approval to maintain the existing shape of the center parapet. Ms. Bertotti said a condition should mention dimensions as well as shape. In response to a question from Mr. Kidd, Ms. Bertotti said, if the Commission moved to approve the application and the motion to approve failed, then the application would be denied.

Mr. Kidd said he would entertain a motion to approve the application. He said a condition relating to the parapet could be included in a motion if desired. If a condition were not included in the motion, someone else could also ask for an amendment to the motion if they wanted to, he said.

Special Exception Modification (2017-021)

MOTION: Mr. Stebe moved to approve the special exception modification with the modifications as specified in staff memoranda from:

1. Michelle Handfield, Assistant Town Engineer, dated March 15, 2017
2. James Davis, Zoning Enforcement Officer, dated March 15, 2017.

Mr. Bergin seconded the motion. Mr. Stebe and Mr. Bergin voted in favor of the motion. Ms. Scorso, Ms. Ike, and Mr. Kidd voted against the motion. The motion did not pass and the application was denied.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – To revise Art. I Sec. 2 to delete the definition for High Rise Apartments and Art. VII Sec. 1 to delete the reference to high-rise apartments. – Zoning Regulation Amendment (2017-020)

Zoning Regulation Amendment (2017-020)

MOTION: Ms. Ike moved to approve the text revisions at Art. I Sec. 2 to delete the definition for High Rise Apartments and at Art. VII Sec. 1 to delete the reference to high-rise apartments. Mr. Stebe seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval is that the proposed amendment is editorial and consistent with the Manchester 2020 POCD.

The zoning regulation amendment will be effective on April 18, 2017.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – For extension of Center Springs Park and construction of a 10-stall parking lot and 570 feet of bituminous concrete multi-use trail at 363 Broad Street. – Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significance (2017-008) – Request for 65-day Extension; Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2017-009) – Request for 65-day Extension

Ms. Bertotti said Town staff is currently working on revising the plans for this proposal due to discussions between the Redevelopment Agency and the Board of Directors.

Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significance (2017-008) – Request for 65-day Extension

Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2017-009) – Request for 65-day Extension

MOTION: Mr. Stebe moved to approve the 65 day extension of time for the Inland Wetlands Permit and Determination of Significance (2017-008) and the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2017-009). Mr. Bergin seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

There were no administrative reports.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

March 6, 2017 –Public Hearing/Business Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Stebe moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Bergin seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS:

1. UNITED SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION – Historic Zone Site Development Plan (2017-025) – For exterior modifications to the existing house and partial pavement of the existing gravel driveway at 99 Hartford Road, Historic Zone.
2. TOWN OF MANCHESTER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – Inland Wetlands Permit (2017-026); Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2017-027) – For reconstruction of North Main Street from Tolland Turnpike to the Hockanum River.

3. **TOWN OF MANCHESTER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2017-028)** – For reconstruction of the southern Lincoln Center parking lot and adjacent access drives at 494 Main Street, 41 Center Street, 99 Edgerton Street, and 35 Center Street.

The Chairman closed the business meeting at 8:35 p.m.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

April 17, 2017
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS BUSINESS MEETING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.

R:\Planning\PZC\2017\04 - April 3\Minutes\BM Minutes 03 APR 2017.docx