

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING  
March 20, 2007**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wethersfield Police Department Meeting Room, 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hammer called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Clerk Knecht called roll as follows:

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Excused</b>
Joseph Hammer, Chairman	X		
Margaret Wagner, Vice Chair	X		
Philip Knecht, Clerk	X		
Thomas Harley	X		
Robert Jurasin			X
Earle Munroe	X		
Dorcas McHugh	X		
Richard Roberts	X		
Frederick Petrelli		X	
James Hughes			X
Anthony Homicki	X		
George Oickle	X		

Also present:

Peter Gillespie, Director of Planning and Economic Development  
Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner

Chairman Hammer stated that there were 2 full members not in attendance at the time of roll call. He requested the services of alternate members Commissioner George Oickle and Commissioner Anthony Homicki to serve as full members.

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**P.H. 2.1 APPLICATION NO. 1553-07-Z. Percon, Inc./5th Avenue Motel Seeking a Special Permit to construct an additional eleven (11) units in accordance with Section 5.2.E.7. of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations at 1695 Berlin Turnpike.---TABLED FROM 3-6-07.**

Paul Randazzo, Percon Inc., representing the 5th Avenue Motel, is addressing issues that were not addressed in the

March 6, 2007 meeting. Mr. Randazzo referred to a memo dated February 26, 2007, from Peter Gillespie regarding site plan requirements. Mr. Randazzo did review the changes with the Engineering Department and changes were made to the plan and a new plan was submitted. Mr. Randazzo referred to page 3 of the February 26, 2007 memo regarding the Town Engineers 15 requests. Mr. Randazzo stated that they did satisfy the requests.

Commissioner Munroe stated that he visited the site and it appeared that on Rt.15 there is a driveway. He asked Mr. Randazzo if they were going to leave it as a driveway and stated that he may need to get a permit from the DOT.

Mr. Randazzo stated that the large sign is the main sign for the motel. There is another sign that is a directional sign that represents an arrow to the parking lot if traveling south on Rt. 15. Commissioner Munroe stated that there is a driveway comes off Rt. 5- Rt. 15 ramp. Mr. Randazzo stated that the driveway was not going to change.

Commissioner Munroe asked if they had a permit for the driveway. Mr. Randazzo stated that the driveway is existing. Commissioner Munroe said that there were two commercial driveways. Mr. Randazzo said that the driveways are not part of the scope of work that he is dealing with. Vice Chair Wagner asked if item 6.1K.2 #4, from the memo dated March 16, 2007, from Denise Bradley, regarding the box truck was dealt with. Mr. Randazzo stated that the box truck would not extend over the front end of the truck. If the box truck was backed in, the box truck would be even or there would be 3-4 foot section over the wheels. There will be a curb line with a 3 foot planting bed, 6 foot sidewalk (which overhang only hangs off 5 feet). There is 4 feet between the end of the curb and the overhang.

Vice Chair Wagner asked if the Planning Department has approved the landscaping plan. Mr. Gillespie stated that he just received the landscaping plan this evening. Mr. Randazzo said that he went to Millane Nursery based on the information that they were given. There is a 3 foot planting bed divided into 11 sections. Mr. Randazzo showed the Commission a sketch and names of the trees that they were hoping to put in. He noted that they would also be putting in fabric and bark mulch. Mr. Randazzo also noted that the landscape designer at Millane Nurseries, Gay Kepple, suggested the trees, as she thought that they would withstand traffic. Commissioner Oickle asked if Mr. Randazzo could show where they would be putting the plants. Mr. Randazzo referred to the site plan. Vice Chair Wagner asked him to clarify which ones are trees. Mr. Randazzo stated that none of them were trees, they were all low bushes. Commissioner Oickle asked if there was anything else involved with the landscaping plan. Mr. Gillespie stated that the Planning Department has asked for a bunch of calculations and confirmation of minimum landscape requirements. He noted that he did not see that on the plan and it was not on the sketch. Mr. Randazzo stated that the planting beds would be added to the site.

Commissioner Roberts stated that in addition to the landscaping plan there was a memo dated March 16, 2007 memo from Denise Bradley. Commissioner Roberts wanted to know if any of the issues were still outstanding. Chairman Hammer asked Denise Bradley to comment if all of the items in the memo have been addressed. Ms. Bradley stated that the first three items on the first page are regarding general information that would be added to the site. She noted that she has not received any details on the exterior lighting. Ms. Bradley also noted that on Page 2 there were 6 points made by the Town Engineer. Chairman Hammer asked if the landscape plans that were submitted this evening addressed all of the points that the regulations require. Ms. Bradley stated that no, the landscape plan did not meet the regulation requirements.

