

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
MARCH 1, 2005**

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members present:

Joseph Hammer, Chairman
Theresa Forsdick, Vice-Chairman
Philip Knecht, Clerk
George Oickle
Earle R. Munroe
David R. Edwards
Richard Roberts
Peggy Wagner

Members absent:

Peter Leombruni
John Adamian
Robert P. Jurasin
John Hallisey

Also present:

Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner

Chairman Hammer asked for a roll call. Clerk Knecht read the roll call.

Chairman Hammer indicated that at least five of the seven members present must vote in the affirmative in order to approve an application.

Clerk Knecht then read a description of the first application into the record:

APPLICATION NO. 1446-05-Z Nathan Hale #58 AHEPA, Inc. seeking approval under Article XXXI for a Site Plan and Design Review for the construction of a 4-story addition, paved parking and drives, detention facilities and associated site improvements, located on the east side of the road in a Special Residential Development District Zone at 1532 Berlin Turnpike.

Clerk Knecht read the following correspondence into the record:

- A letter from Brown, Paindiris & Scott, LLP to Guy Hesketh, dated Dec. 17, 2004. The letter states that enclosed is the drainage easement referenced in your letter to Andreas Kapetanopoulos. It further states the easement was recorded in the Wethersfield land records on May 11, 2004, Volume 1161 Page 53-56. The letter is signed Karen L. Scheffler, Paralegal to Attorney Nicholas Paindiris.

Peter Argiros is the architect for the project and discussed the site plan. The existing building houses 41 one-bedroom units for elderly residents (65 and over). The plan calls for a four story building of 42 units consisting of 540 s.f. each to be added to the existing. He went through each of the layout drawings, including the basement drawing, which he said was constructed because of the grade of the property. The basement would be used for storage and utilities, no units would be located there. The first floor would contain the A type units, which can be converted to handicapped accessible units when necessary. The remaining floors would contain B type units. All units contain the same number of square feet. The existing community space in the building would be enlarged.

The Applicant is also proposing to extend the garage and parking area with a wraparound drive that brings cars to the lower level. He said that the existing entrance would continue to be used for entrance and exit to the site with a second drive constructed only for emergency vehicles. Mr. Argiros showed pictures of the existing building and the site. He continued to describe the layout of each floor

Commissioner Oickle asked if HUD still had a requirement for 10% of the units to be handicapped accessible. He also asked for a clarification on the size of the units. Mr. Argiros replied that there would be two adaptable units on the first floor to meet the handicapped accessibility requirement, the lower cabinets would have to be removed to make the units accessible. He also confirmed that all of the units would be the same size and would be 540 s.f. Commissioner Oickle asked if HUD still required units for mentally handicapped individuals. Mr. Argiros replied that was not part of the requirements for this program which was the 202 program. Finally Commissioner Oickle asked if there would still be Section 8 housing. Mr. Argiros said that would not be provided as part of this program.

Mr. Argiros continued that in order to provide an entrance at the proper slope, an entry ramp would be constructed which would be handicapped accessible with a plaza.

Commissioner Oickle also asked if the building was to be constructed of brick. Mr. Argiros said that the building would be four stories of masonry construction with some wood trusses to tie into the brick exterior. The building would be sprinkled.

Commissioner Oickle asked why there looked like two different materials on the rendering. Mr. Argiros said that the same brick exterior would be used to match the existing and that the plan just illustrated the difference between the existing and proposed.

Chairman Hammer asked for a clarification on the number of units and if anything was to be done to the existing building. Mr. Argiros said that there are 41 units in the existing building and 42 units in the proposed building. They would be modifying the exterior site area where regrading is required. Chairman Hammer said that the 540 s.f. provided doesn't meet the zoning requirement of 650 s.f., and Mr. Argiros responded that they had received a variance from this requirement. Chairman Hammer also asked for confirmation on the variance that they received regarding the landscape border around the building from the required fifteen feet as well as a variance from the parking area. Mr. Argiros said that they did receive these variances.

Commissioner Oickle asked if there was a need for screening near the Village Apartments. Guy Hesketh, the engineer for the project responded that if the Commission would let him go through his presentation, he probably could answer a lot of the questions.

