

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES
December 29, 2020

A special meeting of the East Granby Planning & Zoning Commission was held via ZOOM on Tuesday December 29, 2020. Members present when Chairman John Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. were David McNally, Thomas Derlinga, David Brassard, Amanda Thompson, Daniel Velcofsky and with alternate members Katie Hastings and Mark Ricketts.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. PZC's Zone Change Application (#20-06)

CP "A" Zone to CP Transitional Zone

Assessor's Lot# 11/Map 17 (rec'd 8/25/20) (h/d 12/08/20 cont'd to 12/29/20)

Mr. Haynes gave a brief overview from the last meeting, the history of the parcel and the reasons for the zone change proposal. This zone change is in conformance with and an implementation of the recommendations in the 2014 POCD.

Attorney T.J. Donahue explained how the Silverman Group has an excellent reputation and has worked well with other surrounding Towns. A short concept plan presentation was presented to the Commission. The trend is for distribution centers. This property has excellent location for highway access and is central to surrounding States. He discussed the site and abutting properties. They would protect the Village Center with natural and berms type buffers. The concept plan displayed half the site as buffer to surrounding uses. He noted that the site is so spatial that a distribution center could be built in such a way, it would not be visible to any of the abutting residential uses.

The concept plan showed two distribution center/warehouse type buildings (approx. 500,000-650,000 sq. ft. each) with a residential development to the front portion of the property abutting the Village Center area. The concept plan also showed several roadway connections for ingress/egress with the main egress onto Gateway Boulevard. He concluded by saying the Silverman group could fulfill the Town's needs. Mr. Welsh, noted for the record, that though the concept plan showed warehouses, he wanted it clear that what they were referring to were distribution centers.

Mr. Silverman noted that manufacturing was not "happening right now" but distribution centers are. Amanda Thompson was concerned with 3rd shift operations for noise and truck traffic. She questioned the Commission's ability to eliminate a third shift operation. Mr. Silverman stated that almost all are run as 24 hour facilities as many have a robotic third shift. Attorney Donahue noted that there was 500-1000 feet of separation to most residences. The traffic would head east toward the Route 91.

There was discussion on access to Hazelwood Road as that is a lighted intersection whereas Gateway Boulevard is not. That access is a possibility but details would need to be worked out with other property owners to allow that to happen.

Mr. Haynes stated that a special permit would be required in either zone but the issue is scale near the Village Center. He again stated that 300,000 sq. ft. would be more appropriate. Attorney Donahue explained that the site is costly to develop and 300,000 sq. ft. would not work. Scale has no impact if you can't see it. He wants to work together to develop a plan that works for them and the Town.

Mr. Welsh was concerned for the abutting properties – Town High School, Sanford Ridge, Higley Village and Schoolhouse Landing – and the impact to these developments. Building height in either zone is 45 feet. Mr. Haynes discussed other ideas such as a small warehouse to the southern part of the property, with a small industrial subdivision in the “center area” and residential/retail to the northerly part of the property that abuts the Village Center. There was a need to balance market trends with the best uses for this property for the Town.

Attorney Donahue wanted the opportunity to come back to show the Commission that development will not be visible with the use of aerials. . John McCormack compared this site with the development of apartments with 2 (550,000 sq. ft.) distribution centers on Day Hill Road on approximately 200 acres. Mr. Derlinga noted that it may be possible to make the building invisible but noise and truck traffic are still an issue. Attorney Donahue would like the opportunity to also get information to the Commission on truck traffic.

Mr. Welsh questioned whether the Commission should consider withdrawing or amending the application to redraw the zone lines so the southerly portion stays CP “A” and the northerly portion is rezoned to CP Transitional. Mr. Silverman stated that his proposal is viable and he can bring it to fruition. All distribution centers have truck traffic and all have a 3rd shift. The site has topography issues that make it costly to develop. He wants the opportunity to work together.

For public comment, Paul Oliva stated sound levels should to be limited during nighttime hours. In response to a public question, Mr. Silverman stated his residential development proposal would be apartments and he would maintain ownership.

Julie Sweeney, a resident on Turkey Hills Road, talked about the huge issues happening in Windsor with noise levels and traffic. She preferred the idea of mixed use and bringing retail to the area and having a well-lit walkable area for nighttime.

Mr. Derlinga displayed an aerial view of the property and the surrounding developments. Greg Nanni read from the 2014 POCD, page 46, under CP Transitional Zone Goals & Policies, which read the goal was to work with the owners of the 130 acre parcel for its development.

Mr. Haynes read an email into the record from a resident at Sanford Ridge in favor of the zone change. There were no further comments. Mr. Welsh explained that in the past, the former Commission Chairman never voted on the same night as the public hearing, to allow members to time to consider all that was heard and discussed. This was an option members may want to consider. The public hearing closed on this application. The public hearing portion of the meeting closed at 8:31 p.m.

DISCUSSION WITH APPLICANT AND/OR PUBLIC

None

MINUTES

A motion was made by Thomas Derlinga and seconded by Daniel Velcofsky to approve the minutes of 12/08/20 as submitted. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Presentation information from the Silverman Group for Application #20-06
- Email from Pat Linde regarding Application #20-06

OLD BUSINESS

A. Zoning Enforcement Report – no report

B. Planner Report –

a. Administrative Site Plan Approvals: none

NEW BUSINESS

A. PZC's Zone Change Application (#20-06)

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No one made a motion, No action taken at this time.

ADJOURNMENT to Executive Session

A motion was made by David McNally and seconded by Thomas Derlinga to adjourn the special meeting for an executive session to discuss current litigation at 8:43 p.m. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalie McKenney
Land Use Administrative Assistant