

**CITY OF TORRINGTON  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
June 10 2020**

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

Also Present: Martin Connor, AICP; City Planner

Not Present: Diane Carroll, Alternate

**1. Call to Order:**

Chairman Greg Mele called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., Remote meeting via ZOOM online. (not held at City Hall building)

**2. Attendance/Announcement:**

Chair Mele announced present and serving this evening will be Commissioners Greg Perosino, Donovan Riley, James Bobinski, Donna Greco, Starley Arias, Tom Telman and Greg Mele. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor.

Chair Mele introduced Donovan Riley, our new Planning and Zoning Commission member who has filled a vacancy.

**3. Public hearings scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 10, 2020, remote meeting (not held at City Hall):**

- a. Special Exception 20-04  
Applicant: Mmak LLC, Richard Weigold  
Location: 21 Prospect Street, Suite B  
Proposal: Change of use to residential use in the Downtown District  
(former office use)

Chair Greg Mele opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. and stated serving on the public hearing this evening will be Commissioners Greg Perosino, Donovan Riley, James Bobinski, Donna Greco, Starley Arias, Tom Telman and Greg Mele. City Planner Martin Connor is also present.

Mr. Connor read the legal notice which was published on the City of Torrington website.

The applicant Richard Weigold made a presentation to the Commission on his proposal to convert an office use unit into a first floor handicap residential unit.

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Chairman Greg asked Mr. Connor to read his memo to the Commission dated June 3, 2020 into the record.

There was discussion amongst the Commission members about other residential uses on the property and questioned whether there were any other residential uses on the first floor, which there are none.

Commissioner Perosino inquired what were the details regarding general conditions for a Special Exception approval. In response, Mr. Connor read Section 8.3 regarding Special Exceptions, General Conditions, into the record.

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

Chairman Mele opened the hearing for public comments in opposition to the proposal.

Mr. Connor stated correspondence in opposition was received; a letter dated June 8, 2020 from David Sartirana, Board President, Litchfield County Board of realtors, Inc., 21 Prospect Street, Suite E, Torrington, CT was sent in. Mr. Sartirana was present via ZOOM and asked Mr. Connor to read the letter into the record, which he did.

There were no further comments for or against the proposal.

Mr. Mele declared the public hearing closed at 7:41 p.m.

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to APPROVE Special Exception 20-04

Applicant: MMak LLC, Richard Weigold

Location: 21 Prospect Street, Suite B

Proposal: Change of use to residential use in the Downtown District  
(former office use)

The Commission finds the proposal meets the general and specific standards for Special Exception Approval.

MOTION seconded by Ms. Greco, unanimously carried.

b. Zone Change

Applicant: James R. Strub, Secor, Cassidy & McPartland PC, attorney for property owners

Locations: 1143 New Litchfield Street (Assessor Map 101/001/005) and  
1185 New Litchfield Street (Assessor Map 101/001/006)

Proposal: Change Zone to Local Business, LB  
(both parcels currently zoned R6)

Chairman Mele opened the public hearing at 7:42 p.m. and stated serving on the public hearing this evening will be Commissioners Greg Perosino, Donovan Riley, James Bobinski, Donna Greco, Starley Arias, Tom Telman and Greg Mele. City Planner Martin Connor is also present.

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Mr. Connor read the legal notice which was published on the City’s website.

Applicant James R. Strub made a presentation on behalf of the two property owners.

Mr. Mele asked Mr. Connor to read his June 2, 2020 memo into the record.

The Commission discussed the surrounding area, and the property behind the subject parcels, which is protected. On nearby Peck Road there are many office uses. The consensus of the discussion was that this area is more suitable for Local Business uses than for R6 uses.

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing for comments for or against the proposal. There were none.

Mr. Mele declared the public hearing closed at 8:07 p.m.

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to APPROVE Zone Change

Applicant: James R. Strub, Secor, Cassidey & McPartland PC, attorney for property owners  
Location: 1143 New Litchfield Street (Assessor Map 101/001/005) and 1185 New Litchfield Street (Assessor Map 101/001/006)  
Proposal: Change Zone to Local Business, LB (both parcels currently zoned R6)  
The effective date of the Zone Change shall be the day after publication of legal notice of decision in either the local newspaper or on the City’s website.

