

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING
July 18, 2006**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday, July 18, 2006 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.

ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Hammer asked Clerk Knecht to call roll as follows.

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

Also present:

Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner
Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner

The commission decided to have Commissioner Homicki as the voting alternate.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Hammer said that there was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Organization of the Planning and Zoning Commission

Election of Officers

a. Chairman

Commissioner Jurasin said that he would like to nominate Joseph Hammer for what he had done last year. He had done a great job and he thinks that they need him to take the commission through the next year. Commissioner Petrelli seconded the motion. Chairman Hammer said that he would be glad to serve for another year and he appreciates the nomination.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

b. Vice Chairman

Commissioner McHugh said that she would like to nominate Margaret Wagner. She said that she would be a wonderful backup to Chairman Hammer and she gets to the point and is concise and has the experience for the job.

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

c. Clerk

Chairman Hammer said that he would like to nominate Philip Knecht for the position of Clerk. Commissioner McHugh seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

Authorization of Signatures

a. Authorization of Peter D. Gillespie to sign notices for Commission

Commissioner McHugh made a motion to authorize Peter D. Gillespie to sign notices for the commission. Commissioner Homicki seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

b. Authorization of Michael J. Turner to sign notices for Commission

Commissioner Jurasin made a motion to authorize Michael J. Turner to sign notices for the Commission. Commissioner Homicki seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

Ex Officio Members

a. Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager as Ex Officio Member

Chairman Hammer said that no motion was necessary.

Appointment to Capitol Region Council of Governments

a. Nomination and election of representative and alternate to the Regional Planning Commission of CROG

Chairman Hammer said that Commissioner Jurasin is the principle and Commissioner Wagner is the alternate. Chairman Hammer asked if Commissioner Jurasin would like to continue and he agreed. Chairman Hammer nominated Robert Jurasin as the representative to CROG. Commissioner Knecht seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

Chairman Hammer asked Commissioner Wagner if she would like to continue as the alternate. Commissioner Wagner said that she would. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to nominate Margaret Wagner as the alternate representative to CROG. Commissioner Homicki seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

Appointment to Economic Development and Improvement Commission

a. Nomination and election of liaison to the Economic Development and Improvement Commission

Chairman Hammer asked Commissioner Knecht if he would like to continue and he said that he would. Chairman Hammer made a motion to nominate Philip Knecht as the liaison to the Economic Development and Improvement Commission. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

Review of Commission Rules and Procedures

a. Commission Rules and Procedures to be readopted

Chairman Hammer asked for a motion to readopt the rules and procedures. Commissioner McHugh said that the commission was going to look at and make minor changes and therefore asked if the motion could not move forward now but in the near future when the Staff has time to look at them. Chairman Hammer asked that they temporarily adopt the rules and procedures so that they don't lapse. Commissioner McHugh made a motion to do so. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

Chairman Hammer announced that they would be hearing a presentation on the Silas Deane Highway from Fuss and O'Neill and welcomed the members of the Rocky Hill Planning and Zoning Commission who were present in the audience.

APPLICATION NO. 1528-06-Z. John Anagnos Seeking Site Plan and Design Review for an addition, renovations and relocation of seating at 884 Silas Deane Highway.

Dante Boffi of Dante Boffi Architects was present to represent the owner John Anagnos. He gave a brief outline of the proposed project. He said that there is an existing concrete loading dock approximately 25' x 26 1/2' deep unscreened and 95% of the produce is loaded and unloaded there. He said that they deal with retail and restaurant seafood. He said that they would like to enclose the loading dock in a concrete block shell and enclose the backside with the exception of three overhead doors. He said that they are also proposing a second story office extension which would involve putting a hole through the second floor wall and the extension would sit on top of the enclosed loading dock. Mr. Boffi said that currently there is 1100 s.f. of office space and they would like to scale that down to 600 s.f. in the new space. He said that they would then provide an indoor dining area with more of a sit down feel. It would have no table service, just window service with a place to sit down in a dining room. They would add two additional accessible bathrooms one male and one female and there would be 73 total seats for both the indoor and outdoor dining areas. He said that the parking plan submitted goes through each proposed use and the corresponding parking. The existing kitchen would also be expanded by 75% by adding another grill, fryolator, and other typical things found in a commercial kitchen. There would be two service counters and they would relocate the aquarium as a backdrop to the service counters. Mr. Boffi showed the commissioners the elevation and pointed out the side entry and proposed second floor office space. He also showed the site concept plan with proposed landscaping.

Mr. Boffi said that one month ago their application for outdoor dining was approved and the owner had selected a spot in the rear corner of the lot, which the commission questioned as being feasible. The commissioners had mentioned places in the front of the lot. He took that back to the owner and they are now proposing creating an outdoor dining

terrace with landscaping to help beautify the street. Right now there is zero green space on the lot. They are proposing a front entry at the corner and in front of the proposed dining area an outdoor terraced patio with plantings. He said that there is stonework that is a requirement of the Design Review Committee and he has talked with the owner about specific plantings that are listed for the Silas Deane Highway. He said that along the border there would be a low stone wall 18 - 24" in height. Also there would be a slope from the Silas Deane Highway to the property. They would provide a decorative berm with a shade tree and at the existing curbcuts they would take the first space out and put in the same pavers to be used on the terrace to give some life to the curb. Mr. Boffi said that the state owned area in front of the building is not their property but they are trying to get the state to turn the bituminous areas to grass areas, however there are no assurances on a timeframe to help with the curb appeal.