Commissioner Oickle asked if the lighting plans were revised. Mr. Gillespie stated that they just received the Cooper Lighting - Lumark details. The only thing that needs to be confirmed is the height of the poles. Mr. Randazzo stated that the height of the poles are 12 feet, full cut-off style fixtures, high- pressure Sodium, Metal Halide lighting, full downcast (nothing above). He noted that there are currently 3 poles on the property and they are proposing to leave the poles, but move them into the landscaped area.

Commissioner Roberts asked if there was anything truly deficient other than the landscaping plan. Mr. Gillespie said that the Commission has the ability to modify the landscaping requirements if the situation warrants it.

Commissioner Oickle noted that he was concerned with the traffic in the area of the motel.

Mr. Gillespie stated that the prime objective of the lighting is that they are full cut-off fixtures and there is not light spill. Commissioner Oickle asked if the parking lot will be repaved. Mr. Randazzo stated that they will be extending

the parking lot by 3 feet.

Chairman Hammer asked if the clientele of the motel will be expected to stay a night or two or longer term. Bharat Rana, owner of the 5th Avenue Motel and Siesta Motel, stated that he expects to have night people as well as Monday thru Friday business people. He noted that he can not judge what will happen. At this time he does not take weekly people since he does not have that many rooms. Chairman Hammer asked if Mr. Rana limits the number of people to occupy each room. Mr. Rana said that he does not limit the number of people in each room, but each room only has one bed. He noted that some units in the new section will have 2 beds. Chairman Hammer asked if there was a desk person on duty 24 hours a day. Mr. Rana stated that he is open almost 24-hours, he may close for a couple of hours.

Chairman Hammer asked if there was enough information to close the hearing. Vice Chair Wagner said that she prefers that they have a landscape plan, not a sketch of bushes. She noted that she would like to see where the bushes would be located around the motel. Vice Chair Wagner stated that she was not comfortable in giving the Planning Department this much responsibility. Although she trusts them, she thinks it's too much of a scope to have them work out. Chairman Hammer noted that he agrees with Vice Chair Wagner.

Vice Chair Wagner asked Mr. Randazzo if he misunderstood what the Commission was requiring. Mr. Randazzo stated that looking at the site, as he sees it, they are adding a building at the opposite end of the parking lot. To the west and north is woods, you can not plant to the south (blacktop), to the east there is a landscaped island that will not be moved. He noted that there are not many places to plant the trees. Mr. Rana stated that the west side had 7-8 bushes, he could not move the snow. All of the bushes were damaged since he could only move the snow to the west. Vice Chair Wagner stated that Commission is supposed to have a vision of what the town should be and want as many of the sites that they are adding to, to look good. She noted that part of their job is to make sure that this new building adds to the look on the Berlin Turnpike. Commissioner Oickle noted that he backed Vice Chair Wagner on her statement. He also stated that the town staff presented them 2 times for a landscaping plan. Commissioner Oickle said that the motel was located in the entryway to town and that the sketch that was presented this evening was not a landscaping plan.

Commissioner Homicki asked if the landscaping plan could be done in two weeks. Mr. Randazzo stated that yes, it could be done. He noted that he used his own judgment, and did not feel the sketch was going to be an issue.

Chairman Hammer asked if Mr. Randazzo could arrange to meet Mr. Gillespie at the site within the next couple of business days. He felt that it was important to involve Mr. Gillespie. Commissioner Homicki asked if the landscaping was the only sensitive issue in the 6 points that were made by the Town Engineer.

Chairman Hammer noted that there was a memo dated March 2, 2007 from Brian O'Connor asking if it was possible to relocate the sign so it will not block the view of Gator Car Wash. Mr. Randazzo stated that if the sign was not placed there, there would be no direction of how to get into the motel.

Chairman Hammer asked if anyone in the public had any comments on the application.

Linda Cosgrove, 110 Brussels Avenue, stated that she listened to Commissioner Oickle talk about trees and Vice Chair Wagner talk about beautification. Ms. Cosgrove noted that Mr. Rana is trying to have a livelihood and the Commission is only worried about the trees. Ms. Cosgrove noted that she feels that the business owners in town should be treated more friendly.

Chairman Hammer asked if there was anyone else in the audience for public comment on the application.

There was no one left in attendance to speak on the application.

Commissioner Thomas Harley made a motion to keep the public hearing open for **APPLICATION NO. 1553-07-Z**. until the next Planning and Zoning meeting on April 4, 2007.

