

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES
February 8, 2022

A meeting of the East Granby Planning & Zoning Commission was held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, via Zoom. Members present when Chairman Thomas Derlinga called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM were David Brassard, Charlie Allen, Daniel Velcofsky, John Welsh and alternate members Mark Ricketts and Jay Tran. Voting in place of absent member Amanda Thompson was Mark Ricketts.

PUBLIC HEARING

The legal notice was read.

A. Gary Ginsberg / Zone Change Application #22-01
Agricultural to Residential R-40 / 46 East Street
(rec'd 1/11/22) (h/d 2/08/22) (d/d 4/12/22)

CRCOG comments indicated no problem with the change.

T.J. Barresi, licensed engineer, licensed land surveyor, and principal owner of Barresi Associates in Windsor represented Gary Ginsberg for his zone change application for 46 East Street, a 2.698 lot presently in the Agricultural Zone. The property is a single-family home accessed off East Street and home of the applicant, Gary Ginsberg. Mr. Ginsberg is requesting to change the zone of the entire property from Agricultural to R-40 Residential. This proposed zone change will allow the property to be split into two legal residential home lots. One lot will maintain the existing home and a new home for the applicant's mother-in-law will be built on the new lot. This proposed use is in harmony with the abutting land uses, most of which are open space areas and residential uses to the south. According to Mr. Baressi, based on the current use of the property, the request is respectful of the regulations in the Town's Plan of Development.

Also included with the application was a concept plan showing how the property will be split and utilized. To assure the feasibility of creating another lot, tests with Farmington Valley Health District were conducted to make sure that the soil could support onsite septic systems and the test pits did meet the health code. Because of wetlands on the property, Mr. Ginsberg will have to request a permit from Inland Wetlands for the regulated activity. However, prior to submitting to wetlands, a successful zone change is required to make the lot legal.

Applicant and homeowner Gary Ginsberg also spoke to the Commission about his request for the zone change and thanked the Commission and Mr. Baressi for their time. As mentioned, if approved he will build a home for his mother-in-law on the adjacent lot.

Gary Haynes noted that in his staff report dated February 4, 2022, he recommended approval of the application. The applicant can create two lots and meet the R-40 setback requirements with appropriate lot width and minimum lot size. There is an existing nonconformity with the current historic home built closer to the road, but the plan does not involve any further increases in nonconformities. Mr. Haynes stated the applicant has demonstrated the location of the house within

the current setback requirements as well as a plan showing that they can meet the public health code requirements for the separation, and the condition that he suggested under 3.1 in his staff report is no longer necessary because a map has been provided showing the actual concept split.

David Brassard commented that he has no issue with the zone change to Residential. Thomas Derlinga and Charlie Allen also commented in favor of the change.

There was no public comment either in favor of or opposing the change, although an e-mail was received from town residents Debra and Charles Banning, 879 South Grand Street and Lisa and James Wosko, 875 South Grand Street in favor of the change. That e-mail was provided as part of the record and is listed in Communications.

With no further comments or questions, the public hearing closed on this application.

With no objections from the Commission and with the approval from the Silverman Group, the Commission skipped down to New Business on the agenda to vote on the zone change.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Gary Ginsberg / Zone Change Application #22-01 Agricultural to Residential R-40 / 46 East Street (rec'd 1/11/22) (h/d 2/08/22) (d/d 4/12/22)

A motion was made by David Brassard and seconded by John Welsh to approve the zone change Application #22-01 from Agricultural to Residential R-40 for property at 46 East Street. The change was in conformance with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development with an effective date of March 5, 2022. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION WITH APPLICANT AND/OR PUBLIC

A. Silverman Group – Rainbow Road / 130 Acre Parcel

Gary Haynes introduced Blake Silverman, Toby Nelson, and Holden Sabato from the Silverman Group, as well as Peter DeMaillie from Design Professionals. Blake Silverman thanked the Commission for the opportunity to present the project and gave a brief background about the firm. The Silverman Group is an investor, developer, and manager of real estate based in New Jersey with four regional offices located in Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Simsbury, Connecticut. It consists of about 25 million square feet of industrial, office, retail, and other properties in 20 states.

Mr. Silverman described the site as a 130-acre tract in close proximity to the airport off Route 20 (Rainbow Road), with ideal access to Interstate 91. He reviewed the Group's previous proposals to the Town, which first included a single 1,158,638 square foot commercial building, then a 933,300 square foot commercial building with an apartment community. However, because the Town expressed that these buildings would be too large and would prefer a village center concept in that area, plans were further revised to feature smaller commercial buildings at the rear of the site with the proposed residential apartments in front.

The current plan is to build an approximate 400,000 square foot building at the rear of the site with future building between it and the proposed front residential area. No traffic will enter through the residential area to service the commercial buildings. The building in the rear will be built on a speculative basis and the buildings in the front will be intended as multi-tenant buildings, with a truck court located between them for screening from the residential portion.

Existing trees will also provide screening and the residential area will be blocked off from the commercial area with an emergency access gate. Main access will be through Gateway Boulevard with secondary access through an easement area on Connecticut South Drive that is now part of the parcel owned by the Silverman Group. Charlie Allen questioned whether that area would be used for additional tractor trailer parking in addition to what is already indicated around the commercial buildings, and the Silverman Group replied that the option is there to use those spaces for extra trailer storage if desired. The number of trailer parking spaces in the proposal varies per concept.