Mr. Hesketh went on to describe the site location, the fact that it was in three separate parcels currently. AHEPA plans to combine the location into one parcel. He described the project as a four story addition of 42 units to the existing 41 units. A total of 88 parking spaces would be provided. A new emergency access would be provided onto the Berlin Turnpike per the Fire Marshal's request. A new stormwater drainage system and landscape features are proposed. The Applicant did go before the ZBA last night and was granted the following relief:

- 3.4.e.2 - A reduction from the required landscape border around the building of 15' required to 7.5' provided.
- 3.4.e.8 - A reduction from the required setback from the parking lot. A reduction to 12.5' was granted.
- Reduction in the required unit size and maximum density.
- Reduction in the minimum landscaped area that is part of the open space requirement. The required amount of open space is 25% minimum, only 15% is provided.

Mr. Hesketh said that this last requirement was brought to their attention by the staff and therefore was not listed on the zoning analysis provided.

Commissioner Oickle asked if one parking space per unit is sufficient for holidays. Mr. Argiros responded that of the existing 41 units, the majority of the occupants don't have a car. Only 5% of the occupants have and use a car. Mr. Hesketh said that the requirement is one space per unit and that 88 spaces are provided.

Mr. Hesketh said that the required number of trees would be provided in the internal parking lot. He also said that the existing trees on the perimeter of the project would be used and counted into the required number of trees. Commissioner Oickle asked if the filling and excavating on the slope will affect the screening to the neighboring property. Mr. Argiros contributed that there is a six foot high stockade fence there. Commissioner Oickle asked for some clarification on the proposed screening and the Applicant pointed out the proposed screening on the map.

Mr. Hesketh said that they are asking for a waiver from the Commission regarding the dumpster area. Mr. Gillespie clarified that the regulations require that the dumpster area be located closer to the building served than to the property line. The proposed dumpster area is approx 63 feet from the building and 61 feet from the property line. The ZBA's request to increase the landscaping around the building caused the dumpster area to be pushed out further. Commissioner Munroe asked what the hardship was and why it can't be located closer to the building. Mr. Hesketh said that in order to have access to the dumpster, the turning radius has to be large enough for the truck. He said that without losing a number of parking spaces, it cannot be done. He further added that the Commission has the authority to waive the requirement. Commissioner Munroe informed the applicant that usually the application would go to the ZBA after appearing before this Commission.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the waiver requested was a new requirement. Mr. Gillespie said that it was a new requirement under section 6.8 in the new regulations.

Chairman Hammer asked if the dumpster was moved two feet would it be in compliance. Mr. Hesketh replied that it would be and the pad could be reduced but then it wouldn't include enough space for future use of recycle receptacles. Chairman Hammer also asked if trees and fencing would be located around the dumpster. Mr. Hesketh said that both would be used as screening.

Commissioner Munroe asked the Applicant to identify the property line of the nearest property owner. The Applicant referred to the Village Apartment complex.

Mr. Hesketh then went on to discuss the stormwater drainage system and plan. The site drains to either a swale into the apartment complex property or a shallow underground detention basin. Commissioner Oickle asked the Applicant to describe the underground basin. The Applicant elaborated on the construction and design of the basin.

Commissioner Oickle asked if they would be discharging water onto the adjoining Village Apartments property? Mr. Hesketh said that part of the agreement of the parcels transfer was that there would be the legal right to discharge water onto the property. The system ensures that there would be no increase in discharge. He also described the separators that would be installed to meet DEP standards. Commissioner Oickle referenced the Town Engineer's letter and asked if his requirements referred to maintenance. Mr. Hesketh said that there would be a cleaning of parking lots and paved areas and inspections done in the spring and fall.

Commissioner Oickle asked Commissioner Munroe if the DOT would get concerned about the drainage. Commissioner Munroe replied that they will if it is discharged onto State property.

Commissioner Munroe asked if the applicant went before the Wetlands Commission with computations. Mr. Hesketh replied that they had. Commissioner Munroe expressed his concern with the size of the existing pipes. Mr. Hesketh said that the pipes in the building would be upgraded.

Commissioner Wagner expressed concern about the pipe in the system that doesn't have much slope to it and the fact that there would be standing water in the pipe. Mr. Hesketh said that the water would flow through the pipe when there was head buildup. Commissioner Wagner stated that even after flow there would still be standing water in that pipe at some points in time. She is concerned about the health and safety of the elderly residents in the building with standing water on the site. Mr. Hesketh said that the standing water in the pipe is better than standing water out on the site and that the health concern is probably no more so than other pooling water on the site. Commissioner Wagner asked if it was possible to redirect the pipe around the back side of the site. Mr. Hesketh replied that it was not possible because of the elevations of the site. Commissioner Wagner said that the detention basin would drain when there is a foot and a half of water in there. Mr. Hesketh said that there are orifices in there at water elevations. Commissioner Wagner asked how thick the riprap channel would be at the site. Mr. Hesketh said that they are following the regulations to this

regard. Commissioner Wagner asked if there would be any increase in runoff. Mr. Hesketh said that there would not be and that the 25 year storm shows a 20% reduction.