Commissioner Anthony Homicki seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Wagner, Knecht, Roberts, McHugh, Harley, Oickle, Munroe, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

There were several people in attendance at the meeting and Chairman Hammer stated that the applications that were listed on the agenda were for future meetings and were not for public hearing. Most of the people in attendance were interested in the Comstocke Ferre application. Commissioner Homicki stated that the Commission was not discussing upcoming business. Commissioner Roberts noted that in the future the agenda could be worded in such a way that it would not confuse people. Chairman Hammer suggested using Upcoming Business- Not for Discussion. Chairman Hammer noted that the parties that were interested in the Comstocke Ferre plan should call the zoning office a few days before the meeting to make sure that the application will be coming up. Commissioner McHugh clarified that the application is in the zoning department and that the Commission has not seen it yet.

Chairman Hammer apologized to the audience about any misunderstandings regarding the agenda.

## **2.2 Discussion of Rules and Procedures.**

Mr. Gillespie noted that the Rules and Procedures have been looked at two times before and there were certain issues that the Commission wanted addressed. The Commission was provided with a new version of the Rules and Procedures dated February 13, 2007. The revised copy highlighted the changes that were made.

The changes are as follows:

Article II, Sec. 2, the language that include, without limitations, was added.

Article II, Sec. 2.d, added specific authority of ability to review site plans.

Article IV, Sec. 5, revised language to be clearer.

Article VII, Sec. 5, changed the affirmative vote of 5 members is required.

Article VII, Sec. 7, relocated from another section.

Article VII, Sec. 9, modified statutory reference.

Article VII, Sec. 12, changed to majority vote of the members present, as long as five or more members are present.

Article VIII, Sec. 2, deleted personal interest.

Article, XI, Sec. 6, deleted public comment, since addressed at other times.

Commissioner Roberts suggested that Item k, under Article XI, Sec.6 be removed.

Article XI, Sec. 9, added establish a reasonable limit, and the word time.

Article XV, Sec. 1, changed shall to should.

Article XVI, Sec. 3, deleted wording about the functions of the Planning Department.

Article XVII, changed to the 5 vote rule to be consistent throughout the document.

Commissioner George Oickle motioned to adopt the Rules and Regulations.

Commissioner Richard Roberts seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Wagner, Knecht, Roberts, McHugh, Harley, Oickle, Munroe, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

### **2.3 Discussion of Rear Lots.**

Mr. Gillespie stated that the Commission has discussed this several times before. He noted that last time there was a specific interest in trying to determine how much property in town the new regulations might impact. Mr. Gillespie said that the town does have a Geographic Information System (GIS) which does not have the advanced capabilities that he would have liked it to have.

Mr. Gillespie said that through his analysis it looks like there are 15-20 properties that could potentially qualify under new regulations. He noted that the large properties that could be subdivided through the conventional lot requirements were excluded from the analysis. Mr. Gillespie stated that in summary, this would allow individuals to come to the Commission through the special permit process. The special permit process does require public hearing and a notice to neighbors within 300 feet.

Mr. Gillespie summarized Items 1-11 in the memo dated January 12, 2007 regarding Rear Lots.

Mr. Gillespie stated that they looked at other towns in the area to see which ones permit these types of things as well as the criteria. He noted that the regulations have not been substantially modified since the Commission has last looked at them back on January 16, 2007. The language regulations were fine tuned.

Commissioner Homicki asked if Mr. Gillespie referenced the two or more adjacent access strips. Mr. Gillespie stated that he felt that it was definitely something that the Commission should talk about. Commissioner Roberts stated that was inclined to say that 2 is OK, but not more than 2. Commissioner Oickle asked Mr. Gillespie why the front yards on Wolcott Hill are different from the others. Mr. Gillespie said that he believed that in the previous subdivision for those particular lots there was a different setback established.

Mr. Gillespie stated that sketches would help to define the rear lot measurements. The Commission discussed the language in the memo dated January 12, 2007 regarding rear lots.

Mr. Gillespie stated that with the language changes made this evening, there would be a possibility to move this to a public hearing and public discussion to gather the pros and cons of allowing rear lots in town.

Commissioner George Oickle motioned to move discussion to a public hearing with the changes that were suggested this evening.

Commissioner Richard Roberts seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Wagner, Knecht, Roberts, McHugh, Harley, Oickle, Munroe, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Hammer said that there was No New Business.

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **4.1 Discussion of Bus Shelters.**

Mr. Gillespie stated that the town has been working with Rocky Hill, for the Silas Deane Revitalization plan. They have been talking about installing new bus shelters up and down the highway corridor. He noted that the CRCOG and Connecticut Transit are also discussing the issue of bus shelters throughout the region.

