

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
August 1, 2006**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, August 1, 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:

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner

The commissioners decided to have Commissioner Hughes as the voting alternate.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

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. **This application was postponed until the next meeting.**

APPLICATION NO. 1532-06-Z. Guaranteed Maintenance & Development LLC Resubdivision and creation of a new lot in accordance with Section 143-1 of the Wethersfield Subdivision Regulations at 478 Nott Street. **This application was postponed until the next meeting.**

APPLICATION NO. 1533-06-Z. Wethersfield Country Club Special Permit in accordance with Section 6.10 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the excavation of a one-acre pond at 76 Country Club Road. **This application was postponed until the next meeting.**

APPLICATION NO. 1534-06-Z. CT Multi-Specialties Group Seeking Site Plan and Design Review for a modification in accordance with Section 10.1.D.5.d to Application 1490-05-Z for a new addition.

Mark Fey, from Don Hammerberg Associates presented the application. He said that the ZBA granted a variance on June 30, 2005 and again on October 4, 2005. They also got special permit approval on October 4, 2005. Finally the Design Review Committee saw the initial design once and then on July 5, 2006 they approved the revision of the prior submission.

Mr. Fey said that they are proposing to add to the side of the building a 1300 s.f. addition to increase the infusion and chemotherapy center. They got a variance to do it so that they wouldn't have to move the facility. He said that the new proposal is shorter than the building height. They would drop down the parapet wall to 12-13' in height. It would be a smaller volume addition. He said that they would be matching the corbelling of the present building. They would reduce the height of the overall addition to 11'-7". He added that the impact to the neighbors would be less and that the fenestration would be the same. He said that the detailing would also essentially be the same and that the plan is identical.

Mr. Fey said that the facility sees about 60 patients per day and with the addition the number of seats will increase and they will see more patients and have less crowding. He said that the client is going paperless so the space that they thought that they needed on the upper floor is not necessary.

Chairman Hammer asked if the Design Review Committee had reviewed this proposal and had any comments. Ms. Bradley said that they had approved it as submitted. Commissioner Knecht asked if they were lowering the height because of resistance from the neighbors. Mr. Fey said that they have had no negative comments, but with the paperless component, the upstairs storage and skylights were more expensive than anticipated, it is not cost effective to have the upper story. Commissioner Knecht asked if the purpose of the height was to enhance the use of the building. Mr. Fey said that it would be 1000 s.f. of storage area. They had designed it for a file load but now they are not looking at getting more files.

Commissioner Wagner said that the reason that she had asked them to come back is because the commission is trying to beautify the Silas Deane Highway. She said that the original addition fit in well with the building and didn't stand out and now the proposal looks like an addition. She said that before it was the same height and didn't have glaring difference. She asked if there was anyway to compensate for the look by adding a parapet wall. Mr. Fey said that they could raise the height, but the roof surface wouldn't be the same so he would need to do other drainage. He said that he doesn't want to have to go the Design Review Committee again, but it could be done. He said that they would have to plan for more brick work and they don't want to take away from the pediment or create a new focal point. He said that also it would be nicer for the neighbor to see a less imposing wall. Commissioner Wagner said that she is more concerned about the look from the highway. Mr. Fey said that the other building is way forward from the face of this.

Commissioner Roberts asked Ms. Bradley if the two story one was approved last year and therefore they don't have to worry about parking. Ms. Bradley said that it was. Chairman Hammer asked if there would be trees to help screen the building. Mr. Fey said that there are very mature trees on other side and that this building is much more dominant. Commissioner Oickle asked who owns those trees. Mr. Fey acknowledged that it was the neighbor and that they are 10-12 feet from the neighbor's property line.

Chairman Hammer said that this was not a public hearing and asked if there was anything further. Mr. Fey said that they are right where they need to be per cost and ready to start next week pending approval. Chairman Hammer called for a motion or discussion on the matter.

Commissioner Harley said that he agrees with Commissioner Wagner and even though he didn't raise his hand to make the applicant come back, now that he has seen the proposal he is shocked by the look. He would like to see false work to equal the height so that it looks the same.

Commissioner Knecht asked if there would be an effect on service. Mr. Fey said that it would add to the cost but no gain for the end user. He said that they are on the edge of affording to do it and they are trying to juggle what is needed to be done to stay on the site.

Chairman Hammer asked if the Design Review Committee had submitted detailed comments. Ms. Bradley said that they had not. Mr. Fey said that one member of the Design Review Committee said that he couldn't tell the difference.

Commissioner Wagner said that it is a very beautiful building and is distinguished as one of the first that moved the town into the direction that we want to go. She asked if it was set back 5-10 feet from the front of the building. Mr. Fey said that it was 6-7 feet back. Commissioner Wagner said that it was a very tight site and very close and if there is any way to add the false work to make it match and to make it look like it is not an addition, and if they can figure out a way to do that it would be better. Mr. Fey said that it could be done but there would be a cost associated with an additional 9' of brick and masonry work.