Mr. Boffi then described the addition. He said that the building is a mixture of a lot of different types of architecture. It is primarily a painted block building therefore they are trying to focus on the corner. It would be set back 150' from the road and give the illusion of a floating cube. He said that it would be a paneled cube painted in the same gold color of the trucks. This would give the building more character and pop and would help the overall structure. Right now the building is not a beauty and it is not the type of construction that would lend itself to brick or gabled roofs. He said that the rest of the building would remain blue-gray. This ended Mr. Boffi's presentation.

Commissioner Jurasin asked what the square footage of the expansion would be. Mr. Boffi said that the second floor would be 630 s.f. and the enclosure would be 530 s.f. but there would be no footprint change since the proposed expansion is on the existing footprint. Commissioner Oickle asked about the existing area of the building. Mr. Boffi said that it is 12,000 s.f. and that much of that is warehouse (about 9,000 s.f.).

Commissioner Jurasin asked given the expansion, how they would treat all of the parking required. Mr. Gillespie said that they would look at the survey submitted. Mr. Boffi said that the owner pays \$1000 per year for the use of the space along the Porch & Patio property, however they have enough real estate that if the new owner took exception to the agreement that they could restripe their parking and lose only three spaces. Commissioner Jurasin asked if someone were to park in the three spaces near the truck aisle how would they get out. He asked if they could restripe those spaces at 90 degrees. He said that they have the opportunity to look at the lot because right now it is confusing and difficult to maneuver. He asked that they follow up and make it a more traditional lot. He said that the prints are not clear on the landscaping in front and can they do more to beautify the lot. Mr. Boffi said that the adjacent Burger King has done a nice job with their landscaping and that there are two schools of thought, either to dot the landscape consistently or bunch moments together. He said that they are creating a moment in front of the store where all that is there now is blacktop, and they would use the Silas Deane plan to call out the landscaping.

Mr. Gillespie said that they had received the revised drawing on Friday and that the staff has not had the opportunity to review it yet so he can't say if the palate matches and he is not comfortable saying if the plan is ok. Commissioner Jurasin said that they need to do a lot more to beautify the frontage and complement and improve the site parking. He said that if they add more landscaping and make it clearer to look at the frontage and parking it would be a friendlier environment. Mr. Boffi said that they have 20 more spaces than they need, the primary spaces are in the front and the ones in the rear go unused. Commissioner Jurasin said that he likes the plan to put parking in the back because everyone wants to park in the front. Mr. Boffi said that the topography is difficult.

Commissioner Wagner said that originally there was just a plan for outdoor seating. Mr. Boffi said that was just the first part of the proposal and this is part two. Commissioner Wagner asked if there would be 73 seats total. Mr. Boffi said that would be the total of inside and outside seats. Commissioner Wagner said that they are losing four spaces off of the front and she assumes that those employees would be parking in the rear. Mr. Boffi said that the calculations presented are a result of the new parking required. The total would have been 114+ because they eliminated two in the front. Commissioner Wagner asked that they show a parking plan and calculations with the existing situation and the proposed. Mr. Boffi said that they would and also said that they would be losing six spaces overall. Commissioner Wagner said that it is an opportunity to make City Fish look great and they want them to stay and help with the Silas Deane Highway. She said that she is not only concerned about the parking maneuverability, but would also like to see something done to the building. She said that it is a great opportunity to make the whole façade pretty instead of just one part.

Commissioner Oickle said that he echoes Commissioner Wagner's comments and he is well aware of what City Fish means to Wethersfield. He asked if there were comments from the Design Review Committee. Mr. Gillespie said that they did get review and approval from the Design Review Committee with recommendations including some being made like the open spaces, however the correspondence is not in the file. Commissioner Oickle said that he was surprised that they didn't get it and asked if the colors matched. Mr. Boffi said that the building is vast and that the color has been there for a while and that the building is a mishmash of different eras and designs. Therefore they are trying to shock it with the geometry of the cube.

Commissioner Oickle asked if the block pavers proposed for the parking lot would make it difficult to get in and out of the lot. He said that it wouldn't make it any less steep. He also asked if the retail door would be in the same location and suggested that they move the retail door. He also asked how much of the lot is proposed as green space. Mr. Boffi said that 10% is proposed as green counting the rear strip. Commissioner Oickle said that another applicant at Suny's wanted to put dining outside on the Silas Deane Highway with a barrier. He asked who would want to sit without umbrellas or trees and it doesn't make sense to him to be below the surface of the Silas Deane Highway. Mr. Boffi said that the reason for the plantings is to provide significant tree cover and there would be an 18" stone wall and a 4' high tree line. He agreed that the Silas Deane Highway is noisy and that thankfully they are near the intersection so there is more stopping. They are looking to make this a shrouded garden space. Commissioner Oickle asked if the State Traffic Commission had seen this. Mr. Boffi said no.

