

ENFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

Thursday, June 10, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
ENFIELD TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
820 ENFIELD STREET - ENFIELD, CT

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Roll Call

Commissioner Higley took the roll and present were Commissioners Frank Alaimo, Ken Nelson, Virginia Higley, John Petronella and Alternate Commissioners Vinnie Grillo and Nelson Correia. Absent were Commissioners Richard Szewczak, Linda DeGray and Mary Scutt.

Chairman Nelson seated Commissioners Grillo and Correia.

Also present was Laurie Whitten, Director of Development Services.

Approval of Minutes

- a. May 27, 2021 – Regular Meeting

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alaimo, to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2021 Regular Meeting.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

Public Participation

Chairman Nelson asked if anyone in the public would like to speak; no one came forward.

Bond Release(s)

- a. **SPR# 1776** - 138 South Road – Request for the release of the Landscaping Bond in the amount of \$2,340.00.

The Commission voted with no motion or second to approve the release of the Landscaping Bond in the amount of \$2,340.00.

Votes: 6-0-0

New Public Hearings

- a. **PH# 3009** – 11 Pearl Street – Special Permit & Site Plan Review application for the reuse of the former Thompsonville Fire Department building as a mixed-use residential and commercial beer/wine tap room with outdoor seating; Map 24/Lot 65; TD-5 Zone;

Patrick & Jeannette Tallarita, applicants; Winter Street Corp., owners. (DoR: 5/27/2021; MOPH: 7/31/2021)

Ms. Whitten asked if they can delay the Public Hearing as the applicant was not present.

Motion: Commissioner Alaimo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higley, to table PH# 3009 until the end of the agenda.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

- b. **PH# 3010** – 54 Hazard Avenue – Special Permit & Site Plan Review application to allow a fencing club (commercial recreation use) in a Business Regional Shopping Center – Stop & Shop Plaza; Enfield Station, LLC., owner; Enfield Fencing Club LLC., applicant; Map 56/Lot 26; BR Zone. (DoR: 5/27/2021; MOPH: 7/31/2021j)

Commissioner Higley read the legal ad and took the roll and present were Commissioners Frank Alaimo, Ken Nelson, Virginia Higley, John Petronella and Alternate Commissioners Vinnie Grillo and Nelson Correia. Absent were Commissioners Richard Szewczak, Linda DeGray and Mary Scutt.

Ian Tucker, 89 Partridge Run, Somers and Joyce Bolanos, 43 Moody Road, Enfield addressed the Commission along with Coach Gherardo Mauri. Mr. Tucker stated that the fencing club they were a part of in Broadbrook had closed due to COVID. He stated that they secured a lease in the Stop & Shop plaza and they will be the premier fencing club for the area. He stated that they have a lot of experience and will provide classes for both children and adults.

Chairman Nelson asked what the hours and days of operation will be. Mr. Mauri went over the hours and types of classes that will be offered.

Chairman Nelson asked if tournaments will be held at this location, to which Mr. Mauri replied that they will. Chairman Nelson asked if they will exceed the occupancy limit for the building, to which Mr. Mauri replied that they will not.

Chairman Alaimo suggested that they wait to hear input from the Fire Department in order to determine the layout. Mr. Mauri stated that they did meet with the Fire and Building Departments and are going to follow their guidance.

Chairman Nelson asked three times if anyone in the public would like to speak. No one came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Grillo, to close the Public Hearing.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

Commissioner Higley stated that it will be a great addition to the town.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alaimo, to approve PH# 3010.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

Old Business

- a. **SPR# 1858** – 612 Hazard Avenue – Site Plan Review application for adaptive reuse within an SDD Zone to allow for a 43-unit apartment complex in the former Blair Manor facility; Meadow Manor, LLC., owner/applicant; Map 110/Lot 343; SDD Zone. (DoR: 4/22/2021; MAD: 6/26/2021) *Continued from May 27, 2021*

Peter Alter of Alter & Pearson addressed the Commission along with Dana Steele of JR Russo & Associates. Mr. Alter went over the issues that the Commission had previously asked them to address.

Mr. Alter stated that the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) recommends that a project like this have a mixed use component. Mr. Alter stated that this property will be perfect for a fitness trainer to lease the space and use it as a training facility. He stated that it is self-contained with its own restroom so the public can use the space.

Mr. Alter stated that the SDD zone does not name a required unit size, but the Commission thought a lot of the units were too small. He stated that the units are now much larger with the exception of one studio unit. He explained that in order to do this, they had to give up 12 bedrooms, which is a substantial concession that the developer made. Mr. Alter stated that the dimensions are now on the plans and each unit has its own laundry.

