

CITY OF TORRINGTON
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
March 15, 2023

Present: Greg Mele, Chair
Greg Perosino, Vice Chair
Donna Greco, Member
Donovan Riley, Member
Starley Arias, Alternate

Also Present: Jeremy Leifert, AICP, City Planner

Not Present: Jim Bobinski Member
Diane Carroll, Alternate
Tom Telman, Alternate

1. Call to Order:

Chair Greg Mele called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Attendance by Zoom or in-person at City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT.

2. Attendance/Announcement:

Chair Mele announced present and serving on the Commission this evening are Greg Perosino via zoom, Donna Greco, Donovan Riley via zoom, Greg Mele. Starley Arias logged in via zoom approximately 7:11 p.m. Also present is Jeremy Leifert, City Planner.

3. Minutes for Approval:

a. 2/15/23

There were not enough commissioners present who attended the meeting to vote. Tabled until the April 19, 2023 meeting.

4. Public Hearings beginning at 7:00 p.m., March 15, 2023 City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT

a. Special Exception 22-08 and Site Plan 1425
Applicant: Alam Realty, Inc.
Location: 861 New Harwinton Road
Proposal: Sales of gasoline, new canopy, parking, landscaping, site work, signage (continued from February 15, 2023)

Mr. Mele read a letter of withdrawal from the applicant's attorney Mike Zizka.

- b. Proposed Change of Zone Map and Site Plan 1441
Applicant: Patrik Jonsson
Location: 53 McDermott Avenue
Proposal: Change Zone to Local Business (LB) with AM overlay and Adult use cannabis retail establishment

At 7:04 p.m. Chair Mele opened the public hearing and announced serving on the Commission will be Greg Perosino, Donna Greco, Donovan Riley, and Greg Mele. Also present is Jeremy Leifert, City Planner.

Donna Greco read the legal notice of public hearing.

Patrik Jonsson, Accord Park Drive, Norwell, MA appeared. An email of the neighborhood notifications was sent to Jeremy Leifert. Mr. Jonsson gave a presentation of his proposal. This is not a residential neighborhood. There are many other businesses in the vicinity.

Galen Semprebon, Senior Project Manager of East-West Engineering, West Hartford, CT appeared and presented site details, with a screen shared site plan map. There is already good lighting on site, drainage and detention basin on site. No substantial changes are proposed. Staff comments will be addressed. One driveway will be made one way in to as not to interfere with the traffic flow at the intersection. The parking spaces on site will be reduced from 71 spaces to 57 spaces.

Judy Schulyer, PE, of East-West Engineering was present on zoom. The parking plan was screen shared and reviewed, landscaping was discussed as well as lighting. (Starley Arias arrived at approximately 7:11 p.m.). A waiver was requested, of lighting plan, also waiver for parking requirements, on the 57 parking space site. There are a few outstanding issues to be addressed, such as adequacy of the storm drainage system and detention basin. A traffic report had been prepared and submitted. There will not be a more than ten percent increase in traffic at the intersection, CT DOT traffic counts were used in preparation of the traffic report. Details of the traffic report were reviewed.

Mr. Mele inquired about the status of the brick small structure on site. Mr. Jonsson responded that structure will remain, he is leasing the property, not owning. The cooler on the larger building will be removed.

Mr. Riley inquired about peak traffic hours of 7-8 p.m. Peak traffic on the road is approximately 4:00 to 5:00 pm. Mr. Riley comments, inaudible. Mr. Jonsson said their operating hours will be 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10:00 pm. To 5:00 p.m. on Sundays, similar to their other stores.

Mr. Leifert noted City Engineer Paul Kundzins needs to review the storm water calculations. Mr. Leifert recommends continuing the public hearing.

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing for comments in favor of the operation, there were none.

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing for comments in opposition to the proposal, there were none.

At 7:25 p.m. Chair Mele declared the public hearing continued until April 19, 2023.

- c. Special Exception 23-01 and Site Plan 1442
 - Applicant: A. Secondino & Sons Inc.
 - Location: 95 Grove Street and 104 Grove Street
 - Proposal: Change of use to educational facility and office use
(former church use)

At 7:25 p.m. Chair Mele opened the public hearing and announced serving on the Commission will be Greg Perosino, Donna Greco, Starley Arias, Donovan Riley, and Greg Mele. Also present is Jeremy Leifert, City Planner.

Donna Greco read the legal notice of public hearing.

John Schmitz, Civil Engineer, BL Companies, 355 Research Parkway, Meriden, CT appeared representing the applicant. Mr. Schmitz verified the public hearing signs were posted and provided neighborhood notifications. He gave a presentation, these are two separate parcels, site features were noted. The proposed parking, grading, drainage, landscaping, erosion and sedimentation plan, anti-tracking pads were discussed. They are currently working through City staff comments and revised plans will be presented next. A traffic plan had been presented and was reviewed.

Andy Graves, Project Architect, appeared with additional details. This project is to convert to a headstart program with young children and support services. There will be eight classrooms and they need to be on first floor grade for access and ADA requirements. A floor plan was presented and reviewed. The convent on site will remain untouched as much as possible. ADA requirements were reviewed, and since these are very young children, there needs to be a direct access to the exterior from each classroom. The administrative offices will be located upstairs. Elevations were presented, drawings were screen shared. A playground is proposed on the site.