Commissioner Munroe also asked about the comments from the Design Review Committee as he is curious about the incompatibility of the materials and color of the outside of the building. Mr. Boffi said that at the second Design Review Committee meeting he brought another design scheme and they unanimously liked the other one with the cube. He said that the premise is pure geometry and the hope is that the design and massing stays with the building even if the color changes. He said that it would be a termination of a ghastly two story addition.

Commissioner Munroe said that his understanding was that site plan review plans had to be signed by an architect or engineer. Mr. Gillespie said that typically they don't ask for live seals on a plan review set.

Commissioner Knecht asked if there would be an aquarium built inside and if they would provide educational programs. Mr. Boffi said that the existing aquarium would be relocated and a sister aquarium added for people to see while they are in line for food. He said that they often host class field trips so maybe it would provide an educational benefit.

Commissioner McHugh asked the applicant to review the loading dock change and direction. Mr. Boffi said that they are closing two docks out of four and those docks would only receive small box trucks. Most of the loading is done in the rear. Also part of the proposed addition will screen the 18 wheelers. Commissioner McHugh said that the loading would improve behind the new addition and asked if they would park the trucks on the CL&P property. Mr. Boffi said that they have an agreement to use that area in the far rear corner and the trucks come in from Maple Street via a Right-of-Way and legal agreement. He said that the large trucks rarely come in from the front. Also the owner is trying to delineate the back half of the lot for parking and employees and the front half for customers. He said that the owner would like to beautify the property and give back some curb appeal. He said that the parking has been there in its current state and he wonders how successful they will be at reorganizing the parking.

Commissioner McHugh agreed with Commissioner Oickle that the retail entrance should be improved. Mr. Boffi said that the entrance in the front is not accessible, and the existing retail entrance is accessible. Commissioner McHugh said that she values the owner and thinks that he does a wonderful job and she would like to see the façade toward the Silas Deane Highway improved. Commissioner Oickle said that he would like to see this proposal go to the State Traffic Commission because it is a difficult location and you can get mixed up in the left turn lane. Commissioner Jurasin said that the development isn't big enough to warrant STC effort and that it is different than going to the district. He said that they are not touching the existing so they don't have to go to the district.

Chairman Hammer said that the commissioners brought up some good points and said that they would like some additional information including traffic circulation and striping. He said that he has trouble visualizing the proposed elevation and said that the rendering doesn't provide the full flavor just a little snapshot. He said that it would be very

visible and they can't force the owner to use certain colors but he would like to see a fully colored rendering to see what it would look like. He asked about parking with 600 s.f. of retail and four parking spaces lost, would there be more customers. He said that he has a concern with the restaurant people and the retail customers adding to the parking. Mr. Boffi said that the 20 extra spaces are needed. Chairman Hammer wondered if this would be enough. Mr. Boffi said that the parking requirements calculate a worst case scenario and that the worst case for the employees is opposite the time of the worst case for customers. The majority of employees are there before the hours of operation and before the dinner crowd. The worst case for employees is 20, most of the time there are 8-9. Many of the employees are two per truck then they go to another delivery.

Commissioner Jurasin said that the site plan has no name on it and should have improvements. Chairman Hammer suggested that the applicant come back with more information and drawings with options on parking and full staff review. The commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Wagner said that she thought that the restaurant and dining area would only be used at noon. Mr. Boffi said that they would be used during the hours of operation and that won't change. Commissioner Jurasin agreed that it was implied that the outdoor dining would only be used at noon. Mr. Boffi said that the hours of operation are until 6 or 7 so it would be an early dinner but the eating areas would be open during the hours of operation.

Chairman Hammer suggested that Mr. Boffi contact Mr. Gillespie to make sure that he covers all of the bases before the next meeting. Mr. Boffi said that he would.

Commissioner Harley said to clarify that the DOT is not going to come out and remove the pavement. He said that if the applicant would like to do something he should show it on plans and get the permit from the district office. Mr. Boffi said that the owner is in conversation with the district office but he got some feedback from the Design Review Committee and he hoped that they knew that the project wouldn't hinge on that space being changed.

Commissioner Munroe asked when they needed to begin. Mr. Boffi said that right now it is wasted space that they don't need and they want to start ASAP. Commissioner Munroe asked about a construction schedule. Mr. Boffi said that it would be a four month window and realistically begin in the fall.

Commissioner Knecht asked if they expect an increase in business. Mr. Boffi said that there is no indication.

Commissioner Jurasin made a motion to table the application. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

APPLICATION NO. 1531-06-Z. Hometown Developers, LLC Seeking a Zone Change from Office (O) Zone and General Business (GB) Zone to Special Residential Development (SRD) to allow the construction of twenty-one (21) active adult units at 91 Nott Street.

John Harvey presented the application on behalf of the applicants Mark Trahan and Dan D'Addeo. He said that also present were Corey Garrow and Kevin Johnson, engineers from Close, Jensen and Miller and Richard Morris, the architect on the project.