Mr. Alter stated that the supplement to the traffic report indicates that the commercial uses they are proposing will not generate any substantial amount of traffic.

Mr. Steele stated that the back area of green space behind the building in the southeast corner has proposed picnic tables and barbecue stations for the residents. He stated that trails and a dog park were considered but may impact the wetlands, so they want to start with the picnic areas and wait to see what the residents want for other amenities.

Mr. Steele stated that there are snow storage areas depicted on the plans and they added a stop sign at the entrance. He stated that the A/C pads behind the units and the foundation plantings in the front have now been added to the plans.

Mr. Alter went over the changes to the unit sizes, listing off the dimensions of the largest and smallest units as well as average sizes.

Commissioner Correia asked how many people can realistically fit in a 1,200 square foot (SF) gym. Mr. Alter stated that for personal training it becomes a function of who they are training and for what purpose. He stated that they hope to lease it to a personal trainer with a following who trains utilizing scheduled appointments throughout the day. Commissioner Correia stated that it is a great way to use the space, to which Chairman Nelson agreed.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if tenants can freely walk to the riverbank. Mr. Steele stated that there is a chain link fence currently in place and pointed out on the site plan where the fence is located.

Chairman Nelson asked if the escarpments are passable to the average person, to which Mr. Steele replied that they are.

Chairman Nelson stated that he still does not see that they are meeting the minimum requirement for square footage. Mr. Steele stated that the adaptive reuse regulations do not have specific requirements and they did the best that they could. Mr. Alter stated that the purpose of the SDD zone is to recognize that there are existing units and they are limited to the building structure the way it is built. He stated that they went as far as they can in terms of unit sizes, and some of the units exceed the size requirements. Mr. Alter reiterated that the SDD regulations do not call out a unit size and requested that the Commission have some flexibility with the unit size.

Chairman Nelson stated that they can get the square footage required by reducing the number of units. Mr. Alter stated that it meets the requirements of the SDD, and this is as far as they can go while still making this project work.

Mr. Petronella asked if there is a waiver for reduction in unit sizes or if they can act on this as-is. Ms. Whitten stated that there are currently no requirements for the SDD for density or unit size. She stated that the applicant made a great attempt to try to make this a viable project for the town and the owner, and that in general housing desires are going smaller so she does not see the problem with this.

Mr. Petronella stated that the square footage of the gymnasium got larger to accommodate the public.

Commissioner Alaimo stated that the plan meets all regulations under the SDD. Chairman Nelson stated that bathrooms are not in the regulations either so someone with a storage unit could add a bathroom to a 10x10 unit and do the same thing. Ms. Whitten stated that this is a Special Permit so the Commission can deny it.

Mr. Steele stated that this property was changed to the SDD zone, which is very specific and only for adaptive reuse. He stated that someone with a storage unit would first have to request a zone change, which the Commission can deny.

Chairman Nelson stated that they are making this residential housing, so the residential requirements should fit. Mr. Alter stated that the building was vacant, deteriorated and underutilized, and it is improper to ask for plans when the applicant is asking for a zone change. Mr. Alter went on to state that this is a Site Plan Approval and the plan meets every element of the regulations for this zone.

Ms. Whitten stated that adaptive reuse regulations assume that the local regulations will not be met, and the applicant is expected to do the best they can with the platform they have to work with. Chairman Nelson stated that they set a precedent for unit sizes with the Hazardville School.

Commissioner Alaimo asked how many bedrooms were in the building when it was a nursing home, to which Mr. Alter replied that there were about 100. Mr. Steele stated that a common corridor takes up a lot of room, which is why it was eliminated. Chairman Nelson explained how having L-shaped units would increase the size of the units.

Mr. Alter requested a moment to confer with his client.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Petronella, to approve SPR# 1858.

The motion failed with a 3-3-0 vote with Commissioners Nelson, Higley and Correia voting against due to the square footages of the units and the precedent that was set with the Hazardville School.

Votes: 3-3-0

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Grillo, to hear PH #3009 at this time.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

New Public Hearings

- a. **PH# 3009** – 11 Pearl Street – Special Permit & Site Plan Review application for the reuse of the former Thompsonville Fire Department building as a mixed-use residential and commercial beer/wine tap room with outdoor seating; Map 24/Lot 65; TD-5 Zone; Patrick & Jeannette Tallarita, applicants; Winter Street Corp., owners. (DoR: 5/27/2021; MOPH: 7/31/2021)

Pat and Jeannette Tallarita, 1400 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission. Mr. Tallarita stated that they would like to turn the second floor of the building to their permanent residence and utilize two bays on the first floor as their garage. He stated that they would like to have a seasonal tap room which will not produce the beer or wine but rather will serve products from local

breweries/wineries along with wood fired pizza. He stated that it is a seasonal operation from mid-spring to mid-fall and will be a part time retirement career.