Wethersfield and Rocky Hill have narrowed in on 2 different style bus shelters. The two styles are The Lancaster and the Garden City. The Garden City is the more ornate of the two. The objective is to remove all existing bus shelters and replace them with a new consistent style. Mr. Gillespie wanted to see if there were any strong feelings with the Planning and Zoning Commission before they took this to the next level which is to potentially pursue funding, continue to talk with Connecticut Transit. He noted that one wrinkle is the Connecticut Transit has potentially agreed to maintain the bus shelters throughout the region; however they need a revenue source to fund it. They have discussed putting advertising on the bus shelters. Mr. Gillespie stated that many of the towns were very much opposed to compromising the bus shelters with advertising.

Chairman Hammer asked if the town or the bus company would own the bus shelters. Mr. Gillespie said that they are still not sure. At this time the town owns the bus shelters. Chairman Hammer asked if there was a difference in cost between the 2 styles of bus shelters. Mr. Gillespie stated that they are similar in cost. The bus shelters are approximately \$10,000 each. They are made of a special glass that is tamper resistant. The dimensions are 4'x9' (Garden City) and 4'x10' (Lancaster) of the 2 styles shown. Chairman Hammer noted that he felt the 4'x10' is a little large for some locations. Mr. Gillespie noted that he did not sense any strong feelings from the Commission regarding the bus shelters. That was his main objective this evening.

#### **5. MINUTES**

##### **5.1 Minutes of the March 6, 2007 meeting.**

Commissioner Richard Roberts motioned to APPROVE [the March 6, 2007 meeting minutes.](#)

Commissioner Phillip Knecht seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (8-0-1)

Aye: Wagner, Knecht, Roberts, McHugh, Harley, Oickle, Homicki, Munroe

Nay: None

Abst: Hammer

#### **6. STAFF REPORTS**

Mr. Gillespie reminded the Commission about the dinner Thursday night.

#### **7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING.**

Carol Modugno, owns property on Thornbush Road, has a question on item #1 of the rear lot regulations. She noted that she was concerned about side and rear lot setbacks. Ms. Modugno asked about the AA zone, does it need to be 160 feet frontage, not including the 25 foot access. Mr. Gillespie stated yes, it would have to be 110 feet plus the 25

feet. Need to maintain the minimum lot size for the zone plus the 25 foot access strip, theoretically the minimum amount of frontage for the lot to qualify. He noted that this was separate from minimum lot size and some of the other things.

Chairman Hammer thanked Ms. Modugno for her comments.

There was no one else in attendance for public comments.

## 8. CORRESPONDENCE

**8.1** A copy of the Property Maintenance List

**8.2** A letter dated March 7, 2007, to Joseph Hammer from Carol Modugno regarding rear lots.

**8.3** A letter dated March 9, 2007, to Peter Gillespie from John Tartaglia regarding 295 Ridge Road.

**8.4** An invitation to the Preserve America Community Forum on Wednesday, March 21, 2007, 7:00 p.m. at Keeney Hall.

## 9. UPCOMING BUSINESS

**P.H. 9.1 APPLICATION NO. 1552-07-Z. CP Equity Holding, LLC** Seeking a Special Permit, in accordance with Section 5.2.A.2. of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations, to renovate existing structures, construct an additional building, convert property into a mixed retail, office and residential development and associated site improvements at 249-263 Main Street.

**9.2 APPLICATION NO. 1556-07-Z. Century 21 Access** Seeking Site Plan and Design Review for an electronic message center located at 449 Silas Deane Highway.

**P.H. 9.3 APPLICATION NO. 1557-97-Z. Violet Frajko** Seeking a Special Permit, in accordance with Section 3.5.2. of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations, to operate a home occupation at 190 Beverly Road.

**9.4 APPLICATION NO. 1558-07-Z. Vinnie DeFillipo** Seeking Site Plan and Design Review to construct two (2) new structures for office use and associated site improvements at 1912 Berlin Turnpike.

**P.H. 9.5 APPLICATION NO. 1559-07-Z. CP Equity Holding, LLC** Seeking a Change of Zone from B Residence to Village Business (VB) Zone at 249-263 Main Street.

## ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Anthony Homicki motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Earle Munroe seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Wagner, Knecht, Roberts, McHugh, Harley, Oickle, Homicki, Munroe

Nay: None

Abst: None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Lori Keleher  
Planning and Zoning Recording Secretary