Mr. Harvey said that they were present for a public hearing on the proposed zone change from two business zones, Office Zone and General Business Zone to the Special Residential Development zone. He said that the hatched area shown on the proposed zone change map was incorrect it is too far to the east of the property line and needs to be corrected. He then described the limits of the property and the abutters. He handed out a packet of information to each commissioner which included the legal notice and aerial photos. He said that the property was a truck terminal and the applicants have addressed environmental issues. He said that the history of the site can be seen in the submission on

the three cards taken from the town records. There were three proposals for the property. The first was for office in 1985, the second for three-story office in 1988 both of these were approved but never built. The third was for a paving contractor in 1990 which was withdrawn. He said that he is guessing that it was withdrawn because of opposition by the neighbors. He said that now they would like to try to get the zone changed to allow for active adult housing. The applicant plans to put 21 single family detached homes on the site. He said that he is an advocate for the developer but the residential neighborhood is in favor of this. He said that there are no hot issues, no lighting concerns, there would be significantly less noise, traffic and it would preserve and enhance the surrounding residential property values. Mr. Harvey said that from the town's point of view it is a needed use, a copy of the 2000 Plan of Development is in the handout and it says that the town has the oldest population and it is needed. He said that amendments were suggested and were done and now what is being proposed meets the housing goals. He said that plan calls for the opportunity to create transitional higher density housing and that is exactly what is being proposed. He said that this is the only active adult proposal where the residents would be able to walk to services like Dunkin' Donuts and shopping and there is a need without placing a burden on the tax services. He said that the revenue would exceed that for a commercial use and the residential character is left intact. Mr. Harvey mentioned that he also included an excerpt of the zoning regulations which talk about the two step process, requiring a zone change then site plan approval later. He said that there is no evidence to support that there would be a negative impact on the abutters.

Mr. Harvey then introduced Mark Trahan. Mr. Trahan said that he is thankful to the commission for hearing the proposal. He said that the overall project clinically makes sense. They have already made a sizeable investment and everyone that they have talked to said that people in Wethersfield are looking for this type of development. He said that it is a necessary project. He said that he hopes that the rendering picks up the spirit of Old Wethersfield and that they feel that they are in Old Wethersfield even though they are separated by the railroad tracks. Mr. Trahan then described the elevations and said that the first home is a Hubbard designed home and that the homes are made not to look like a development. He said that they want to capture the nuances of Wethersfield and that they would like to build a traditional street that fits anywhere in Wethersfield or Old Wethersfield. He said that they superimposed Hubbard Place on the site and that the setbacks, etc. were essentially the same. Mr. Trahan said that 35% of the population is 55 and over and that these demographics have a need for this project. He said that they viewed the 55 and over communities in the surrounding towns and they are pricey. In Rocky Hill, they are \$375,000 or more and Glastonbury they are \$500,000 or more. He said that the price point that they are proposing has a market and they would be smaller homes and have zero steps into the buildings. He is hoping that the home would grow with the occupant. He said that the project is needed and first in and he talked with the abutters and got replies that they were glad that something is being done with the property because it is currently unsafe and fires are set, etc.

He said that turning the land into something makes sense. They thought that there were two tanks with issues and they found four tanks, removed close to 1800 tons of contaminated soil which was taken to Chicopee to be remediated. They didn't know how much investment they would need to get the property ready to build, but it was more than they thought. Mr. Trahan said that they are asking the commission to consider the look and feel of the development and see if it makes sense. He said that the population served will get a lot.

Richard Morris, the architect for the project then described the units. He said that he wished every developer that he interacted with had the attitude of this developer. He said that they were asked to participate in placemaking and evaluate what is good for the town. He said that they didn't want a monotonous development, but rather a place that looked like it had grown over time. Mr. Morris said that they studied the surrounding area and looked at pleasant blocks. They are planning 1200 s.f. homes close together to create a hometown feel. Typically, these style houses would be close together and they plan to use sidewalks, lights and lampposts to help with the feeling. He said that the topography is ideal, it is flat which will lend itself to zero clearances for access and the utilities would be buried between homes. He said that they designed four units but with the proposed materials, cladding and arrangement, no two homes would be the alike. They are looking at vinyl shake or HardiPlank to communicate a heavy weight and there are various roof styles to achieve the objective.

Chairman Hammer asked for a description of the upstairs and downstairs of a typical unit. Mr. Morris said that they would have two bedrooms and a den and the dormers in the upstairs may be an option to create a bonus room or storage. However, the dormers were mainly designed to break up the roofline. Mr. Trahan said that the first floor would be the main floor where 99% of the use would be. He said that the upstairs would be mainly for storage.

Commissioner Jurasin said that he would like to look at the trees planned on the street but there is no landscape plan or lighting plan. Mr. Gillespie said that it has not been developed since it is a zone change application. Mr. Morris said that the landscaping and plantings are an integral part of the design and that some of the concept plans do include plantings. He said that the intent is that every other parcel would have specimen trees, there would be a break in the center of the street and at the end of the cul-de-sac for public space. Commissioner Jurasin asked if the utilities would be underground. Mr. Morris said that they would. Commissioner Jurasin asked since it is age restricted, would there be sidewalks on both sides. Mr. Morris said that they were limited by the budget and asked to see what was viable with a one sidewalk scheme. Mr. Trahan said that the traffic on that road would be at a minimum because it is a private road and one sidewalk is plenty, they would like to make it look proper. Mr. D'addeo added that two sidewalks forces a lot of hard surface. Mr. Trahan said that they would be willing to work with the commission.

