



Town of Watertown, Connecticut

Land Use Administration
Watertown Municipal Center
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REVISED
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING

Minutes
April 6, 2022
6:30PM

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Vice-Chairman Raymond Antonacci called the meeting to order at 6:30PM

Members Present: Raymond Antonacci, Vice-chairman
Lou Cavallo, Secretary
Jack McHugh
Dave Pope
Bob Marinaro
Dan DiVito
Joe D'uva

Members Absent : Richard Antonetti, Chairman
Lou Esposito
Ken DeMirs

Others Present : Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services
Paul Bunevich, Town Engineer
Carol Allen, Administrative Assistant

Vice Chair Raymond Antonacci led the pledge of allegiance.

Joe D'uva seated for Lou Esposito
Jack McHugh seated for Richard Antonetti
Bob Marinaro seated for Ken Demirs

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – none.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

1. Regular Meeting February 2, 2022
2. Regular Meeting March 2, 2022 (meeting cancelled)

Text of Motion: Table February 2, 2022 minutes

Motion made by: D. Pope

Seconded by: J. D'uva

All in Favor

STAFF REPORT

Mark Massoud reported:

1. Several changes were made from the Connecticut State Legislature in 2021 with deadlines approaching. The matters will be brought before the commission in the next few months.
2. Subcommittee coming back to meet for the zoning regulations reviewing the changes made by the consultant. It will be finished and put before the commission for a vote.
3. Each municipality is tasked in revision of its Affordable Housing Plan and will have preparation for discussion at the next meeting.
4. Actions needed in this calendar year in regards to accessory apartments in regards to allowing them or not and will have information regarding this.
5. Cannabis regulations are moving forward in terms of implementation. The town does have on the books a probation against the retail sales of cannabis in regards to having some review and discussion from the commission.
6. Relaxed regulations for outdoor dining due to COVID has been extended for at least another year.
7. Exploration of permit and approvals has been extended.
8. Starting in 2023 there will be requirement training for land use commissioners for four hours and then four hours every two years.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – none.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Letter dated February 6, 2022 from Margaret LaFlamme and Joseph Masi, co-owners of the French Hill Estates Subdivision requesting a revision to the approved subdivision – paving road width from 30' to 24'.

Attorney Franklin Pilicy: I wrote a letter dated March 1, 2022 that outlines the application. This subdivision was approved in 2010 but due to legislation last year the approval expiration has continued until December 23, 2029. Due to economic conditions the development has not started. In 2014 this commission amended subdivision regulations to allow for certain subdivision roads where width could be approved either 24 feet or 30 feet depending on commission decision at the time of approval. Because this development had not been started this application is requesting a modification to the 24 foot pavement width as opposed to 30 feet that was mandated at the time the subdivision was approved. In support of this I prepared along with Mr. Masi some additional information of street width in the immediate neighborhood that show all the town streets that access French and so forth are 24 feet in some cases with one exception which is the Stepanie Subdivision where that was approved with a mandatory 30 feet. I also point out for purposes of reference Route 6 in front of my house is a 24 feet width. This subdivision is relatively short, it's a dead end street it is eleven houses on that portion of the road that is why it is being requested, the 24 foot road width. It's my opinion that if this subdivision were approved anytime after 2014 it would be a 24 foot road, certainly no need for a 30 foot road when you only have 11 houses feeding into a cull-de-sac. Because this is a provision in your regulations already, this is not necessarily a waiver as such and is in the nature of a modification which only requires a majority vote.

Joe Masi, 33 Pleasantview Street: Mr. Pilicy gave the basic background on all the streets on French Street. Mr. Masi read a letter into the record.

Mr. Masi showed the commissioners a map.