Mr. Leifert explained originally the building would not meet the setback requirements, so the building was moved and straightened, and since then there have been conversations with Mayor Carbone. A property line adjustment is being considered so the original building design plan may be used. The adjoining parcel is owned by the City of Torrington. The updated plan should be available at the next meeting. An Architectural Review Committee meeting will be held tomorrow at 5:00 p.m.

In response to questions from Mr. Perosino, Mr. Graves stated the timeline to complete the entire project is 12 to 14 months.

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing for comments in favor of the proposal. There were none.

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing for comments in opposition to the proposal. There were none.

At 7:41 p.m. Mr. Mele declared the public hearing continued to the April 19, 2023 meeting.

5. Old Business:

- a. Site Plan 1438 and Location Approval
Applicant: Baris Kara
Location: 37 Migeon Avenue
Proposal: Change of use to auto dealer and repair (former warehouse/office)

Mr. Baris Kara appeared before the Commission. He is currently operating at a site on lower East Main Street and is locating to relocate to 37 Migeon Avenue. The property has been surveyed and an engineer has submitted a site map. This subject location has four bays in the back of the property. The previous use was office and storage warehouse for an oil company. The building will be painted and landscaping installed, improvements are being made now.

Mr. Leifert read this memo to the Commission dated March 15, 2023.

MOTION by Ms. Greco to APPROVE

Site Plan 1438 and Location Approval

Applicant: Baris Kara

Location: 37 Migeon Avenue

Proposal: Change of use to auto dealer and repair (former warehouse/office)

With the following conditions and recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the applicant follow the advice of Assistant City Planner Nate Nardi-Cyrus in his March 13 email to the City Planner, specifically regarding lighting and signage.
2. It is recommended that the applicant follow the permitting requirements of Building Official Kevin Gillette contained in his letter to the City Planner dated March 13, 2023
3. The applicant shall submit information on the final plans showing the slope of the handicap accessible parking space and the location of the accessible route and slope to the building entrance.
4. The applicant shall be required to stripe and mark the handicap space on the site
5. No more than four (4) vehicles shall be displayed for sale at any time as presented on the submitted plan
6. In accordance with section 8.4.3 and 8.4.6 of the zoning regulations, the following shall be submitted to the City Planner:
 - a. Two paper copies of the full approved plans including the engineer's stamp and chairman's signature box
 - b. One mylar copy of the full approved plan set for filing with the City Clerk in accordance with section 8.4.3.P of the zoning regulations. Each mylar sheet shall bear a chairman's signature box, a copy of the approval letter from the commission, an engineers' seal and live ink stamp.
 - c. Mylar sheets shall be filed by the applicant with the City Clerk after the signature of the Chairman and prior to occupying the site for business use

MOTION seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

6. New Business:

- a. Special Exception 23-02
Applicant: Wendy Roberts for WMWater63LLC
Location: 63 Water Street
Proposal: Two residential units on first floor in DD Zone (6.8.17 A.b)
(set public hearing date)

MOTION by Ms. Greco to set a public hearing date of April 19, 2023, seconded by Mr. Riley, unanimously carried.

- b. Site Plan 1445
Applicant: Borghesi Building
Location: 2015 East Main Street
Proposal: Renovate and two new additions to existing car dealership (630 sq. ft. and 1,920 sq. ft.)

Marc Borghesi, President of Borghesi Building appeared before the Commission and gave a brief presentation of the plan to add two additions to the Northwest Hill Jeep dealership. Plans were screen shared. (Commissioner Starley Arias recused himself from acting on this proposal.) Mr. Leifert noted an Architectural Review application is forthcoming.

Table until April 19, 2023.

- c. Special Exception 23-03 and Site Plan 1446
Applicant: Haynes Aggregates – Torrington LLC and O&G Industries, Inc.
Location: 3217 Winsted Road and 3345 Winsted Road
Proposal: 6.4 Earth Excavation and accessory retail sales
(set public hearing date)

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to set a public hearing date of April 19, 2023, seconded by Ms. Greco, unanimously carried.

7. Correspondence:

- a. Zoning and Blight Violation update

An update was provided to Commission members.

- b. Town Farm Road, SR Litchfield, LLC – MW Solar Photovoltaic Project
Petition for Declaratory Ruling & Party Status under Conn. Gen. Stat. SS 22a-19

Mr. Leifert provided background information, Intervener Status has been filed by one of the neighbors, and City of Torrington was notified as the municipality. The

Conservation Commission report had been submitted to the Connecticut Siting Council for the proposal solar array field which is proposed to be located in both Litchfield and Torrington.

Mr. Mele noted the March 11, 2023 zoom seminar offered by the Connecticut Bar Association which was attended by Commissioners Diane Carroll, Donna Greco, Greg Perosino and Greg Mele.

Mr. Leifert reviewed the new mandated training requirements that are now necessary for Commissioners. The seminar on March 11, 2023 covered the Affordable Housing and Fair Housing requirements of the training. Mr. Leifert needs to provide a report to Torrington City Council at the end of the year. He will keep the Commission informed of other training opportunity as they arise.

8. Adjournment:

MOTION by Ms. Greco to adjourn at 8:06 p.m., seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.