Chairman Hammer asked Mr. Gillespie to remind the commission about the two step procedure for a zone change. Mr. Gillespie said that a zone change to Special Residential Development requires a two step approval process, the application for the zone change which only requires a conceptual site plan. The zone change approval cannot be conditioned, however, it can be based upon 21 +/- units on a cul-de-sac as the attached plan illustrates. The detailed site plan review requires the developer to go back to wetlands and once the site plan is approved they are obligated to come back with the site plan with all of the details including street trees, sidewalks, drainage, lighting, etc. Chairman Hammer asked if this application needed Historic District approval. Mr. Gillespie said that the railroad tracks are the boundary, so it did not. Commissioner Knecht asked about the soil at the site. Mr. Gillespie said that it has been remediated. Mr. D'addeo said that there were four tanks removed from the site and over time there was some spillage. They hired a LEP, licensed environmental practitioner who is certified to determine the clean vs. contaminated soil and they sent the material to a testing lab to verify the tests. They pulled 1800 tons of material from the site and carted it to Chicopee where they take the dirt and burn the contaminants and reuse the dirt in asphalt. The site is now clean. Commissioner Knecht asked if they had approval from the DEP. Mr. D'addeo said that they did and that the environmental consultant documented every stage of the process and that they are still finishing the testing. He said that the fluids have been removed from the tanks and documented.

Chairman Hammer asked if any members of the public were present to speak about the proposal. Seeing none, he asked if the commissioners had any questions.

Commissioner Harley said that they have seen this a couple of times now and that they agreed to consider this application in two steps contrary to the way that they have discussed other cases in the past. Commissioner Jurasin said that he was missing from the second application presented but is there categorical evidence that they can't put that number of units once the zone is changed. Chairman Hammer said that once they apply for a zone change, the regulations distinguish that they can be approved once the scheme is approved. Mr. Gillespie said that there is no conditional zone change so there is no specification for a number of units. However there is a level of comfort needed that the concept is suitable for the property. He said that the testimony of the applicant and the density illustrated is part of the record and the zone change and decision is based on the proposed character. He said that legally they can't say exactly what is proposed.

Chairman Hammer asked for a consensus. Commissioner Jurasin asked how many units could be at the site. Mr. Gillespie said 30 units. Commissioner Jurasin asked if it could go up. Mr. Gillespie said that they could apply for site plan approval for single family homes with 2 1/2 stories. Commissioner Jurasin asked what if they lose 11 homes when they put sidewalks in on both sides. Mr. Trahan said that the sidewalk will go in if the PZC says so. Commissioner Jurasin said that there are a lot of other things that without full review are difficult to determine.

Mr. D'addeo said that they went to develop the property and asked Mr. Gillespie what would be a good use and if there are two sidewalks then it would be a lot of pavement. They determined that it made more sense with one sidewalk and he understands that there are typical issues that affect a site plan. Commissioner Hughes said that the last conversation was an overwhelming response that thank goodness they want to do something with this property. The preexisting use was a trucking company and this developer is doing a tremendous thing. He is confident with what they are doing and he thinks that it has been an eyesore for a long time. Mr. Harvey said that they won't come in with a site plan. Chairman Hammer asked why and if it was because of resources. Mr. Harvey said that it was significant money to go through the process and come in with both.

Commissioner Petrelli said that it seems that the first issue is that business won't fly on that property. Also, it is blighted and in need of a zone change to start and if they are not required to give the site plan now then they don't have to grant the site plan approval. Mr. Gillespie said that the commission can only reject the site plan application if it doesn't meet the site plan requirements. Commissioner Jurasin said that as of right they could build 30 narrow buildings and the commission has to approve it. Chairman Hammer said that if they approve it based on the conceptual site plan of 21 units and they change the regulations to get it all in together then they could reject more than 22 units. Commissioner Jurasin said that they can't do that and the applicant has also acknowledged that they don't have the intention to build more units than they have shown. Commissioner Oickle asked if there was case law on the matter. Chairman Hammer said that he hasn't looked into it. Commissioner Oickle said that he doesn't like this approach. He said that they could be burned by the regulations and that they should require the site plan with the zone change so that they know what they are going to get. He said that there is a history of a floating zone for this type of housing. Chairman Hammer said that the regulations say what they say and he would like to get a consensus before they proceed with a vote to approve or maybe deny without prejudice.