Chairman Nelson stated that there is also a bnb, which is a problem. Mr. Tallarita stated that he thought nightly rentals are an allowable use in that zone. Ms. Whitten stated that they are allowed to rent rooms. Commissioner Higley stated that they are allowed to rent rooms on a nightly basis but cannot call it an airbnb. Ms. Whitten read a section of the regulations pertaining to the renting of rooms. Mr. Tallarita stated that they will no longer refer to it as an airbnb.

Commissioner Higley stated that this is a wonderful use of the property. She suggested that the applicant specify months rather than saying mid-spring to mid-fall.

Commissioner Higley stated that she would hate to see Caronna's parking lot impacted. Mr. Tallarita stated that he has been in communication with Tony and does not plan to infringe on Caronna's at all.

Commissioner Petronella asked if any exterior renovations are proposed, to which Mr. Tallarita replied that there are none. Mr. Tallarita stated that the only exterior change is that they received a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to add a deck for their personal use.

Commissioner Petronella stated that the project will be a great addition to downtown.

Commissioner Alaimo suggested that the applicant ask for the operation to run year round rather seasonally. Mr. Tallarita stated that they can eliminate the seasonal and the 4 days per week and then do what they want with it.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if the private storage area on the first floor can be expanded upon later. Mr. Tallarita stated that this will be used as their garage.

Chairman Nelson asked if the tap room will be open to the public, to which Mr. Tallarita replied that it will.

Commissioner Alaimo commended the applicants for taking on this project.

Chairman Nelson asked three times if anyone in the public would like to speak; no one came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Grillo, to close the Public Hearing.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

Chairman Nelson stated that he would like to remove any season or time restraints so that the tap room can be utilized all year. Commissioner Higley stated that they will also add the third bay for the brewery.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Petronella, to approve PH# 3009 as amended.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

Chairman Nelson asked when the business would be open, to which Mr. Tallarita replied that the tap room will be open next summer.

Other Business

Extension Request(s)

- a. **PH# 2943** - 0 Shaker Road - Request for a three-year extension of time to pull a building permit (from July 11, 2021 to July 11, 2024), and a three-year extension of time to complete the project (from July 11, 2024 to July 11, 2027); Shaker Pines Fire District #5, owner/applicant; Map 94/Lot 62; I-1 Zone.

Captain Edward Prajzner, 99 Lake Road, stated that they are asking for this extension due to COVID-19.

The Commission voted with no motion or second to approve the extension.

Votes: 6-0-0

- a. Discussion with consultant regarding update of the Enfield Zoning Regulations

Chairman Nelson stated that the consultant had a family emergency. Ms. Whitten stated that the consultant will be at the next meeting.

Commissioner's Correspondence

Commissioner Alaimo asked if there are any updates on the old Mobil station on the corner of Hazard Avenue and Middle Road. Ms. Whitten stated that Blight and Zoning have been working with them as far as violations and she will check on the status.

Chairman Nelson asked why local businesses get fined for displaying A-frame signs but the farmer's market is allowed to do it. Ms. Whitten stated that it came about due to COVID, to which Chairman Nelson replied that the signs are all over town. He stated that it is only fair to allow everyone to do it if the farmer's market can.

Director of Development Services Report

Ms. Whitten stated that the farmer's market is running every Sunday from 10 to 1. She went on to state that there are many beds left for the community garden.

Ms. Whitten stated that the State had approved funding for the train station.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if Winstanley has pulled their building permits yet. Ms. Whitten stated that they are currently posting bonds and in the process of review.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if Staff had received any information back from the traffic study around the mall. Ms. Whitten stated that the data is currently being analyzed and she will forward it to the Commission when she receives it.

Applications to be Received

Ms. Whitten went over the new applications to be received, including the winter farmer's market at 53 Manning Road and Dunkin Donuts façade improvements on Enfield Street.

Opportunities/Unresolved Issues

Ms. Whitten brought up the issue of non-profit housing and how to define it. She stated that there is a church that is interested in putting in non-profit housing. Commissioner Petronella asked if they would be partnering with a developer or doing it on their own, to which Ms. Whitten replied that they would be partnering with a non-profit developer. The Commission discussed the definition of non-profit housing and various examples of non-profit housing. It was decided that Ms. Whitten would find the section pertaining to non-profit housing in the regulations and email it to the Commission.

Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alaimo, to adjourn.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

Prepared by: Elizabeth Bouley

Respectfully Submitted,



Richard Szewczak, Secretary