Paul Bunevich, Town Engineer: The previous reduction in the street width since the last 20 years were only in zones of R30, R70 or R90. The only one was R30 Peck Lane off of Nova Scotia. After a long discussion with the Fire Marshal she told me she is against this road width reduction. It is a parking issue because these lots are in the R12.5 and are small because of the site constraints, they are not going to have long driveways. If you look on the site development plan most of the driveways end at the setback line which is 35 feet I believe. If you look at the subdivision on Peck Lane the driveways are at least 100 feet long or more. They have plenty of length for parking for an event an individual might have and that was a concern. My original letter I was okay with the MS04 requirements from DEEP which were trying to eliminate impervious areas in any way shape or form reducing the road from there made some sense. After discussion with Mark, the Fire Marshal and Mr. Spina we decided that this would set a precedent the R12.5 that could be acceptable if the lots were bigger and have bigger setbacks for the house with increased driveway length and storage. One other thing Mr. Masi said this is a 11 lot subdivision it is 18 division and as Commissioner Pope mentioned there are 7 lots off this one driveway and would not be approved today. The

maximum you could get was 2 off a common driveway in this zone subject to the commission's approval. The basic point is Mr. Spina, myself and Kim Calabrese are in agreement that this was not a good idea after further discussion we had.

Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services: When Mr. Masi first came we had offered a compromise. To keep that portion of the driveway at 30 feet and narrow the rest of the main road to 24 feet which appeared acceptable to Mr. Masi. After that we deferred to the Fire Marshal and to Public Works in terms of making a determination as to whether they find that proposal acceptable or not.

The commission had concerns regarding what the hardship would be, enough width for snow shoveling in the winter and enough width for fire trucks & ambulances.

Attorney Franklin Pilicy: Every other street that touches French Street is 24 feet or less and does see multiples of the traffic.

Paul Bunevich, Town Engineer: None of the streets that Attorney Pilicy and Mr. Masi mentioned were approved after subdivision regulations. They were enacted in 1964. Stephanie Street is the only new street and that touches French Street and that is 30 feet.

Joe Masi: Those roads that were established years ago have been in existence for up to ten years with the parking everywhere and fire trucks get through.

Vice Chair Raymond Antonacci: We have the Director of Public Works, the Fire Department and the Town Engineer saying that they don't approve of this and they are experts. I will defer to them in this situation.

Text of Motion: Deny request for a revision to the approved subdivision paving road width from 30' to 24'.

Motion made by: R. Marinaro

Second by: D. Marinaro

Nay: D. Marinaro, D. Pope

Aye: R. Antonacci, J. Duva, J. McHugh, D. Divito

No abstentions

On a vote of 4 in favor to deny the request and 2 against, the request to deny was approved.

2. Site Plan application from Matt Oneglia, for a 15,000 Sq. Ft. medical office at 486 Straits Turnpike, Watertown Map 152, Block 256, Lot 4.

Matt Oneglia, Torrington: We were approved at the December meeting for a special permit for a medical office use. We have worked with staff for months with our plan responding to their comments. Regarding the plan itself and believe we have addressed everything required of us I am here tonight for an approval.

Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services: We did ask from the initial site plan to make some refinements to the plan which included an installation of a public sidewalk along Bunker Hill Road, retention of the existing stone road on the building, a pedestrian connection internal sidewalk from Straits Turnpike and from Bunker Hill Road, improved landscaping, we will note that the commission needs to approve the reduction of the landscaping plan towards the adjacent property with the substitution of fencing. In front of you, you have architectural plans, we asked originally for the eastern elevation which faces Straits Turnpike in terms of presentation to the parking lot have a plain façade we asked for improvement from Straits Turnpike. They have included some smaller windows and landscaping. We are asking if you are comfortable or have any questions otherwise they have addressed all the concerns and requirements they would have asked at this point.

Vice Chair Raymond Antonacci: Would it be possible to improve the façade on Straits Turnpike side. It would be subject to Mark Massoud's approval for the façade on the eastern elevation facing Straits Turnpike.

