



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

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**MINUTES- REVISED
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
THURSDAY JANUARY 4, 2024
REGULAR MEETING 7:00 PM**

This meeting was held remotely, solely via ZOOM.

Commissioners Present: C. Andres, J. Chadwick, J. Vaiuso, F. Russo, M. Liguori, S. Huttner

Commissioners Absent: M. Palluzzi

Staff Present: H. Smith (Town Planner), E. Breining-(Asst. Town Planner), M. Martin- Clerk

Chairperson Andres introduced the commission and staff.

Secretary F. Russo read the public hearing notice.

Chairperson Andres reviewed the public hearing meeting procedures.

E. Breining reviewed how to participate in the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Branford Real Estate LLC
c/o Arian Prevala-Applicant & Owner
544 & 558 West Main Street
Special Exception - Used Car Sales Dealership
Application #23-10.2
A/R 11/2/23 & PH set for 1/4/24

H. Smith stated that additional information is still needed.

The applicant has asked that this public hearing be opened and continued to the February 1, 2024 meeting.

MINUTES: 12/7/23 & 12/14/23

F. Russo made a motion to approve the 12-7 minutes.

J. Vaiuso seconded the motion which passed. (Sharon Huttner abstained)

J. Chadwick made a motion to approve the 12-14 minutes.

F. Russo seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

1. 40 Ct. Ave. Assoc. LLC- Applicant & Owner
11 Laurel Hill Road
Special Exception- for Grading (Sec. 6.8) - for a single family
Application #23-11.4
A/R 11/16/23 & PH set for 1/18/24

2. Scott & Lisa Santoroski-Applicants & Owners
37 Brainerd Road
Special Exception for Grading (Sec 6.8)
Application #23-11.5
A/R 11/16/23 & PH set for 2/1/2024 (with time extension)

3. Scott & Lisa Santoroski-Applicants & Owners
37 Brainerd Road
Special Exception- Three Family Dwelling
Application #23-11.6
A/R 11/16/23 & PH set for 2/1/2024 (with time extension)

**He reviewed the 3 new applications that came in on wed afternoon.
Staff will set the public hearing**

NEW BUSINESS:

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Proposed Incentive Housing Zone Development- 250 North Main Street
Conceptual Plan Review (per Section 5.7.B.4 of the Zoning Regulations)-

Two representatives of the applicant (A.R. Building Co.) were present; Emily Mitchell and Jason Kambitsis (President of AR Development Co.) spoke. Jason spoke first explaining the company is a real estate development company located in PA and is over 50 years old and they have 9,000 units in 14 states. They build, buy and manage all their own properties which sets their company apart from others. They plan on building 1500 units this year. He displayed some colored photos of their current projects (interior and exterior).

He then talked of the 250 North Main Street site and showed some aerial photos. He then displayed the concept plan which would be 242 units. (23 units per acre) They meet the parking requirements.

He talked of the height of the building (52 ½ feet). He asked the commission if they liked the plan, the height, the density, etc.

H. Smith reviewed the staff report he prepared. He spoke of the incentive housing zone, sidewalks, crosswalks, bus routes, etc. He displayed a site plan.

The Commissioners had a discussion and they each gave some input.

F. Russo likes the idea of residential in that location instead of commercial.

J. Chadwick likes the idea, he is ok with the density and height.

C. Andres likes the idea that the developer has a reputation of holding onto ownership of their developments. He favors housing that would be affordable. He is concerned about the density and the fact that a lot of commercial parcels in town are being taken up by residential and he listed some of them.

He spoke of density and hopes the developer will comply with the regulations.

M. Liguori agrees that this area would be better residential than commercial. He spoke of stores not doing well and housing is needed. He would like to keep the quaintness of Branford.

J. Vaiuso spoke and said he would like to see a good balance for residential and commercial uses thru town. He noted that this project is a bit dense. Residential would be good at that site but less dense. He would prefer 3 floors instead of 4 floors and less height.

S. Huttner agrees with the others as to the positive idea of residential. She is concerned about the density and also the sustainability of the development. She asked if the builder has looked into solar, ev chargers, heat pumps and also native plants for landscaping.

C. Andres noted that M. Palluzzi is absent this meeting.

H. Smith asked the group if they agreed with his comments that a safe pedestrian route to the transit stops and the sidewalk that goes to the town center should be included as part of the proposal.

The Commission agreed with H. Smith comments to create safe sidewalks and crosswalks and connection to the town center.

H. Smith then talked of the stats regarding new residential developments in town and the commissioners made a few comments.

Jason replied to some of the commissioners concerns and thanked them for their comments.

2. Possible Traffic Peer Review- 325 East Main Street

H. Smith noted this is the former Regal Cinema site and in anticipation of an application coming in, they talked to the applicant and suggested they start a traffic study since its possible the commission will require a peer review and that would take some time. And as a side note, IW reviewed an application and they approved it. The applicant did do a traffic study and as they were formalizing their final plan with Inland Wetlands commission, the town engineer reviewed the study and he submitted a letter which went out in your meeting packet. H. Smith noted the town engineer had some questions regarding the traffic and he suggested that a peer review would be appropriate. We have a few firms ready to submit proposals if the commission approves. He noted it is up to the commission, they are not bound by the Town Engineer's opinion.

The commission discussed it and agreed with the Town Engineer's opinion that a peer review should be performed.

3. Interpretation of Sight Triangle - definition wording (Zoning Regulation Section 2.2)

E. Breining asked the commission: how high are objects allowed to be in the site triangle? He read from the regulations (Section 6.12C) and the definition of a sight triangle. He noted that recently, he has gotten some inquiries regarding this and there is no specific height limit for objects. He then referred to the AASHTO standards. He asked the commission for a number (height) they feel is appropriate. He was going to use the AASHTO standard but wanted the commission to confirm that it was ok to do so.

C. Andres read from the regulations and made a few comments and the commissioners had a brief discussion.

The consensus of the commission was to use the AASHTO standard or less when appropriate.

H. Smith suggested using the current AASHTO standard or whatever this standard may change to be in the future.

4. Planner's Report

H. Smith is working on the zoning regulations text language changes. He said he hoped to have an initial draft to discuss at the next meeting or the following meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.