Finally, Mr. Hesketh described the utility plan and connections to the site.

Mr. Hesketh stated that they did get Wetlands approval for the Erosion and Sedimentation plan and that they had appeared before the ZBA and were granted the relief that they had requested. They also got a positive review by the Design Review Commission. He said that he hadn't seen a staff recommendation, but was happy to answer any question.

Commissioner Oickle said that only one entrance could be provided and that the proposed second entrance is in the State ROW and is being provided only for emergency use at the recommendation of the Fire Marshal. Mr. Hesketh said that the proposed second entrance wouldn't be allowed by the DOT and is only going to be allowed because it was required by the Fire Marshal.

Commissioner Oickle asked what the slope of the rear driveway would be. Mr. Hesketh said that it was 8 1/2 to 9%. Commissioner Oickle asked if the Town Engineer had any comments on this very steep drive. Mr. Gillespie said that he did not specifically speak to the slope of the drive. Commissioner Oickle expressed his concern particularly with respect to sanding the drive, etc.

Commissioner Oickle asked the applicant to explain the lighting plan. Mr. Argiros replied that a box fixture would be provided to match the existing on the site. He explained on the plan where they would be located. Mr. Gillespie asked if there were any proposed along the building, and Mr. Argiros replied that there would be. Commissioner Oickle asked how high the light pole would be. Mr. Argiros said that a 20' high light pole was proposed. Commissioner Oickle asked if this met the new regulations. Mr. Gillespie said that it did not as the requirements limit the height to 18', and that this was to be one of his comments.

Commissioner Munroe said that the lights in the rear would be more obvious to the residents behind the property. Mr. Argiros said that there had to be lighting as a security issue for the elderly residents. Commissioner Oickle asked if the new lights were different from the old ones. The existing lights are at an angle and give more illumination. The new lights shine straight down.

Commissioner Oickle said that the Applicant seems to have a lot of variances on the site and it seems to be overbuilt. He asked if the number of units was reduced, would a lot of the zoning issues be satisfied. Mr. Argiros said that the grant would be reduced making it impossible to build.

Mr. Gillespie said that the Applicant did meet before the ZBA last night and even though there was no letter before the Commissioners, they did get approval of the requested variances. The Design Review Committee reviewed and approved the plan asking for more landscaping to be added, particularly that plantings be added near the border with the apartment complex. Mr. Hesketh said that this has subsequently been done and pointed out the trees that had been added on the final plan. Mr. Gillespie said that the type of tree was discussed as well, the Design Review Committee specifically asked for no crabapple trees. He also reminded the Commission that they have the ability to grant waivers for this application.

The applicant is asking for the following waivers:

- A waiver from the regulations §6.8.b regarding the location of refuse storage areas.
- A waiver from the regulations §3.4.e.9 regarding the requirement for two driveways. The plan shows one driveway instead of two for both ingress and egress, however a second driveway is provided for emergency services use.
- A waiver from the regulations §6.1.L regarding modifications to the proposed landscaping. 32 deciduous trees are required and 16 are proposed.

Mr. Gillespie stated that the motion to approve should reflect the above as well as:

- The plan should be modified to reflect the changes granted by the ZBA in the variance for common open space.
- The plan should be modified to add details for the stockade fence around the dumpster and details for the proposed lighting for the site. All proposed lighting is to be 90° full cutoff to minimize glare. The staff shall review said details.
- The three existing parcels on the property need to be combined to make one parcel.
- The existing trees on the property need to be flagged before any development happens to ensure that they are maintained.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the Fire Marshal had any comments. Mr. Gillespie said that their comments have been limited to specific building and code issues at this point. The Fire Marshall asked for the second emergency access, and a lot of his other concerns go away when the building is sprinkled.

Commissioner Oickle asked why there is no public hearing on this matter. Mr. Gillespie said that the new regulations contemplate an instance where a zoning change would be necessary prior to the Special Residential Development District project going forward. This isn't the case here, so no public hearing is required.