Commissioner Homicki said that he has looked at the site and initially he agreed with Commissioner Wagner but now the logistics of this tight site make him think that it is not a big deal. He said that it is not like City Fish. Chairman Hammer said that there are good points made by Commissioners Harley and Wagner. He said that he is struggling with this but leaning toward approval because the big building is screening it, it is set back from the street and screened and there is not a high visibility of the addition from the road.

Commissioner Hughes asked if there was a generator on that side of the building. Mr. Fey said that there is not, just gas service meters and the driveway is being drained by a concrete pipe.

Chairman Hammer asked if the building was one story on the left. Mr. Fey said that it was and it would balance the building to the point of the pediment. Commissioner Roberts asked how long it is from the doorway to the addition. Mr. Fey said that it was 242 feet, over 10 times bigger. Commissioner Roberts said that he was thinking the same thing as Commissioner Wagner but he is not an architect and there is a reason why they have the Design Review Committee. Mr. Fey said that it has been an ordeal. It had sounded simple but there is a lot of sweat to get it to mesh.

Commissioner Oickle said that he is not voting but he agrees with Chairman Hammer particularly with screening to the south and also it would be a minor improvement with a setback. He said that there are many more problems as they try to renovate the Silas Deane Highway. He said that even with small improvements and additions, he doesn't want to discourage quality but he is in favor of making improvements. He is not sure that reducing the wall and the setback and the screen that he is going to see it also set down. He said that there is a lot of earth in front and it is not a significant issue.

Commissioner Knecht made a motion to accept the plan as is and go ahead with the proposal. Commissioner Munroe seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (6-2-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Munroe, Roberts, McHugh, Hughes

Nay: Wagner, Harley

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.
(Information distributed at the 7/18/06 Meeting)

Paul Randazzo introduced himself as the owner of 287, 277 and lot 38 on the Silas Deane Highway on the west side. He said that the houses are old and getting older and he has seen homes that are mixed use as he has traveled up and down the Silas Deane Highway. He said that he got the idea from an East Windsor subdivision behind Jonathan Pascos and it is a concept that offers retail or office on the first floor and residential on the second. He said that presently there is a beauty salon on the east side of the Silas Deane that is also a residence. He said that the concept is needed because it is something that the town doesn't have, it makes the Silas Deane more attractive at that end, and it offers the small business person a small office and retail site and possibly residence. He said that it could be done as condos or rentals. He has an empty lot and one house which will be vacant and he doesn't think that there is much more that he can put into these houses and he thought that the concept might be attractive. He said that when he spoke to the engineering department they told him about a similarly designed concept by Len Tunderman for the east side where Carmela's Pasta and other houses are. He is looking to propose this but wants to know which direction the PZC wants him to go and if they don't see this as feasible than he will look into something else. He said that he has two properties on the east and west sides and would like to do something within this building season. He would like to knock down 330 and 334 Silas Deane Highway because those are beyond repair.

Commissioner McHugh said that the concept is good but there are similar types of structures on both sides of the highway. Mr. Randazzo said that there could be other houses for sale and some are real eyesores and beyond repair. He has had issues trying to clean them up and had taken 150 yards of junk out. He thinks that the property is valuable enough for his concept and he thinks that he could fill the buildings. He said that he also owns 322 Silas Deane Highway on the other side of Abbate and they have hinted that they want to sell and move and then he could move on a lot of improvements very quickly. Mr. Randazzo explained that it doesn't have to be a single building and if there are gables in the front, it could be a single standing unit. He said that the colors are not significant to him and he will leave that up to the Design Review Committee. He said that he thinks that the colonial design fits into this end of town.

Commissioner Roberts asked if he had received approval for one of these properties. Mr. Randazzo said that 4 or 5 years ago he applied for a two family at 287 Silas Deane Highway and it was designed half-heartedly and he wanted to see what the reception would be and it was rejected by the neighbors. Commissioner Roberts said that he remembers a semi-commercial plan and that is where he thinks this is headed, with the caveat being the screening because of the residential. Mr. Randazzo said that he is not looking at high volume businesses here to impact on the neighbors to the rear of the property. He said that it would be minimal with residential up above. He added that because it is on the east side it is a problem because he can't do mixed use, so he needs to seek a zone change and wanted to go before the PZC to get a feeling of where the commission is headed.