John Welsh pointed out to the Commission that the proposals currently submitted by the Silverman Group are at this time simply a concept plan, not an actual site plan and are subject to change. Gary Haynes indicated the intention is for the Silverman Group to display their concept plan before the Commission to see if there is interest in it before they seek a regulation change to allow for a development of this purpose. The Silverman Group reiterated their commitment to the project and to ensuring that they cater to their tenants and businesses with the functionality of these buildings.

The Silverman Group continued their presentation with a description of the proposed residential layout: two 3.5 story buildings with 32 units and three 3.5 story buildings for a total of 148 apartments. To position the site as a community hub, an amphitheater, walking path, and a community park with a sports field are also proposed. The Silverman Group has constructed similar communities in Connecticut in Simsbury, North Haven, Brookfield, Norwalk, Stamford, West Hartford, and Meriden.

Jay Tran suggested that with the proximity of the gun club, the plans should probably consider some type of sound buffering.

Charlie Allen questioned whether the Town of East Granby's emergency services have the capability and equipment necessary to service units that are 3.5 stories high. This will have to be investigated.

Thomas Derlinga inquired as to whether the project would be completed in stages or all at once. The Silverman Group replied that they intend to construct both areas simultaneously.

The Silverman Group continued with block renderings of the multi-family construction envisioned for the project, which also illustrated the landscape buffering of the area from Rainbow Road.

Gary Haynes again summarized that as the developer works with the Town, there will be discussions as to how to match community needs with the concept plan.

David Brassard expressed concern that it will be difficult, based on the site itself, to truly screen these buildings from surrounding properties, including the high school and other neighboring developments. It was mentioned that in the mid portion of the development, there is a large amount of land and wetlands that serve as a buffer.

Mark Ricketts asked if the area between the site and Rainbow Road would be developed and/or if the commercial buildings would be visible to passing traffic. It was answered that the area would remain a green space and that the overall leveling of the site necessary for building will also help to screen the area.

Daniel Velcofsky commented that he likes the direction that the plan seems to be going in, has viewed the Simsbury and West Hartford locations constructed by the Silverman Group, and is excited to see how the plan progresses as it continues to move forward.

MINUTES

Charlie Allen noted that the fourth paragraph under “Election of Officers,” it should read that David Brassard was voted Vice Chairman. A motion was made by John Welsh and seconded by Daniel Velcofsky to approve the minutes of 1/11/2022 as amended by Mr. Allen. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission received:

- CT Federation of Planning & Zoning Agencies quarterly newsletter
- Regulation Change Application #22-02 by Timothy Brignole for the Craft Café License at wineries
- IWC Minutes for 2/02/22
- E-mail request from the Silverman Group for a discussion/presentation at the 2/8/22 meeting regarding their 130-acre parcel on Rainbow Road
- Staff comments dated 2/04/22 for Application #22-01 for 46 East Street
- CRCOG comments dated 2/04/22 for Application #22-01 for 46 East Street
- An e-mail from Gary Haynes dated 2/07/22 with attached revised map for Application #22-01 for 46 East Street
- An e-mail forwarded from Gary Hynes regarding the Silverman Group presentation for 2/8/22
- E-mail dated 2/08/22 from the Bannings & Woskos in favor of the zone change Application #22-01 for 46 East Street
- E-mail dated 2/04/22 from Attorney Carl Landolina with a text amendment for Regulation Change Application #22-02

OLD BUSINESS

A. Zoning Enforcement Report

170 Hartford Avenue

Complaints have been received from a neighbor regarding R&N Tire at 170 Hartford Avenue. An area at the rear of the property was cleared during the summer for storage purposes and to expand the parking area for Checkered Flag Auto without a revised site plan. Owner Dirk Romeyn has since engaged T.J. Barresi and Associates to work on the site plan, but in the meantime a large amount of storage has been accumulating on the property. A cease and desist order has been issued. The Town is working with Mr. Romeyn now to try to rectify the situation and get the revised site plan before the Planning and Zoning Commission to address the issue.

B. Planner Report

Administrative Site Plan Approvals – 153 Rainbow Road / fuel tank

The property at 153 Rainbow Road sought administrative approval to install an outside fuel tank with bollards. F.A. Hesketh and Associates filed a site plan as well as the administrative approval application and it was approved.

Cannabis Moratorium

The cannabis moratorium expires in June. Previous conversations have discussed obtaining public input on the topic through public hearings, land use workshops, or referendums. The other option is to propose an actual regulation change. Gary Haynes has had discussions with neighboring towns and has determined that the consensus is to allow for production facilities but limit them to industrial areas. For East Granby, they would be limited to the Commerce Park B Zone, away from the town center area.

Daniel Velcofsky and Mark Ricketts both voiced that they felt the best course of action was to move ahead with the regulation change. Gary Haynes noted that in doing so, communication will be circulated through Let's Talk Turkey and the Town's Facebook page and there will be public input throughout that process that will allow residents both for and opposed to express their opinions. A public hearing could be scheduled for March.

C. CRCOG Regional Meeting Report – No report.

D. Election of CRCOG Representatives

David Brassard was thanked for his past participation as CRCOG representative for the Commission. A motion was made by John Welsh and seconded by Thomas Derlinga to appoint Charlie Allen and Todd Zessin as CRCOG co-representatives for 2022. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, Gary Haynes introduced Laura Hall as the new Administrative Assistant for the Building and Land Use Departments. Thomas Derlinga thanked John Welsh for his many years as Chairman of the Commission.

A motion was made by John Welsh and seconded by Thomas Derlinga to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hall
Land Use Administrative Assistant