Commissioner Forsdick made a motion to approve application 1446-05-Z with the following conditions:

- The three existing parcels on the property need to be combined to make one parcel.
- The existing trees on the property need to be flagged before any development happens to ensure that they are maintained.
- The waiver from the regulations §6.8.b regarding the location of refuse storage areas is granted.
- The waiver from the regulations §3.4.e.9 regarding the requirement for two driveways is granted. The project is permitted to have one driveway instead of two for both ingress and egress, however a second driveway must exist for emergency services use.
- The waiver from the regulations §6.1.L regarding modifications to the proposed landscaping is granted.
- The plan should be modified to reflect the changes granted by the ZBA in the variance for common open space.
- The plan should be modified to add details for the stockade fence around the dumpster.
- The plan should be modified to add details for the proposed lighting for the site. All proposed lighting is to be 90° full cutoff to minimize glare. The staff shall review said details.

Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. Chairman Hammer asked for any discussion on the matter, seeing none, he asked for a vote on the matter. All members present voted (6-1):

Aye: Hammer, Forsdick, Knecht, Munroe, Roberts, Wagner; Nay: Oickle; Abst: Edwards

Chairman Hammer announced that Application 1446-05-Z has passed.

Commissioner Roberts requested that the Commission revisit the content of the regulations §6.8.

APPLICATION NO. 1447-05-Z. Nextel Communications Inc. seeking approval under Article XXXI for a change that is not significant - installation of wireless telecommunications equipment at the existing tower, located on the east side of the road in a General Business District Zone at 250 Silas Deane Highway.

Tom Flynn, Nextel Communications, 100 Corporate Place, Rocky Hill CT introduced himself as the next applicant. Nextel has reached an agreement with the town to locate their antennas at the 100' antenna centerline on the existing antenna at 250 Silas Deane Highway. The installation would include 12 panel antennas and a 12' x 20' prefabricated aggregate material shelter next to the town's equipment shelter. The cable will run to the shelter via cable bridge. The applicant plans to relocate the existing fence behind the police station. Mr. Flynn said that he thinks it is a simple application, the Town Council has approved the lease, and the Town Engineer has reviewed the plans and finds them acceptable.

Chairman Hammer asked if all of the comments in the letter from the Town Engineer had been addressed. Mr. Gillespie said that he was not sure that the shelter exterior meets the exterior of the other shelter. Mr. Flynn said that he would be willing to color the exterior as the Commission wished. Mr. Gillespie also said that the Town had not seen

the final drawings of the telephone service to the shelter. Mr. Flynn said that has since been met and final utility plans have been completed.

Commissioner Oickle asked what underground cabling would be needed. Mr. Flynn said that it would be separate electric and cable. Mr. Flynn said that their service would use the existing conduit. Mr. Gillespie said that the applicant would need to coordinate with the lieutenant of the police department regarding construction.

Commissioner Oickle asked if Verizon comes in would a third shelter be constructed. Mr. Gillespie said that it would be at their next meeting. Mr. Flynn said that drawing C-2 shows all three shelters. Each antenna has its own equipment needs. The cabling is all inside the tower itself. Commissioner Oickle said that since it is a huge distance and a substantial amount of trees in the area, there should be no problem with the neighbors.

Commissioner Roberts asked if the proposed shelters are where they were intended to be at the outset of the hearings. Mr. Gillespie indicated that he was not sure because he was not around when it was originally permitted. He said that this proposed shelter was not visible, but the next one (Verizon) will be more visible.

Commissioner Munroe asked if it was necessary for each service to have its own shelter. Mr. Flynn said that each carrier needs its own space for its own equipment, unless there is a very large building constructed, you will see each carriers equipment shelter. Clerk Knecht asked if the separation of the structures were based upon safety factors. Mr. Flynn said in this case, the separation had more to do with the location of the parking spaces and the existing shelters. The technologies among the carriers are very different, and the way that this location has been set up, it is not conducive to one large structure housing each carrier's equipment. The Town of Farmington has done this with a garage type structure on New Britain Avenue.

Chairman Hammer asked if there were any other questions. Seeing none, he asked for a motion.

Mr. Gillespie indicated that they should not have any conditions.

Chairman Oickle made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Chairman Forsdick seconded the motion. Chairman Hammer called for a vote. All members present voted in favor of the application (8-0).

