

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES
April 12, 2022

A meeting of the East Granby Planning & Zoning Commission was held on Tuesday, April 12, 2022. Members present when Vice-Chairman David Brassard called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM were Charlie Allen, Amanda Thompson, Daniel Velcofsky, John Welsh and alternate members Jay Tran and Todd Zessin. Voting in place of absent member Thomas Derlinga was Todd Zessin.

PUBLIC HEARING

The legal notice was read.

A. SL50-58 Rainbow Road LLC/Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-04
Revisions to the Commerce Park Transitional Zone for Uses
(rec'd 3/08/22) (h/d 4/12/22) (d/d 6/14/22)

Blake Silverman, Holden Sabato, and Toby Nelson of the Silverman Group gave a presentation of their concept plan for their 130 acre parcel off of Rainbow Road, consisting of a 400,000 square foot industrial building, two smaller industrial buildings of 237,510 and 163,085 square feet, and a 148 unit apartment community.

Amanda Thompson asked about the Silverman Group's plan for a trail from the high school to School Street that was mentioned in previous discussions but does not appear in the concept plans. The Silverman Group's representatives replied that such a path is something for them to investigate further as they work to incorporate connectivity within the wetland constraints of the site.

David Brassard asked about the possibility of shifting the building location further east on the site but this cannot be done due to wetland boundaries. Charlie Allen asked about the height of the proposed berms, but their height has not been calculated yet as the plan is still conceptual.

Amanda Thompson asked if the proposed buildings would have third shift work. The Silverman Group replied that the buildings are being built on speculation so this would not be determined until a tenant is identified.

John Welsh stated to Commission members and those present that the purpose of the evening's meeting is for a proposed regulation change to the Commerce Park Transitional Zone and that the concept plan presented, while informative, contains nothing binding. The Silverman Group then reviewed the proposed changes to the regulations, which include increasing the allowed size of both light manufacturing facilities and warehouse/distribution centers to 400 thousand square feet (from 150 thousand and 300 thousand square feet).

Discussion followed regarding the specific additions, changes, and deletions by both Gary Haynes, former Director of Community Development, and the Silverman Group. In reviewing these changes, regarding building and parking setbacks and landscape buffers and berms adjacent to residential properties, John Welsh proposed the deletion of the phrase "if the residential zone contains residential uses" with the intent to protect future growth involving any future Commerce Park Transitional zoning.

The Silverman Group noted that they have proposed lofts and offices for the multi-family residential development which they have found to be desirable to tenants in today's market. Additional proposed changes to the regulations include provisions regarding private and public amenities and parking in off-street lots, garages, and in front of garages as well as a maximum height of 50 feet for multi-family dwellings.

The Commission then took comments and questions from the public. Tim Brignole of Peak Mountain Drive questioned whether the regulation change will allow for just one 400,000 square foot building on a site or if multiple buildings of that size will be allowed on a piece of property. He also questioned the limit of 400,000 square feet per building as opposed to a one million square foot limit and expressed that he feels the Silverman Group's application for the zone modification is appropriate given the design plans that were presented.

Amanda Lindberg of Sanford Ridge provided a letter to the Commission and stated her requests regarding the regulation change, which included restricting the hours of operation at the site, both pre- and post-construction; relocating vehicle access to the north and east sides of the commercial buildings to reduce the impact of truck fumes, noise, and litter; a comparison of the proposed rental rates to those of the Silverman Group's similar property in Simsbury; and drainage/wetland protection to prevent damage to Sanford Ridge homes.

Bill Myers of North Main Street spoke in favor of the Silverman Group's proposed project for more manufacturing and residential buildings in town.

Joe Doering, SRCA Board president and resident of Sanford Ridge, elaborated on that community's concerns regarding drainage at the site. He noted that due to their slopes, the Rainbow Road property and Sanford Ridge both drain into the same wetlands. Mr. Doering questioned whether some of the drainage can be directed toward Route 20 rather than the low point of the wetlands area near Sanford Ridge. He also spoke in favor of restrictions on hours of operation for weekends and evenings.

Guy Hesketh, owner of three buildings on Creamery Brook, brought to the Commission's attention the changes coming for multi-family uses with the State of Connecticut's Public Act 21-29, part of which involves required parking. Under this act, a town cannot require more parking than the State indicates: one space for either studio or one bedroom apartments and two spaces for two or more bedroom units. Mr. Hesketh noted that a town can opt out of this requirement through a two step process requiring action by both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Selectmen.

Jeff Hecht of Granger Circle spoke positively of the Silverman Group's project but requested that the Commission give the highest weight to the concerns of the residents living next to the property that is going to be developed.