Text of Motion: Approve Site Plan application from Matt Oneglia, for a 15,000 Sq. Ft. medical office at 486 Straits Turnpike, Watertown Map 152, Block 256, Lot 4. In accordance with staff resolution dated April 4, 2022

Motion made by: D. Pope
Second by: D. DiVito
All in Favor

3. Site Plan application Watertown Plastics, Inc. for construction of a 10,000 Sq. Ft building addition and expansion of a parking lot at 830 Echo Lake Road, Watertown, CT. Map 103 Block 96 Lot C2

Brian Baker, Civil One, Licensed Engineer: We are looking for an addition to an existing industrial manufacturing building at 830 Echo Lake Road. We did a full survey at the existing property and had the wetlands flagged in the back. We are in the IR80 zone on the south side of Echo Lake Road. Six hundred and sixty feet west

of the intersection of Buckingham Street. Braxton Manufacturing and other industrial uses are to the east of the site. We have an existing factory building with parking along the front and side of the building with loading docks in the rear. Existing storm drainage goes back to an existing detention basin in the back of the property. The additions and improvements are entirely in the rear of the building, the 10,000 square foot addition. It is proposed to include two loading docks and an additional overhead door. Based upon the additional size of the building we were required for additional parking in the rear as well as a row of 11 spaces in the front of the property. We modified that based on comments from Mark and Paul. In accordance with the MS4 requirements we had to expand the detention basin and add a second detention basin with some underground infiltrators to treat the storm water. There is wetland regulated activity with no direct impact to the wetlands reviewed and approved by the Wetlands Commission. Due to the spaces in the front 2 trees had to come down and Mr. Bunevich asked from them to be replaced. I have shown 2 flowering dogwoods to replace those in front. We also had originally 12 parking spaces in that front bay area and we were asked to relocate one of them in the back and that would save an existing third tree that is already in the front. We did address comments that came in from Mark and Paul on this.

Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services: The revisions that we requested from the original plan were minor in nature. As stated this is a 10,000 square foot addition to the rear of the building. We had some minor comments with regards to parking spaces and loading docks which have been adequately addressed. I will note that the applicant did ask for a waiver of Section 8.8.17 of the landscape requirements because most of the addition and the construction will be to the rear of the property and not visible from the front of the site and staff is amenable to that waiver as well.

Text of Motion: Approve Site Plan application Watertown Plastics, Inc. for construction of a 10,000 Sq. Ft building addition and expansion of a parking lot at 830 Echo Lake Road, Watertown, CT. Map 103 Block 96 LotC2 in accordance with staff resolution dated April 4, 2022.

Motion made by: D. Pope

Second by: D. DiVito

All in Favor

4. Site Plan/Special Permit #2022-03 from Waterbury Auto Group for a used car and sales repair at 55 McLennan Drive, Oakville, CT.

Vice Chair Raymond Antonacci: This needs to be set for a public hearing for May 4th.

Text of Motion: Schedule a Public Hearing for May 4, 2022

Motion made by: J. McHugh

Second by: D. Pope

All in Favor

5. Joseph Polletta for Lakeview Estates Subdivision revision of conservation easement location on lots 10,11,12.

Giuseppe Polletta, 25 Lakeview Drive: I own lots on Lakeview Drive in Watertown. Due to the topography of the lands I need to fill the rear of the lots in order to have small backyards for future homes. By filling the rear of the lots I will be into a conservation easement. This application was approved by wetlands and with this change will make a bigger easement around the open space. Mr. Polletta presented maps for the commission's review. I want to add the one in yellow is existing and it's behind the lots and you see the proposed which is right next to the open space and next to the lake. Instead of having these pieces behind the lots, put them all together it will give a better look and more open space area. You could see the existing open space is approximately 26,516, I am proposing to give out 2,750 square feet so it will be over a thousand square feet more which would benefit the town. It will give me a chance to make these lots a little bit better.

Text of Motion: Approve Joseph Polletta for Lakeview Estates Subdivision revision of conservation easement location on lots 10,11,12.

