

**CITY OF TORRINGTON
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
July 20, 2022**

Present: Greg Mele, Chair
Greg Perosino, Vice Chair
Donna Greco, Member
Donovan Riley, Member
Jim Bobinski, Member
Diane Carroll, Alternate
Tom Telman, Alternate

Also Present: Jeremy Leifert, AICP; City Planner

Not Present: Starley Arias, Alternate

1. Call to Order:

Chair Greg Mele called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Attendance by Zoom or in-person at City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT.

Instructions for Zoom are available online at:

www.torringtonct.org/zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7959507035?pwd=MXAwcVIEenhIQUhtSXFzSGhYUnI0QT09>

1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 795-950-7035

Passcode: 907148

2. Attendance/Announcement:

Chair Greg Mele announced present and serving in person this evening are Commissioners Greg Perosino, Donna Greco, Diane Carroll and Greg Mele. Present and serving via zoom this evening are Commissioners Jim Bobinski, Donovan Riley and Tom Telman. Also present in person is Jeremy Leifert, City Planner.

3. Minutes for Approval:

a. 6/22/22

MOTION by Ms. Greco to approve the 6/22/22 minutes, seconded by Ms. Carroll, motion carried with Commissioners Greg Perosino and Jim Bobinski abstaining from voting.

4. Public Hearings beginning at 7:00 p.m., July 20, 2022 City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT

- a. Special Exception 22-04
Applicant: Hugh Sullivan, Bennett Sullivan Associates – Architects
Location: 205 Westside Lane
Proposal: Construct house addition within front yard setback, 4.1.9 B

Chair Mele opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m. and stated serving are Commissioners Jim Bobinski, Tom Telman, Donovan Riley, Donna Greco, Greg Perosino, Diane Carroll and Greg Mele. Also present is Jeremy Leifert, City Planner

Ms. Greco read the legal notice of public hearing.

Mr. Hugh Sullivan, Architect, Southbury, CT appeared before the Commission along with property owner Andy Dobos. Mr. Sullivan submitted the green card neighbor notification receipts and verified the public hearing sign was properly posted.

Mr. Leifert screen shared the submitted maps/plans. Mr. Sullivan gave a presentation, referring to maps.

Ms. Carroll inquired about the septic tank approval for an additional bedroom and Mr. Sullivan noted he has been in contact and has approvals from Torrington Area Health District. He has also met with Jeremy Leifert regarding rainwater collection.

Mr. Leifert read his memo to the Commission dated July 20, 2022.

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

Mr. Mele declared the public hearing closed at 7:14 p.m.

MOTION by Ms. Greco to APPROVE Special Exception 22-04

- Applicant: Hugh Sullivan, Bennett Sullivan Associates - Architects
- Location: 205 Westside Lane
- Proposal: Construct house addition within front yard setback, 4.1.9 B

With the following conditions:

1. It is recommended that the applicant follow the advice of Building Official Kevin Gillette contained in his letter to the City Planner dated June 13, 2022.
2. It is recommended that the applicant follow the advice of Assistant City Planner Nate Nardi-Cyrus in his June 8, 2022 email to the City Planner.
3. The Special Exception shall be recorded in the City land records by the applicant in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-3d.

MOTION seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

- b. Special Exception 22-05
Applicant: Edward Townsend
Location: 165 Hawthorne Terrace
Proposal: Construct house addition within front yard setback, 4.1.9 B

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. and stated serving are Commissioners Jim Bobinski, Tom Telman, Donovan Riley, Donna Greco, Greg Perosino, Diane Carroll and Greg Mele. Also present is Jeremy Leifert, City Planner.

Ms. Greco read the legal notice of public hearing.

Mr. Edward Townsend appeared before the Commission and explained his proposal to add a small addition to the side of his house. He submitted his green card neighborhood notification and verified the public hearing sign was properly posted on the site.

Mr. Leifert read this memo dated July 20, 2022 to the Commission.

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

At 7:23 p.m. Mr. Mele declared the public hearing closed.

MOTION by Ms. Greco to APPROVE Special Exception 22-05

Applicant: Edward Townsend
Location: 165 Hawthorne Terrace
Proposal: Construct house addition within front yard setback, 4.1.9 B

With the following conditions:

1. It is recommended that the applicant follow the advice of Building Official Kevin Gillette contained in his letter to the City Planner dated June 20, 2022.
2. The Special Exception shall be recorded in the City land records by the applicant in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-3d.