Commissioner Harley said that he would like to proceed and that he is comfortable with this proposal and that they have discussed that the site constraints will dictate the density of the lot. Commissioner Munroe said that they spent more than a year on the regulations and that it doesn't say that the applicant needs to comply with the site plan application and zone change at the same time. Commissioner Knecht said that he is comfortable with proceeding. Commissioner McHugh said that she thinks good points were made and maybe in the future they should take some time to look at the regulations. Commissioner Wagner said that she would approve the zone change. Commissioner Homicki said that in the extensive report from Fuss and O'Neill one of the most critical areas that the town is wrestling with is the transition from commercial to residential. While he doesn't like to see commercial use absorbed, he thinks that this is a good proposal. Commissioner Petrelli said that he approves.

Chairman Hammer said that they will proceed with the zone change application. Commissioner Petrelli said that there is no question that he would like to see an all encompassing site plan when it is proposed, but he knows Mr. Harvey and he accepts his veracity. He has stated that they will adhere to 21 units. Chairman Hammer said that the maximum lot coverage in business or office is 40% or 50%. He asked what the coverage would be with this proposal. Mr. Garrow, an engineer for the project said that it would be less than 50%.

Commissioner Jurasin said that he would like to see all of the utilities are underground except for decorative street lighting, the landscape plan conform to the regulations, the cul-de-sac will have the proper turning radius for emergency vehicles and sidewalks on both sides. He said that given the nature of the development the stormwater management should be taken care of and he doesn't know the slope.

Commissioner Oickle asked what the price range of the units would be and if there was any state or federal subsidy. Mr. Trahan said that they would be \$270,000 to \$300,000 depending on the market and there is no federal subsidy. Commissioner Oickle asked the applicant to make sure that the common areas would be maintained. He said that he likes the dormers and the design with different renderings and views. He asked them to come in with a plan with two sidewalks and the location of the wetlands. Mr. Trahan said that yes he would provide the location of the wetlands. Commissioner Oickle asked if they were filled wetlands. Mr. Trahan said that he didn't know. Commissioner Oickle said that he glanced at the Silas Deane plan and noticed a lot of road in the back and wondered if it was a service road.

Chairman Hammer asked about the error on the zone change map. Mr. Harvey said that the application should be amended to shrink down the area to be changed to the property lines. Mr. Gillespie explained that they often zone to the middle of the railroad tracks. Commissioner Jurasin asked if the vision had been adopted. Mr. Gillespie said that it had not.

Commissioner Wagner said that they know from history that the parcel has tried to be developed as commercial three times and it originally was commercial. She said that three other proposals all failed to happen and why do they think that commercial would go there now. Also, she said that the residential property owners may not want it. She made a motion to approve the Special Residential Development zone change for use as an over 55 development of single family homes as presented. Chairman Hammer suggested that they include a reference to the concept plan. The commissioners realized that the public hearing had not been closed.

Commissioner McHugh made a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Petrelli seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: None

Abst: None

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve application 1531-06-Z for Hometown Developers zone change from office and general business to Special Residential Development to allow the construction of twenty one active adult units at 91 Nott Street, based upon the concept plan dated June 19, 2006 p. 2/2.

Commissioner Petrelli seconded the motion.

Chairman Hammer added a reference that the applicant acknowledged that it may not exceed twenty one units.

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

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki

Nay: Jurasin

Abst: None

OTHER BUSINESS

PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW - Paul Randazzo Seeking a Zone Change from C Residence Zone to General Business (GB) Zone to allow the construction of a mixed use structure at 277/Lot #38/287 Silas Deane Highway.

This matter was taken off of the agenda.

Presentation of the Silas Deane Highway Master Plan

Chairman Hammer announced that some members of the Rocky Hill Planning and Zoning were present and asked them to introduce themselves.

Kim Richie, Director of Planning and Building for Rocky Hill

Barry Goldberg, Chairman of Planning and Zoning for Rocky Hill

Frank Morse, Planning and Zoning for Rocky Hill

Tony DeLorento, Planning and Zoning for Rocky Hill

Ray Carpentino, Economic Development Director for Rocky Hill

John Harvey, Silas Deane Steering Committee

Mr. Gillespie said that a steering committee was formed and with funds from the state, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield partnered because of common interests and the need to find a solution. Joint public and quasi-public meetings were held for public information. They wanted to get the authorities on planning and zoning for both towns to hear the plan and how it should be implemented. Mr. Gillespie said that Ted DeSantos from Fuss and O'Neill is present to talk about the vision for reinvestment. He said that they are very near the point of having town council and other land use boards and committees adopting this, however they wanted to see the work to date. The Design Review Committee has already looked at this and endorsed the concepts in the plan.