Motion made by: D. Pope

Second by: J. McHugh

All in Favor

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING

1. Site Plan/Special Permit#2021-06 application from Sasaki Associates, Inc on behalf of Taft School, 110 Woodbury Road, Watertown, CT, to install four (4) 70 foot sports lighting poles and lights on Snyder Field. Parcel ID Map 99, Block 58, Lot 7

Jake Oden, 101 Hamilton Avenue, CFO Taft: Mr. Oden reviewed slides with the commission showing the aerial view with the property lines highlighted in red. Mr. Oden talked about the school having four properly designed and built athletic fields, the upper football track field in the left, one call the existing turf field and the other is called the grass field and the oval is the newly built second turf. In addition to the construction of the field we are doing extensive landscaping and a networks of path that we are introducing that will serve the campus and community well. The lighting reviewed to the commission which highlighted on fitness for students extending the day in early spring and late fall. It is about evolving the experience

keeping in line with other high schools and keeping up with the times to a large extent. There are four poles in the design two of them are on a hill and one is fairly camouflaged by our own building and the other is a little exposed to outside the campus boundaries. We respect our valued place in the historic district. There are four poles in the design one is on the hill, camouflaged by our own buildings and the other exposed to outside the campus boundaries. Other concerns that have emerged that we spoke about were traffic and noise. The traffic will not change here it is high school sport for a very large game we get one to 200 spectators. The parking would continue to be off of Guernsey Town Road where areathletic parkings takes place today. The noise day to day our kids are outdoors until dusk and this would be extending potentially at certain times by 30 minutes maybe an hour when you are talking about special event games. On weekends we anticipate the latest a game would start at 7 pm outside of a weather delay or a bus breaking down on the way that would have the game ending at 9, 9:30. We are talking a few games in the fall and a few games in the spring. In the winter noone is going to be out there having games on weekends. It is prodimately for soccer and Lacrosse would be the lead sports on these fields. The school runs a summer program but it doesn't involved inner scholastic or competition, it would be daytime activity. We did a site visit with ZBA and the public. Mr Oden showed pictures of the proposed lighting and explained the new technology with having higher light poles with a hood having would have no light spill and sky glow.

Heather Allen, 101 Walnut Street: I have been to all the hearings and site visits following this closely from the beginning due to concerns. They did get their variance for the poles and they are enormous. I do understand that the higher poles do target the light on the field. I would like you to set some conditions of approval, this is a sizeable venue in a densily populated area. It is visible the pictures don't show how big these poles are going to be. On the site visit even the big poles are enormous. Every time I take the corner from North Street to Route 6 I will go over there and its not completely tucked away. They could turn night into day is the point. The lighting is a concern for me and the noise. The noise carries tremdously, I am at the top of Walnut Street. Games are very loud but they are during the day you live with it it is not a big deal. There is a party at night from the main campus and you can hear it, I am awake until it is over. A firend of mine that lives a half mile up Route 63 towards Litchfield she can hear the party on the main campus. I would like to feel that the neighbors have some kind of recourse. I would ask that certain things be made a condition of approval starting with the type of activity, the frequency, set some kind of limit that is reasonable but not unlimited and then set a finish time.

Diane Sherry: I am not in favor of the lights to begin with and I know that is not the issue. One of my concerns is I am going to see the lights at night and I have a concern about the noise. Because they do play music during their games. It seems like a lot of money was spent on this field for only 8 usages. I understand it is a school and it does have activities but in the past years they have played in the

daylight so I don't know if it is a hardship. The school is located in a beautiful residential area and I am concerned that the atmosphere is going to change with the lights and the noise. Like Ms. Allen had said there is parties at night and the music is very loud there have been nights where I have not been able to go to sleep. I am afraid this field is used for if they rent it out to premier clubs, theaters and the noise is going to be escalated in more times that it is occurring. I would appreciate if you would take the neighbors considerations when your making your decision.