Aye: Hammer, Forsdick, Knecht, Munroe, Roberts, Wagner, Oickle; Abst: Edwards

Chairman Hammer then called the next application before the commission:

Pre-application Review: Housing Authority of the Town of Wethersfield - Guidance on Special Residential Development Zone requirements for building an accessory storage building at 60 Lancaster Road.

Steven Gilmore, Crew Leader, was present from the Housing Authority to explain the application. He explained that the Housing Authority is trying to build an accessory building to house equipment like snow plows, lawnmowers, etc.

Mr. Gillespie said that Section 3.4 of the regulations permits accessory structures in a Special Residential District, however there are no specific requirements as to size and shape, setbacks, etc. Therefore, since the regulations are silent, it either has to go to the ZBA or gets approved under Section 3.4. He wanted to bring it before the Commission for discussion.

The Housing Authority has identified the location of the building and is looking to get guidance on which way to go. Chairman Hammer said that Section 6.d is broad enough to cover it. Commissioner Oickle said that he would rather the Commission hears the case and not have it go before the ZBA. He asked about the residences around it. Mr. Gilmore said that Lancaster Road is at the front and probably 280' away from any residences. A backyard connects, but it is all fenced in and is probably 180' from that.

Commissioner Oickle said that he would give it due consideration based upon distances from the residences. He isn't sure that it needs a public hearing. Commissioner Forsdick asked if the building would be on the 60 Lancaster Road lot. Mr. Gilmore said that it would be. Commissioner Oickle asked if he was anxious to get started. Mr. Gilmore

replied that he was anxious to start in the spring if possible.

Mr. Gillespie then suggested a site plan application to consider this accessory building. Commissioner Roberts said that this is a Special Residential District and that the Commission should retain jurisdiction over the matter just as they would with AHEPA if they had brought up the matter.

Chairman Hammer said that the consensus was that the Commission would consider the matter. Commissioner Oickle asked if they would waive the fee to the Authority. Mr. Gillespie said that would be possible. Commissioner Oickle told Mr. Gilmore that the application should include whether it was a maintenance building and what roof line, type, design and materials would be used. He told Mr. Gilmore that the Staff would work with him to get the application into the system.

Chairman Hammer said that Mr. Gilmore should be able to explain the proposal to the Commission at the public meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Hammer then moved onto the next item on the agenda, approval of [minutes from the November 30, 2004 meeting](#). He asked for a motion.

Commissioner Oickle said that he took issue with the detail of the minutes, specifically on page 3. He made a motion to approve the minutes with some modifications, including eliminating the use of quotation marks. Commissioner Munroe seconded the motion. The motion passed with those present voting in favor (5-0)

Aye: Hammer, Knecht, Munroe, Oickle, Edwards; Abst: Forsdick, Roberts, Wagner

Chairman Hammer then asked for a motion on [the January 19, 2005 minutes](#). Commissioner Oickle made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Forsdick seconded the motion. All members present and eligible to vote, voted in favor (7-0).

Aye: Hammer, Forsdick, Knecht, Munroe, Roberts, Oickle, Edwards; Abst: Wagner

OTHER MATTERS

- Annual Meeting of the CT Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies. There was a discussion about who would attend the annual meeting. Commissioners Munroe, Oickle, Roberts, Hammer, Forsdick and Knecht said that they would attend. Commissioner Edwards will not attend.
- There was some discussion about the Hughes Brothers project. The clearing is complete and there will be no carwash right away. The fencing on the west side of the site needs to be rebuilt. The fence on the LaCava side will be replaced with stockade fencing.
- The Commissioners discussed the blight patrol. One of the members indicated that it was on the 6 o'clock news. Mr. Gillespie said that there has been an initial list of properties formed without even taking inventory of the other properties in the town. The Commissioners encouraged this activity. It was noted that the enforcement staff meets regularly to discuss projects.
- Mr. Gillespie said that the Town Council has allowed for him to pursue an assistant planner position. This person would work part time starting at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Gillespie indicated that he has struggled to do some of the plan review and coordination among departments. The Commissioners appreciated being told about this and indicated that they still wanted to see Mr. Gillespie present at all meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hammer asked if there was any other correspondence or other business. Seeing none, Chairman Hammer asked if there was motion to adjourn. Commissioner Forsdick made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and a poll of the Commission the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Aye: Hammer, Forsdick, Knecht, Oickle, Roberts, Munroe, Wagner, Edwards

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Philip Knecht, Clerk