Becky Hayes of Cedar Ridge echoed Mr. Hecht's opinion and encouraged the Commission to take neighboring residents' concerns into account.

The Commission then invited the Silverman Group to address any of the questions just raised. The Silverman Group stated that many of the concerns noted regarding drainage, etc. will be addressed further along in the process during site plan approval.

The Silverman Group mentioned that in the concept plan there is about 750 feet from the edge of the paving to the nearest house on Sanford Ridge and about 620 feet to the actual property line.

Their current estimates for rental rates for the apartments are \$1,750 to \$1,900 for one bedroom units and about \$2,100 to \$2,300/\$2,400 for two bedroom units.

The Silverman Group commented that stormwater and drainage issues will definitely be taken into account and held to regulations by the civil engineers working on the project and noted that trucks entering and exiting the site will be focused toward Gateway Boulevard and Route 20.

Regarding hours of operation, the Silverman Group prefers to leave that optionality in place without limits for prospective tenants.

When asked if the number of buildings on the property will affect the amount of truck traffic, the Silverman Group stated that they have not seen it make a difference and that truck traffic varies based on use. The shared truck court between buildings in the concept plan is a way of buffering noise for adjacent properties.

Lastly, John Welsh stated that the regulation change as drafted gives the Commission, through special permitting, the ability to limit hours of operation for uses, including warehouse and distribution uses, even though those uses were originally proposed to be excluded from limitation.

The Commission discussed closing the public hearing with regard to unresolved questions involving parking and the number of buildings on the site. Attorney T.J. Donohue of Killiam & Donohue, representing the Silverman Group, addressed the issues by stating that there is nothing in the regulations that would limit the number of buildings on the parcel and that a site plan would address setbacks, parking, and all other concepts. Parking would be limited to what the state preempts by statute, or the site plan would be changed.

A motion was made by Todd Zessin and seconded by Charlie Allen to close the public hearing on Application #22-04. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

The public hearing closed at 8:19 PM.

DISCUSSION WITH APPLICANT AND/OR PUBLIC

None.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Charlie Allen and seconded by John Welsh to approve the minutes of March 29, 2022 as submitted. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried. Daniel Velcofsky abstained due to his absence at the last meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission received:

- A letter dated 03/25/2022 from Verogy regarding a petition to the Connecticut Siting Council for a solar installation at Dollar Tree at 99 International Drive in Windsor, CT
- CRCOG comments dated 04/04/2022 for Application #22-04 by SL50-58 Rainbow Road LLC for revisions to the Commerce Park Transitional Zone.
- Silverman Group Presentation and Concept Plan for Application #22-04 by SL 50-58 Rainbow Road LLC rev. 04/07/2022
- Silverman Group Presentation and Concept Plan for Application #22-04 by SL 50-58 Rainbow Road LLC rev. 04/08/2022
- IWC Minutes for 04/06/2022
- Revised Zone Change Map - Commerce Park Transitional Zone & Village Center Zone

A letter dated 04/12/2022 from East Granby resident Amanda Lindberg regarding Application #22-04 was received at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Zoning Enforcement Report – None.

B. Planner Report - Administrative Site Plan Approvals – None.

C. CRCOG Regional Meeting Report:

March 2022 Meeting

Charlie Allen reported on the March meeting of the CRCOG Regional Planning Commission. Three things were discussed: a new executive director who is a former West Hartford town manager; a referral to CRCOG regarding building facia that lacked the last couple of sentences; and the issue of accessory dwelling units. New state regulations require towns to allow accessory dwelling units or opt out before January 2023. Mr. Allen suggested that this issue should be included on the Commission's agenda soon.

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)**

Charlie Allen stated that on May 24, 2022 at 7:00 PM a land use workshop will be held at the Senior/Community Center for public input regarding cannabis regulations for East Granby. Signs have been ordered and will be posted at intersections across town for those who might not have access to notifications on social media.

**B. SL50-58 Rainbow Road LLC/Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-04
Revisions to the Commerce Park Transitional Zone for Uses
(rec'd 3/08/22) (h/d 4/12/22) (d/d 6/14/22)**

A motion was made by John Welsh and seconded by Daniel Velcofsky to approve Zoning Regulation Change Application #22-04 by applicant SL50-58 Rainbow Road LLC for Revisions to the Commerce Park Transitional Zone for Uses, striking the language “if the residential zone contains residential uses” from Section 4b and striking the language “for industrial uses” and “if said zone contains residential uses” from Section 4d and acknowledging that Section 5c’s last bullet point may need revision by the Commission at a later point in time. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

C. Moratorium - Expiration Date 06/08/2022 – No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by John Welsh and seconded by Dan Velcofsky to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 PM. The votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hall
Land Use Administrative Assistant