Jake Oden, 101 Hamilton Avenue, CFO Taft: A few things just to be clear there was a lot of investment in this field and used extensively since the turf went down three weeks ago. Obviously you are going to say you have made some investment in lighting technology The school with all of its facilities is a good member of the community making them accessible to people other than ourselves. If we charge money it is nominal amount to cover some component of cost. We are not looking to generate income from the field. If we were renting the field or an outside group use it, often it is for charitable causes someone in our community or locally. Our own bias would be not to do it at night. Again it is about our own use in the evening or the community. The school has been present in Watertown since the early 90's and we maintain an open campus that is accessible to all of neighbors, to anyone in the town. Walking through the campus with their dogs and that is part of the relationship we want to have with the community. The music is played during games presentation and we don't we don't install systems to play during the game. We do play by play and the score or who was involved in the play, so we want to be sensitive in that regard. The restrictions in place with the high school that would make sense for us and abide by them.

Vice Chair Raymond Antonacci asked questions on Ms. Allen's concerns regarding is it for athletic games only, frequency of games, finish times and music being played to loudly.

Lou Cavallo: I am in favor of giving Taft the same latitude as the high school.

Heather Allen , 101 Walnut Street: I want to reiterate my concerns are with other uses. The fields be used for athletic games only and limit the noise and the number of games. I have a concern about the precedent it is setting it and to set some kind of conditions of approval.

Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services: There is a way for the commission to draw the applicant back and tell the them you are outside of the parameters and have a dialogue with them. The second point is the hard start with a leeway of an half an hour for those occurrences where a game does go over.

Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services: Mr. Massoud read the statement of use from Taft.

Jake Oden: Setting rigid restrictions is going to cause a problem. We need to abide by the general ordinances of the town. Predicting what will happen in the future is hard.

Daniel DiVito: Asked if you used 30 foot poles would you be setting restrictions.

Mark Massoud: No.

Text of Motion: Approve Site Plan/Special Permit#2021-06 application from Sasaki Associates, Inc on behalf of Taft School, 110 Woodbury Road, Watertown, CT, to install four (4) 70 foot sports lighting poles and lights on Snyder Field. Parcel ID Map 99, Block 58, Lot 7.

Motion made by: D. DiVito
Second by: D. Pope
All in Favor

NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Carol Allen read the legal notices.

1. Site Plan/Special Permit #2022-01 of Bela Sztanko, EPS Auto Sales for a car sales at 11 Falls Avenue, Oakville, CT in a B-C zoning district Map 133 Block 197 Lot 2

Bela Sztanko, 11 Falls Avenue: I run a car repair business at 11 Falls Avenue. We are a repair shop exclusively dealing in Porsche automobiles. During the course of this business we buy and sell cars from our customers. The State of Ct dictates if you buy and sell more than 3 vehicles a year you would have to get a dealer's license. We have been up against the limit and I want to stay in compliance with the state and town in applying to change my license to a car sales facility. Now our business model will not be changing but we are continuing business status as we have been for the last 10 years. Occasionally I just buy a couple of cars and sell them when customers are tired of upgrade or downgrade and making sure we follow the letter of the law.

Vice Chair Raymond Antnacci: This application creates sort of a dilemma for the commission. We would like to propose this zoning for car sales, it has requirements that your site does not seem to meet and if we approve it, it brings up issues and it also opens up the doors for other people who have a garage to get new car dealership licenses without meeting all the regulations. What I propose is that we table this matter and we are going to ask the board to continue it with Mr. Massoud so we can work some kind of arrangement that would not create a precedent for a difficult situation for the commission to live with. We appreciate your business

being in town but we do have to protect the integrity of the regulations at the same time.

Bela Sztanko: I do appreciate that thank you. I will work with Mr. Massoud.regarding the regulations.

Text of Motion: Table to the May 4, 2022 Regular Meeting

Motion made by: D. Pope

Second by: D. DiVito

All in Favor

2. Site Plan/Special Permit #2022-02 of Bassett Farm, LLC for construction of a single-family home, an accessory dwelling, a common driveway, and onsite septic system on a parcel of land aka Map 10 Block 26 Lot 2A Bassett Road, Watertown, CT.