Ted DeSantos, Director of Transportation for Fuss and O'Neill and Chris Ferraro from Ferraro-Hicks were present to give the presentation. Mr. DeSantos said that the challenge was the goal of economic revitalization in the Silas Deane corridor. He said that the limits were the Town Center in Rocky Hill through the I-91 Interchange and Wethersfield to Routes 5&15. Some of the goals included economic revitalization, instill a sense of community, cater to existing business owners as well as develop guidelines for potential developers. A diverse array of disciplines including planning, architecture, engineering and zoning were discussed in the 20 year vision for the Silas Deane. They were interested in how the towns want the corridor to develop in the short and long term and show property owners how to get the funding to invest. He said that the corridor is significantly challenged from an economic development point of view. One can see high voltage power lines and railroad tracks and most properties are shallow which is not great for development. In addition, the large flat parcels have wetlands, also the roadway goes through two separate towns and the DOT is a major stakeholder. He said that they have been working closely with the Silas Deane advisory committee and the town staff and have held five public hearings, with four in Rocky Hill and one in Wethersfield. They also went before the Wethersfield Design Review Committee and the CT DOT, first at the outset to get input and recently to share the specific recommendations. He said that overall they had positive input even though the ideas are contrary to traditional transportation engineering goals. He said that they have published a final draft 1 1/2 months ago and they are looking to get input and incorporate that into the final report. He said that the recommendation is for guiding principles, constraints and values. He said that they don't promote big box retail because in order to promote retail first you need to bring people to the market, so they recommend housing, especially active adult or higher end condos for young professionals. This type of housing will bring people to the corridor and create energy.

Mr. DeSantos said that the property density needs to be allowed to increase and buildings should be brought to the street or bring the street to the buildings. He also would like to promote shared parking and a rear connector drive and access management, this would reduce the number of curbcuts. They also promote a sense of community through road diet. This would enable the road to maintain capacity but reduce the amount of pavement by including amenities such as sidewalks, pavers, landscaping and architecture of the buildings. This generates a different outcome.

Chris Ferraro then presented some information on the recommendations. He said that access management and the ability to combine rear parking lots are difficult things to achieve. He said that the short term recommendations are mainly visual and aesthetic and it is the long term recommendations that really will make a difference. He said that the marketing plan develops the land plan and creates the infusion of mixed use projects. He asked why a business would locate on the Silas Deane Highway if it isn't marketable. He talked about parcel consolidation and creating densities and developing more intensely. He said that the sections of the corridor have a hierarchy, for example the highway interchange is marketable because it is regional commercial and visible from the highway, also the Route 5 and 15 is to a lesser degree. Mr. Ferraro said that each town has a solid government center even though they don't look or act like it now. The government centers need help and need people on the street which will bring boutique shops and civic events. Things like trees and crosswalks will help with this. The in between areas are no mans land. He said that residents expect a 5-10 minute walk is reasonable. He said that to create mixed use with neighborhood commercial and substantial residence in back is the idea. He said that office doesn't fly, but some retail may work. The concept is that there is a hierarchy of spaces. The corridor would have portals and nodes and each would be treated differently and they would create an identity.

Mr. DeSantos spoke again and said that they approached the problem of the Silas Deane Roadway. The parking is in the front and the travel lane is 50 mph. Therefore it is tough for the small business owner to have a presence. He said that is where they want to incorporate the road diet ideas. He said that from traffic engineering standpoint one land in each direction is not discussed. However it is a concept and one idea on how to accomplish this is with a roundabout in Rocky Hill Center. He said that they could reduce the pavement width and create streetscape and amenities. Mr. DeSantos presented a picture of the roundabout concept. He said that they would introduce a reduction of the travel lane north of the town center to Parsonage by adding a third lane for turning. This three lane section gives additional space in the roadway for amenities and safety features and a left turn lane. He said that they will tailor the recommendations and right now they are only at a concept level for specific areas and that goes along with the access management recommendations. The access made for the rear connection. Also 12-15 curbcut closures are recommended. North of Parsonage on street parking is recommended with a separator island. This would be good for the small business and bring the building to the street. The recommendations are typically applied between intersections. North of Parsonage a rear connector along 8-10 properties and driveway closures are recommended.

Near I-91, they recommend turning the painted island into a planted island if there is enough width. This is an area where pavement is needed. There is a recommendation for a rear access drive behind Walgreens to the Beaver Road extension this would create a connection to walk or drive between the businesses without turning onto the Silas Deane and it would provide connectivity. North of Wells Road to Church Street they would promote on-street parking and bring the street to the building to create a presence and on street the traffic would slowdown. They recommend losing the through lane in each direction. There are no heavy turn volumes in that area. In the area in front of the police station and near the Route 5&15 overpass, they recommend planted islands.

Mr. DeSantos said that the project is about setting a vision and another piece is to provide information to potential developers. He said that they looked at six properties which the towns asked them to provide side development concepts.

Mr. Ferraro said that the pieces are components of the whole. They tried hard to make the master plan a usable document. They used color or sections for highway interchanges and the center is different than the middle. The general highway interchange has broad setbacks. The highly active environment proposed at the town center is not what you want at a highway interchange. He said that gateway signage, wayfinding signage and signs for bus stop locations are needed. The scale in each section, overhead utilities and auto uses should be looked at. Also there is a flat plane with no vertical difference. He said that they analyzed the cross sections and developed recommendations for the setbacks. He said that trees, light poles and vertical elements start the process, also the elements of a landscape. He acknowledged that there is a clear zone issue with the DOT. He showed examples of the recommendations being implemented in the cross section during the short term and long term. He said that there is a matrix with their recommendations and how to implement them. There is a landscape sheet and information on sidewalks. There are also specific comments and recommendations.