Commissioner Oickle asked if Mr. Randazzo had built the homes on Reservoir Road, and when he found that he had, he said that he is an excellent builder and does high quality work. He said that the problem is the physical aspect. Commissioner Oickle said that it sits up high and most homes are good but it bothers him to add more General Business zone in pieces because it is not a good practice. He said that consolidating driveways doesn't always work but if the zone is changed on the whole side with all the vacancy on the Silas Deane where it is relatively flat consolidating driveways may work. He said that the residential would only have 2-3 trips a day but business would get more traffic on that side and just to do Mr. Randazzo's property bothers him. He said that this is in the Silas Deane plan that they received two weeks ago and the mixed use concept still maintains a decent character. Commissioner Oickle said that the concept looks good and he is not averse to approving it but he is not sure that consolidating properties and tearing down is the way they should be going. Mr. Randazzo said that he is not looking for a single building on each lot and if Abbate leaves then he could own four homes in a row and would do one curbcut for the four buildings. They may not be separate buildings. Commissioner Oickle said that the DOT is talking about consolidating driveways and the owners don't want to do it.

Mr. Randazzo said that he needs to do something because he doesn't want to leave the houses the way they are. He said that the houses have been rentable and the insides are better than the outsides. He also said that the property adjacent needs work and he doesn't complain about this blighted property. He would like to see what steps to take in the right direction and the issue is that this concept is not available on either side of the Silas Deane.

Commissioner Knecht asked if he had considered an appraisal for the highest and best use. Mr. Randazzo said that he doesn't want to see a Jiffy Lube or another donut store. Chairman Hammer said that Ms. Bradley had been going through the Plan of Development and found that the future land use being changed to General Commercial is consistent with the mixed use and retail being proposed. Ms. Bradley added that the Silas Deane Master Plan calls for mixed use and medium to high density housing. Chairman Hammer said that it seems like the mixed use gives a transitional zone and single family homes are out of place on the Silas Deane. He said that the potential is there for a good transition if the mixed use doesn't include a drive through or heavy parking.

Commissioner Hughes said that he agrees with that statement and asked about residential values on the Silas Deane and if due to high traffic it was the least desirable for single family homes. Mr. Randazzo said yes and that there is not much left for the single family home on the Silas Deane. Commissioner Hughes asked if this was the maximum and best use for these properties. Mr. Randazzo said that he would like to maximize the land potential and make an easy transition so that the residents on Wright Road are not upset and don't think that the town has turned their back on them. He said that it won't be heavy commercial but rather mixed use with light commercial and residential. He said that if he builds something new it would be different than all of the renovation that is being done on the Silas Deane. He is hoping for a boutique, gift store or some other viable business, not huge boxes where it is so financially prohibitive to run a business. He said that big business is taking over because landlords get money for rent which is driving small businesses to go out of business and this will continue to happen.

Commissioner Hughes said that he likes the concept and it is pliable as a single or multi unit and would impact the Silas Deane with lighter rental and speak to the concerns. He said that there would be the potential to allow curbcuts and amend the topography and he thinks that it is a good opportunity. Mr. Randazzo said that the size would have an impact on what happens and if they want something to happen and if they think that this could work then he would like to start there. He has people moving out very 1-2 years and this is a good time now but he would like to get his feet wet and doesn't want to speculate.

Commissioner Knecht said that multi-use is the goal. He met with the governors of New Jersey and Maryland and 40 architects who talked about the need to change the thinking to create multi use with tenants on top of retail. Mr. Randazzo said that the reason that he has pursued this is because he talked to people and talked about the Tunderman concept and he did the work on the buildings in East Windsor. He said that it was a cul-de-sac with a small office for a Nationwide Insurance Agent and that agent's associate lived above and the buildings offered a New England type of atmosphere rather than generic brick and blank windows. Commissioner Knecht said that to change the thinking to a combination of uses needs to happen and the single New England style must come to an end.

Commissioner Roberts said that he would like to see the applicant follow up on the concept. Residential on the Silas Deane Highway is long gone and the remaining houses are on the Silas Deane Highway plan to be moved in the next 8-10 years. He said that he has been on the commission for a long time and has heard complaining about not combining lots and not doing anything and he thinks that they would be kicking themselves if they do not take advantage of this. He said that in conversations about developments similar to this the concerns were screening and landscaping so that Wright Road won't have to look at headlights.

Mr. Randazzo said that in the 1995 application for Dunkin Donuts screening was a big issue and then years later no one on Cumberland Road complains about the drive thru because it is a wall of trees. As time goes on the commission tries to make the town, developer and residents happy. He said that he remembers one family saying that they didn't want the drive thru but things can work with time and thought and it is the easiest transition for that side of the street.

