

# CITY OF TORRINGTON



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To: Planning & Zoning Commission  
From: Jeremy Leifert, AICP, City Planner *JL*  
Date: January 18, 2023  
RE: Special Exception #22-09 and Site Plan #1430, 232 Klug Hill Road, change of use to allow a 92-Site Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park and associated property improvements

**In reviewing the application, plans and documents submitted, I have the following comments:**

Lelah Campo has filed an application for two adjacent properties: 232 Klug Hill Road - Tax Assessor's Map 215 Block 003 Lot 016 and Tax Assessor's Map 215 Block 003 Lot 004 to request an approval for a change of use from the current single family use to a Recreational Vehicle (RV) park. The applicant also requests approval of the site plans submitted with the application.

The properties are owned by Greenstone Investments, Inc., are a combined 236.4 acres in total area and are both located entirely in the R-60 residential zone. There are no previous site plan approvals in the City records for this property. The proposed Recreational Vehicle Park use is an allowed use in the R-60 zone by Special Exception under zoning regulations section 3.1, Table of Permitted Uses, subsection 1.90 – Mobile Home Park and Recreational Vehicle Park and section 6.7.3 – Mobile Home Parks and Recreational Vehicle Parks. A public hearing for the special exception and a new site plan approval are required for this proposed project. The review of this application is guided by the above referenced section 6.7.3 of the regulations as well as site plan requirements of section 8.4 and general special exception review standards in section 8.2.

A set of plans has been submitted titled "Klug Hill RV Park, KOA Campground, 232 Klug Hill Road, Torrington, Connecticut, Regulatory Submission, November 9, 2022" by SLR, Cheshire, CT. Dated November 9, 2022. 19 Sheets. Staff has met previously with the property owner and engineer to discuss the project prior to this meeting.

Other Items of note:

1. No new building construction is proposed on the property
2. No details have been included on proposed free standing or directional signage for the site. Free-standing signs shall be limited to no more than five feet in height and twenty square feet in area in accordance with the regulations.
3. Trash disposal areas or dumpsters have not been located on the plans. Details need to be added to the plans.

4. The location of underground water lines and electrical to the sites are not indicated on the plans are required to be identified
5. Property boundaries between 232 Klug Hill Road and the adjacent parcel to the West currently bisect the proposed campground and should be combined as a condition of approval.
6. Parking requirements of two parking spaces per site are satisfied by these plans. Two handicap accessible spaces are provided near the office/recreational building. The regulations require 6 handicap spaces to be provided based on the required parking of 184 spaces. I support a waiver to allow for 2 handicap accessible spaces for the campground use.
7. I recommend a waiver of the requirement to provide a photometric lighting plan. The applicant has provided documentation on fixtures to be installed, which are full cutoff and compliant with lighting regulations.
8. Based on the comments by the City Planner, City Engineer and Police Traffic Sergeant described in this memo and revisions to plans that are required by the applicant, the commission is likely not in a position to close the public hearing and render a favorable decision at this meeting. In my opinion, the proposed use and location is compatible with the neighborhood and surrounding uses. However, the proposed site design needs further revisions as described below to meet certain special exception requirements in section 8.2 of the regulations. The applicant will need to consent to and request in writing a 30-day extension to the public hearing to allow for a continuance beyond the allowed 35 days for the public hearing to be open. The 35-day statutory window requiring the public hearing to be closed is currently January 25, 2023. Given that the next scheduled meeting is on February 15, 2023, the commission is required to close the public hearing at this meeting if no extension request is submitted, and will be required to render a decision based on the current record.

#### **Other Staff Comments:**

#### **Economic Development: Rista Malanca, City of Torrington Economic Development**

**Director:** Rista Malanca, AICP, Torrington Economic Development Director verbally indicated her support for the project.

**Wetlands, Conservation, Lighting, Landscaping, Signage:** Nate Nardi-Cyrus, Assistant City Planner, in an email to me dated January 6, 2023, offered the following comments on the plans:

General - *On sheet IN, include septic and detention basin areas for the relevant phases.*

Wetlands – *There are regulated wetlands and watercourses within the subject property that require wetlands review for this proposal. The applicant was granted a permit on April 12, 2022 for the expansion of the existing watercourse crossing (WC22-03-03) and on January 3, 2023 for tree clearing, installation of septic leaching fields, stormwater management basins, and grading entirely within the upland review area (WC22-11-01). This constitutes a favorable wetlands report for this application.*

Landscaping – *The proposed landscaping, as shown as identified lawn areas on sheet LL-2, is consistent with the Torrington's code. In addition, I recommend adding native trees and shrubs throughout the campground to provide shade, protection from wind, and to enhance groundwater infiltration on the site.*

Lighting – No lighting is shown on the site plan. New lighting must comply with section 5.17 of the City zoning code, including the use of full cut-off fixtures. We encourage the use of products approved by the International Dark-Sky Association: <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-industry/fsa/fsa-products/>.