Motion seconded by Ms. Greco, unanimously carried.

Mr. Mele read the following announcement into the record:

***The following public hearing for Special Exception 19-03 and Site Plan 1324 has been continued to June 24, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.***

Special Exception 19-03 and Site Plan 1324

Applicant: TDF Enterprises LLC; Daniel J. Ferraina, Manager

Location: Notting Hill Gate and Wimbledon Gate North  
Assessor Map 219 Block 001 Lots 85 and 48

Proposal: Construct four (4) buildings, 120 units total, fifty-five and over residential community  
Section 6.8 – Multi-family Residences  
Section 6.12 – Active Adult Housing  
(public hearing continued from 2-19-20)

**4. Minutes for Approval:**

a. 5/27/20

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to approve the 5/27/20 minutes, seconded by Mr. Greco, unanimously carried.

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**5. Old Business:**

n/a

**6. New Business:**

- a. CGS Section 8-24  
Applicant: Torrington Board of Education  
Location: Major Besse Drive; Assessor Map 123 Block 007 Lot 009  
Proposal: Construction of a new Torrington High School / Torrington Middle School complex

Mr. Connor read Mayor Elinor Carbone's letter to the City Planner dated May 26, 2020, regarding the plan the Torrington Board of Education presented for the construction of a new Torrington High School / new Torrington Middle School on Major Besse Drive.

Torrington School Superintendent Susan Lubomski made a short presentation to the Commission. Architects from Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. gave a presentation, along with a slide show dated June 10, 2020.

Representatives from Kaestle Boos Assoc. discussed how construction could be phased in, to accomplish no interruptions to the school schedule.

Kaestle Boos Associates explained it is not cost effective to do an addition and/or renovations on the current school facility, and why new construction is much more cost effective. The reimbursement rate by the State of Connecticut to City of Torrington is favorable.

Mr. Perosino inquired when the last renovation to the high school was, architects stated it was in 1999. Mr. Perosino was on the School Building Committee at that time.

Mr. Mele noted the activity and construction may interrupt the school schedule. He inquired if an alternative location was considered. Members of the board said costs would be increased by purchasing another site. Also the \$3,000,000 turf field was just installed, and it is not efficient to lose that. The current building is not an efficient use of space.

Mr. Perosino inquired what would happen with the current middle school. Response was that fourth, fifth and sixth grade could be moved into the current middle school. Other buildings could be looked at for closure. Seventh and eighth grade would have more options in the new building. The remaining elementary school buildings would be used for Kindergarten through third grade.

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Mr. Perosino noted the current building is 60 years old, and it is an absolute necessity for our town to take a bigger lead in the Northwest Corner. This is long overdue, and we need to attract middle to upper management, who are sometimes unwilling to move to Torrington.

Ms. Greco agreed with Mr. Perosino that this is long overdue, and there is so much good that comes out of our school system. This is a real component, for the success of local businesses and our local community.

Mr. Connor stated as City Planner, this past week there was a Torrington Teleconference with the Mayor, Rista Malanca, Economic Development Director; and the current real estate market is booming. It is interesting to hear that the real estate agents are saying first time home buyers are coming. It is important to keep young buyers coming, and it's important to keep our schools current, and moving forward with technology and upgrades to attract more young people to Torrington.

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to make a favorable recommendation to Mayor Elinor Carbone and City Council on Section 8-24 Referral

Applicant: Torrington Board of Education  
Location: Major Besse Drive; Assessor Map 123 Block 007 Lot 009  
Proposal: Construction of new Torrington High School /Torrington Middle School Complex

Motion seconded by Mr. Telman, unanimously carried.

b. Enforcement Update

Mr. Connor noted the report dated June 10, 2020 from Assistant City Planner Jeremy Leifert.

**7. Adjournment:**

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to adjourn at 8:46 p.m., seconded by Mr. Telman, unanimously carried.