

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES
March 29, 2022**

A special meeting of the East Granby Planning & Zoning Commission was held on Tuesday, March 29, 2022. Members present when Chairman Thomas Derlinga called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM were Charlie Allen, Amanda Thompson, John Welsh and alternate members Mark Ricketts, Jay Tran, and Todd Zessin. Voting in place of absent members David Brassard and Daniel Velcofsky were Jay Tran and Todd Zessin.

PUBLIC HEARING

The legal notice was read.

**A. Commission's Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-03
Cannabis Dispensaries/Distribution Centers in Commerce Park B Zone
(rec'd 3/08/22) (h/d 3/29/22) (d/d 5/10/22)**

Paul Calebaugh of Turkey Hills Road praised the Planning and Zoning Commission for their proposal to change East Granby's zoning to allow recreational and medicinal marijuana dispensaries in town and stated that he believes the Town has a great opportunity to increase potential applicants with this new industry. Mr. Calebaugh questioned the proposal's limit of only one dispensary. It was explained that this limit is a State regulation based on the size of the town, and that towns with a population of less than 25,000 residents are restricted to one dispensary. Mr. Calebaugh then asked about the limit for cannabis production facilities. Gary Haynes replied that production facilities will be approved by the State, there is no limit on production facilities, and the State will presumably spread them across Connecticut. In East Granby, they will be allowed in the Commerce Park B Zone. Mr. Calebaugh commented that he feels that the Commerce Park B location would not be beneficial for cannabis cultivation.

Paul Oliva of Talcott Range Drive, supportive of allowing cannabis dispensaries in town, stated he feels that Commerce Park B is too restrictive for these facilities and he would like to see the regulation change extended to include Commerce Park A as well, as Commerce Park A would be an easier area for retail customers to find.

Suzanne O'Connor of Washington Ridge Road spoke in opposition to the zoning ordinance. She is concerned that the Town has not determined the unintended consequences of a cannabis retail establishment in town and how such a facility might affect the Town's emergency services departments. Additionally, with only one dispensary being allowed, she questioned what the actual benefit to the Town would be from a revenue standpoint. She stated she feels that the better option would be to oppose these facilities until more data has been collected and a more informed decision can be made.

The public hearing closed at 7:22 PM.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Charlie Allen and seconded by John Welsh to approve the minutes of March 8, 2022 as submitted. Todd Zessin noted a correction that he was in attendance at the meeting. Votes in favor to approve the minutes as amended were unanimous. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission received:

- Silverman Group Presentation and Concept Plan for Application #22-04 by SL 50-58 Rainbow Road LLC
- PZC Minutes for March 8, 2022
- Revised Regulation Change dated 03/29/22, Application #22-04 by SL 50-58 Rainbow Road LLC for revisions to Commerce Park Transitional Zone

It was reported that CRCOG comments dated 03/04/2022 for Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-03 for cannabis dispensaries were received at the March 8, 2022 meeting and no apparent conflict was noted.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission's Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-03 Cannabis Dispensaries/Distribution Centers in Commerce Park B Zone (rec'd 3/08/22) (h/d 3/29/22) (d/d 5/10/22)

A motion was made by Charlie Allen and seconded by Thomas Derlinga to approve Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-03 for Cannabis Dispensaries/Distribution Centers in Commerce Park B Zone.

Thomas Derlinga stated that he would like to complete additional research on expanding into Commerce Park A.

Amanda Thompson stated that she would like to look into studies concerning the impact on the community and also the possibility of expanding into Commerce Park A.

Jay Tran suggested that individuals who wish to cultivate outdoors in zones other than Commerce Park B have the option to apply for a special permit and could be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Gary Haynes added that most production facilities operate indoors to take advantage of the extended growing season. Keeping cannabis facilities in the industrial area will limit any potential odors associated with production from residential areas, as well as lessen possible security concerns in residential neighborhoods. He questioned the impact on businesses in the Commerce Park A zone, the Town's prime industrial area, should the regulation be opened to include that area.

Amanda Thompson questioned whether there are any existing studies completed in Connecticut regarding the industry's impact on a community. Gary Haynes noted that such studies are usually presented by an applicant for a special permit to address concerns the Commission might have.

Charlie Allen commented that he visited a retail outlet in Southamptton, Massachusetts and talked with key personnel. He found no overwhelming negative feedback from anyone he spoke with. However, funds from the industry are allocated differently than they are in Connecticut, and he too would like to see an economic impact study for Connecticut. He added that he feels that the Town needs to develop a new revenue stream and that it would be foolish to limit that potential revenue now.

Gary Haynes suggested that an option is to extend the current Town moratorium on cannabis facilities so that further evaluation can be completed. He commented that often a production facility applies for more than one license type—cultivation, manufacturing, packaging, etc.—and so therefore keeping these facilities within an industrial zone in his opinion is really the best option.

John Welsh noted that at previous meetings the Commission had suggested community participation with workshops or other involvement but they have not received any other information other than what has been provided by staff. He feels that more time is needed to gather more information from the State regarding economic impact and payback to the community. Mr. Welsh stated that the most prudent option for the Town at this time is to limit the facilities to Commerce Park B to confirm the Town's preference that they should not be located in the prime industrial, retail, village center, or residential areas and to keep control of future development in the hands of the Commission. He reiterated that an individual applicant could at any time request a zone change.

Gary Haynes noted that at this point the State is asking towns to determine what zones or areas they would like to approve for these establishments. Based on the knowledge available at this time, the middle-of-the-road option of Commerce Park B seems most beneficial. In the future, when more revenue data is shared, and if the facilities become more prevalent across the state, the zoning can be expanded.

Charlie Allen again commented that he would like more information about the impacts of dispensaries, both positive and negative, before the Commission decides to restrict the areas they can be located in town.

Amanda Thompson stated that she would agree with Commerce Park B as a starting point for the regulation, in the interest of limiting the impacts to residents' homes.

Thomas Derlinga asked if the State's regulations for cannabis establishments have been finalized and that he would like to see how they are establishing their revenue streams. Gary Haynes answered that they are still in process at this time.

Todd Zessin suggested a trip as a Commission to visit an existing facility in West Suffield.

With the public hearing closed for Application #22-03, extending the moratorium and options for more public input such as a land use workshop advertised with signage were discussed. It was decided that a land use workshop in May would be held for public input.

A motion was made by Charlie Allen and seconded by John Welsh to withdraw the motion to approve Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-03 for Cannabis Dispensaries/Distribution Centers in Commerce Park B Zone. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Todd Zessin and seconded by Jay Tran to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 PM. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hall
Land Use Administrative Assistant