Commissioner Harley asked how many properties the applicant owned. Mr. Randazzo said that he owns 287, lot 37, 277 and half of 307. Commissioner Knecht asked if it was a grey house. Mr. Randazzo said that it was white. Commissioner Harley asked how big the lots would be combined. Mr. Randazzo said that it would be 250 feet of frontage with a depth of 170 feet. He said that there are fences and pine trees and he doesn't know how the town would want to do this but he would like to see the building set back and the parking in the front so that the people in the back don't hear. Commissioner Harley said that multi-use is a great idea. He said that it sounds feasible and he agrees that they would be kicking themselves if they were only concerned about the remaining 75 feet of property.

Mr. Randazzo said that he did some work on 266 Silas Deane Highway and he said that if that owner could get 1200 s.f. on one side he would have bought the concept. He is a small businessman who only needs 1200 s.f. to do his dental work and would have been fine. He said that the concept is low impact and won't produce a lot of traffic and he would like to acquire a bigger part but the prices are prohibitive and the money is not realistic.

Commissioner Oickle asked if they rezone the whole side would the prices on the residential properties rise. Mr. Randazzo said that he has hung out for six years watching the prices and they have topped off at \$200,000 according to appraisals and they are prohibitive because they are small lots with small homes on a busy street. He said that he lived at 307 and it seems to be going that way but if something does get zoned that way and work begins then people will reach for more money but everything is increasing.

Chairman Hammer said that some type of mixed use concept would be an improvement and it is cutting edge to recycle in already developed areas. He said that the key is that people need to be comfortable with the use on that site, he hasn't heard too much negative feedback about the concept. Mr. Randazzo said that with a zone change on the east side it wouldn't conflict with the residential or business because people are doing it anyway, he is hoping to do the west side first.

Commissioner Oickle said that the east side has improved in the last 10 years and he doesn't know if the zone changed helped but he would like to assume that it has. Commissioner McHugh said that she likes the concept and it is bound to happen and this is in the Silas Deane Highway plan so what the vision for this strip is. Ms. Bradley said that it is mixed use and medium to high density housing which fits in with the vision of this property.

Commissioner Homicki said that the value is based on future vision and the concept is timely. He said that as an investor, apartments above are ideal and he is in favor. Commissioner Roberts said that his preference is that the applicant comes in with a zone change and a site plan so that the commission knows what is proposed.

MINUTES

[Minutes of the July 18, 2006 Meeting](#)

Commissioner Roberts said that it was odd that there were 11 people voting. Chairman Hammer suggested that the minutes be revised to show who was actually voting.

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the minutes as revised.

Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion.

All members present and eligible voted in favor of the motion. (7-0-1)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Munroe, Harley, McHugh, Hughes, Wagner

Nay: None

Abst: Roberts

STAFF REPORTS

Chairman Hammer said that they don't have a need for a second meeting in August so it will be posted as cancelled. The next meeting will be the first meeting in September. Chairman Hammer asked if it would be on the first Tuesday after Labor Day or on that Wednesday. Ms. Bradley said that it was scheduled for the Tuesday, September 5, 2006.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING

None

CORRESPONDENCE

- A letter dated July 14, 2006 to Bonnie Therrien from Elizabeth Cole, Director Capitol Region Education Council regarding the Progress Drive subdivision.

Commissioner Oickle asked about this letter. He said that he was surprised that it was in disposition when the primary level is there but the rest is not developed and there is no secondary level on the roadway. He asked how the town can accept it if it isn't finished.

Chairman Hammer replied that the bottom line is that the Council still is pursuing the issue if the road is accepted and if the town has any responsibility. He said that there is a lot lien and not a bond and therefore a question about whether there is enough value. They are concerned about the best way to pursue the issue so that the town is not out of pocket. Commissioner Oickle said that the Council should take it out of the bond because it is an important issue which is safety of the children. Chairman Hammer said that they have recognized it was a mistake to accept the lot lien and in the future they will avoid it.

- A decision letter to Peter Leombruni from the Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission regarding the construction of a new home at 200 Broad Street.
- Wethersfield Planning & Zoning Commission 2006-2007 Member List.
- Wethersfield Design Review Advisory Committee 2006-2007 Member List.
- Wethersfield Zoning Board of Appeals 2006-2007 Member List.

UPCOMING BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner McHugh asked if there needed to be a vote to cancel the August 15 meeting. The commissioners agreed that there should be a vote. Commissioner McHugh made a motion to cancel the August 15 meeting. Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion.

All members present and eligible voted in favor of the motion. (8-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Roberts, Hughes,

Nay: None

Abst: None

Commissioner Wagner asked about the football lights. Ms. Bradley said that there has been no submission. Commissioner Wagner said that she was surprised because they had said that they needed it built by a certain time. Ms. Bradley said that they know that there is to be no August 15 meeting and there has been no submission.

Chairman Hammer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Commissioner Knecht seconded the motion.

All members present and eligible voted in favor of the motion. (8-0-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Harley, Munroe, McHugh, Wagner, Roberts, Hughes,

Nay: None

Abst: None