Motion seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

- c. Proposed Amendments to City of Torrington Zoning Regulations
Applicant: Torrington Planning and Zoning Commission
Proposal: 1. Proposed amendments to Sections 3.1 and 4.16, Recreational Cannabis
2. Repeal Temporary and Limited Moratorium on Cannabis Establishments, Section 5.19

At 7:24 p.m. Mr. Mele opened the public hearing and stated serving are Commissioners Jim Bobinski, Tom Telman, Donovan Riley, Donna Greco, Greg Perosino, Diane Carroll and Greg Mele. Also present is Jeremy Leifert, City Planner.

Ms. Greco read the legal notice of public hearing.

Mr. Leifert noted all items/documents currently in the file, many of which were submitted at previous public informational meetings with Planning and Zoning Commission/Board of Public Safety/City Council.

Mr. Leifert read his memo to the Commission dated July 20, 2022. The Cannabis Planning map was screen shared. Discussion following among the Commission and Mr. Leifert.

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

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

Mr. Tom Kandefer, 1821 Winsted Road, Torrington, spoke in opposition (7:45 p.m.).

Mr. David Reynolds, 69 Wedgewood Drive, Torrington, spoke in opposition (8:10 p.m.)

Mr. Greg Perosino noted the process and steps this Commission has taken thus far to prepare for this hearing, and the proposed regulations. The legality of recreational cannabis has already been determined by the State of Connecticut. The State of Connecticut has control over where the tax dollars will be used, such as educational and social purposes. Massachusetts has not done this and tax dollars go into General Funds. These proposed regulations are a method for Torrington to gain control.

Mr. Perosino continued there will always be a black market, and dangerous additives can be added. Government regulations may allow for a safer product. The City cannot stop recreational cannabis, it is here and he would prefer to take the road to use these tax dollars in the best way possible for the community.

Mr. Mele provided information on how the funding could possibly be used, and the various potential entities that could benefit. Mr. Mele agrees with Mr. Perosino's standpoint.

Mr. Leifert clarified that the City of Torrington cannot stop the delivery of this product. Both Winsted and Thomaston have approved the sale of recreational cannabis. The product will be here whether or not it is approved for sale in the City of Torrington.

Mr. Mele stated the black market is not going away. With this method and regulations, we have some control with the structure and regulations. Mr. Perosino would have preferred if alcohol sales were handled in the same way. The tax dollars can be used to help addiction, and for educational purposes. Ms. Greco stated education is key.

Mr. Perosino stated everyone has been focused on how we can manage this situation the best way possible for this town. Torrington is in desperate need of both addiction and mental health services. Mr. Leifert noted the 3% tax will go to other towns anyways. Details of the overlay zone on the map were provided by Mr. Leifert.

Mr. Riley concurred with fellow Commissioners. Parents will continue to educate their children, just as they have been doing all along. The horse is out of the barn already, and now the situation needs to be managed.

At 8:51 p.m. MOTION by Mr. Perosino to continue the public hearing to August 24, 2022, seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.

5. Old Business:

none

6. New Business:

- a. Special Exception 22-06 and Site Plan 1415
Applicant: Prospect Investments Group LLC
Location: 110 Scoville Street
Proposal: Building addition to existing motor vehicle repair facility,
Expansion of non-conforming structure (set public hearing date)

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to set a public hearing date of August 24, 2022, seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.

7. Correspondence:

- a. Zoning and Blight Violation update – brief update by Mr. Leifert.

Ms. Carroll inquired about parking on lawns, and what are the regulations. Mr. Leifert reviewed the front yard regulations, and Public Works has indicated their regulations cannot be enforced unless the curb is being broken or they are caught.

Mr. Leifert noted enforcement is not applicable, the 50% front set back area, and how a grading permit would be required for half acre or more of disturbance, which would be a much larger area than any front yard area being utilized for parking.

- b. CT Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies, Quarterly Newsletter

Mr. Leifert noted the material forwarded to Commission members.

8. Adjournment:

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to adjourn at 8:56 p.m., seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.