Mr. Ferraro said that branding an image is difficult and consistency of the look from one end to the other is also. The two towns are different and want elements of personal identity. Wethersfield has an agrarian background and Rocky Hill has a boat building history. The details suggested reflect each community's identity. He said that a proposed overlay zone can ease each town into the process rather than rezoning parcels. This would be a legal vehicle that supports the plan recommendation. He said that this needs to move a step beyond the master plan and each town needs to get in the trenches and tie this into the regulations.

Mr. Goldberg, said that this was put on the agenda for discussion and is premature at this point. He said that the node basis and the center of town could be argued. Also they don't want any more traffic on Glastonbury Avenue. He said that he was not part of this process and he would like to see it before it is discussed by the commission.

Chairman Hammer thanked the presenters for coming and doing a lot of hard work. He hopes that the discussion goes forward. Commissioner Wagner asked why they reversed the direction of 5,6 and 4. Mr. DeSantos said that it was prepared as boards and then translated into the report. Commissioner Wagner said that she applauds the need to think globally and that it is interesting what they are proposing. She said that small business has been saying if they take their front parking, they would be obsolete and they are right. She applauds the presenter for thinking globally which is a problem for New England.

Mr. DeSantos said that things need to slow down and this is a vision for the Silas Deane. Chairman Hammer said that he hopes that as things go forward the towns can work together and have joint meetings. Commissioner McHugh also applauded their efforts.

MINUTES

Minutes of the June 6, 2006 Meeting

Chairman Hammer made a motion to approve [the June 6, 2006 minutes](#).

Commissioner McHugh seconded the motion.

All members present and eligible voted in favor. (6-0-3)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Harley, Jurasin, McHugh, Petrelli

Nay: None

Abst: Wagner, Homicki, Munroe,

Minutes of the June 20, 2006 Meeting

Commissioner Homicki made a motion to approve [the June 20, 2006 minutes](#).

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

All members present and eligible voted in favor. (5-0-4)

Aye: Knecht, Harley, McHugh, Wagner, Homicki,

Nay: None

Abst: Hammer, Jurasin, Petrelli, Munroe

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Gillespie said that the Connecticut Multispecialty Group had come in for a small expansion that was approved. It was to be one story with the appearance of two stories due to a fake parapet wall. He said that they have asked to modify their application as a one story. Mr. Gillespie asked if the commission wanted to review this or would they give their blessing for a one story. Commissioner Homicki asked why it would be changed and if it was due to money. Mr. Gillespie said that it was. Commissioner McHugh asked if they would have to resubmit and what the cost would be. Mr. Gillespie said that they would have to resubmit at a cost of \$230. He said that the issue is that they want to move the project forward. They applied one year ago and now they want to move forward.

Commissioner Wagner recalled that they wanted the façade so that it didn't look like an addition and now it will. She is in favor of the applicant coming back to the commission. Chairman Hammer said that if it is visible from the Silas Deane Highway then it should come back. Commissioner Harley also agreed that it should come back.

Chairman Hammer reminded the commission that there is usually only one August meeting. Therefore, they will meet on August 1 and cancel the August 15 meeting at that time.

Chairman Hammer welcomed Earle Munroe and George Oickle back to the commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING.

None

CORRESPONDENCE

- A letter dated June 26, 2006 from Charles Nowicki to Brian O'Connor in response to a letter sent from the Town of Wethersfield dated May 8, 2006 regarding the illegal dumping of debris at Goodwin Park Golf Course.
- A letter dated July 12, 2006 from Bonnie Therrien to Charles Nowicki granting an extension for cleanup of debris at Goodwin Park Golf Course until August 28, 2006.

- A letter dated June 20, 2006 from Elizabeth Cole, Director of Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) to John Kulesza, Wethersfield Technology Group regarding road maintenance concerns on Progress Drive.
- A letter dated July 5, 2006 from Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk to Peg Wagner regarding her reappointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- A letter dated July 5, 2006 from Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk to Richard Roberts regarding his appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- A letter dated July 5, 2006 from Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk to George Oickle regarding his appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- A letter dated July 5, 2006 from Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk to Earl Munroe regarding his appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- A letter dated June 26, 2006 from Helen Melonopoulos to Bonnie Therrien regarding the Premier Building & Developers, Inc. age restricted housing proposal on Old Reservoir Road/Back Lane.
- A letter dated June 27, 2006 from Richard Abraham to Bonnie Therrien regarding the Premier Building & Developers, Inc. age restricted housing proposal on Old Reservoir Road/Back Lane.
- A letter dated June 28, 2006 from Catherine Deros to Bonnie Therrien regarding the Premier Building & Developers, Inc. age restricted housing proposal on Old Reservoir Road/Back Lane.
- A letter dated July 12, 2006 from Bonnie Therrien to Richard Abraham (with copies sent to Catherine Deros and Helen Melonopoulos) in response to their letters regarding the Premier Building & Developers, Inc. age restricted housing proposal on Old Reservoir Road/Back Lane.

UPCOMING BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Petrelli made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15. Chairman Hammer seconded the motion.

All members present voted in favor of the motion. (9-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Jurasin, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Petrelli, Homicki,

Nay: None

Abst: None