Brian Baker, Civil One, License Engineer in the State of Ct: This is a 22 acre parcel. Mr. Baker showed the commission a overall site plan showing the property line, the wetland areas, the proposed driveway with wetlands crossing which serve a single family dwelling. This is part of a 5 residential subdivision and this section of the property has 3 lots approved at the time. It was never built so it stayed. We had a new buyer come in and wants to develop the one house with an attached garage. In lots of towns we deal with, this would simply be a sign off by staff and what you have in your zoning regulations is accessory dwelling with a special permit with a public hearing. It is just a single family residents not an accessory dwelling we wouldn't be here before you. It has already been approved by Wetlands with a wetlands crossing. It requires a culvert approved by state and local health departments. From a zoning stand point is a relatively straight forward application. Staff comments included line distances for the driveway, clarifying what sections of the driveway would be paved, and then added some timber guiderails I think we have adequately addressed staff comments at this time. As part of the wetlands approval part of the clearing would be limited to non wetland area.

Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services: We have had conversations with the applicant and he has satisfied them with minor revisions to the plan. I would agree with Mr. Baker's assessment that current regulations in my opinion are rather restrictive in terms of the process that one goes through to get a detached accessory dwelling. Hopefully the commission will address those issues in the future. They meet all their requirements and we have a resolution for your consideration.

No comments from commissioners.

No comments from the public.

Text of Motion: Close the Public Hearing
Motion made by: J. McHugh
Second by: D. Pope
All in Favor

Text of Motion: Approve Site Plan/Special Permit 2022-02 of Bassett Farm, LLC
in accordance with staff resolution dated April 4, 2022.

Motion made by: D. DiVito
Second by: D. Pope
All in Favor

OLD BUSINESS

1. Echo Asset, LLC, "O" Echo Lake Road, site plan application for development of an industrial building comprised of 4,800 s.f. of office space, 8,000 s.f. of shop area with associated parking for employees and vehicles. Map 104 Block 90 L23A

Sev Bovino: It is served by public water & sewer and is in the IG80 with 33 plus or minus acres. The proposal is to build a 12,00 square foot building with 4,800 square feet of office and 8,000 square feet for shops including a fuel pump for their trucks. There will be two tanks at the pump, one pump will be for diesel fuel. We are proposing 57 truck parking spaces. The shop will have 6 bays with an entrance on grade. There is no floor drains proposed with the shop. An area with 125 feet is set for equipment storage for the property. The buildings are placed 800 feet from Echo Lake Road. To avoid blasting we have followed the existing clearing. We climbed the grades to avoid wetlands. Landscaping is proposed all around the building. The lighting is LED shielded with full cut off fixtures directed towards the ground. The proposed drainage system has water quality swales and basins. The drainage systems meets and exceeds the water quality standards. The detention area provides zero runoff for a storm event. The detention area maintenance schedule is on the plan. We received wetlands approval, we revised the plans to reflect their concerns. We have provided truck movement throughout the property. A photometric plan has been provided for staff together with a construction sequence. We have addressed all comments from staff.

Mark Massoud, Administrator For Land Use/Building Services: We did make some comments with regards with truck turning. Parking has been satisfied. I believe the Town Engineer had some comments with regards to the driveway entrance and some site lines and I believe those are in his staff report and we referenced the conditions of approval that those be met as a condition of approval.

No comments from the commission.

Text of Motion: Approve Echo Asset, LLC, "O" Echo Lake Road, site plan application for development of an industrial building comprised of 4,800 s.f. of office space, 8,000 s.f. of shop area with associated parking for employees and vehicles. Map 104 Block 90 L23A in accordance with a resolution from Mark Massoud dated April 4, 2022 and also by a report written by Town Engineer Paul Bunevich on the site lines on Echo Lake Road.

Motion made by: D. DiVito
Second by: D. Pope
All in Favor

ADJOURNMENT

Text of Motion: Adjourn at 9:05PM
Motion made by: D. Pope
Second by: D. DiVito
All in Favor

Lou Cavallo _____
Secretary