Signage – There are no new signs proposed as part of this application. A sign permit shall be required before installing any signage in accordance with section 5.15 of the zoning regulations.

Conservation – This application was referred to the conservation commission for review and the following comments were submitted in a memo to the City Planner dated December 9, 2022:

- **Plant native tree and shrub species throughout the campground** to provide wildlife habitat and other environmental benefits (e.g., shade, wind protection, and stormwater mitigation).
- **Replace campsites 56-61 with a park-like common area** that includes scattered native trees to buffer important forest habitat (See Map 2).
- **If any future activity is proposed within or adjacent to the wetlands in the western portion of the property** (e.g., wetlands crossings and recreational trails), biological surveys should be conducted to **establish the presence or absence of rare species** identified downstream.
- **Maintain all graded slopes and septic fields as native wildflower meadow habitat** by planting native seed mixes and mowing no more than 2x annually. Maintain existing meadows by mowing no more than 2x annually. Detention basins should also use native seed mix specifically designed for such basins but should be maintained using best practices (see Maps 1-2).
- For the large hayfield to the south of the 'Lodge' **remove riding ring fencing** to expand the hayfield and improve habitat for grassland breeding bird species (see Map 1).
- **Future trail design should require review by the Conservation Commission.**

**Architectural Review Committee:** This application was not referred to the ARC for comment.

**Torrington Area Health District:** TAHD Sanitarian Justin Rompre, in an email to me dated November 17, 2022, offered the following comments on the plans:

*The Torrington Area Health District has received and is currently reviewing the Septic plan submitted by SLR Consulting regarding the property 232 Klug Hill Rd in Torrington, CT. Based on field observations and the proposed plan, it would appear feasible to locate an area to design a code complying subsurface sewage disposal system within the confines of the Connecticut State Health Code.*

**Engineering:** Paul Kundzins, City Engineer in a memorandum to me and the applicant dated December 7, 2022, submitted marked up plans and a list of comments and corrections to be addressed by the applicants' engineer. Supplementary comments were submitted by Mr. Kundzins on January 10, 2023 regarding driveway grades.

**Police Traffic:** Police Traffic Sergeant Dustin Baldis, in an email to me dated December 12, 2022, offered the following comments on the plans:

*The traffic study appears to not take into consideration the fact traffic will be turning right from Klug Hill onto Goshen Road headed into Torrington. They make a very large assumption all camper traffic will be going back towards Goshen. Regardless the numbers show no real change in LOS. My only concern is making sure the turn on the driveway with the steep grade and*

*hairpin like turn towards the top would allow for a truck and camper in each direction to be able to pass on that corner of one another. This should be either wider or more of an exaggerated curve to allow for this turning movement with larger vehicles most likely passing one another from time to time. No further comments.*

**Fire:** Fire Marshal Edward Bascetta offered no comments on this application

**WPCA:** Ray Drew, Public Works Director, offered the following comments in an email to the City Planner on December 30, 2022

*Is it a community septic system, if so what size. If more than 5,000 gpd Maintenance Agreements with the WPCA will need to be executed.*

**Building:** Building Official Kevin Gillette, in an email to me dated November 17, 2022, indicated that he has no comments on this project

**Conclusion:**

Option 1: Due to outstanding corrections to be made to the submitted plans per review and comments by Jeremy Leifert, City Planner in this memo, City Engineer Paul Kundzins on December 7, 2022 and January 10, 2023 and Police Traffic Sergeant Dustin Baldis on December 12, 2022, I recommend that the commission continue this public hearing to the next regularly scheduled commission meeting to allow time for plan corrections and additional review, pending an extension request from the applicant. The applicant should act on the following prior the next meeting:

1. Address comments from City Planner Jeremy Leifert in this memo regarding plan details on dumpster locations and underground utilities
2. Address comments from Paul Kundzins, City Engineer, contained in his emails from December 7, 2022 and January 10, 2023
3. Address comments from Police Traffic Sergeant Dustin Baldis regarding line-of-sight on Klug Hill Road and traffic safety on the sharp driveway turn indicated on the current plans.

**OR**

Option 2: Should the commission close the public hearing at this meeting, I recommend tabling deliberations and a decision on the application to the next regularly scheduled PZC meeting to allow for thorough review of the meeting record, testimony, and application exhibits.