

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT**

**MINUTES
June 13, 2023**

A meeting of the East Granby Planning & Zoning Commission was held on Tuesday, June 13, 2023. Members present when Chairman Thomas Derlinga called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM were Charlie Allen, David Brassard, Amanda Thompson, Daniel Velcofsky, and John Welsh and alternate member Jay Tran.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The legal notice for the two public hearings on the agenda was read.

**A. Application #23-04 – Dattco, Inc.
Zone Change from CP-A to CP-B – 32-34 Hazelwood Road
(rec'd 05/09/2023) (h/d 06/13/2023) (d/d 08/17/2023)**

A motion was made by Daniel Velcofsky and seconded by Amanda Thompson to open the public hearing regarding Application #23-04. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Attorney Carl Landolina of Fahey and Landolina represented the applicant. Joining Mr. Landolina from Dattco were Kevin DeVivo, General Manager, and Kevin Ferrigno, General Counsel. Mr. Landolina noted that there is currently an industrial building, a house, and outdoor storage on the site. The property is the last East Granby address on Hazelwood Road and abuts the Windsor town line. It is within the MDC service area for sewer and water but presently has neither of those services as the last sewer line ends on Connecticut South Drive. The area was initially zoned Industrial but is now zoned Commerce Park A, a change which made the use on the property a non-conforming use. Dattco would like to purchase the property to use as a parking area for their school bus services. Current zoning regulations state that no Commerce Park B Zone can be established unless adjacent to an existing Commerce Park Zone A or B or similarly zoned parcel in an adjacent municipality. With no water or sewer service on site as required in the Commerce Park A Zone, no similar use permitted in the Commerce Park A Zone, and because the property abuts Windsor's warehouse zone, the application requests a zone change for the property to Commerce Park B.

In response to Commissioners' questions, Mr. Landolina and the applicant stated that they intend to keep the existing building on the site and that buses parked there would be registered in East Granby.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Daniel Velcofsky and seconded by Charlie Allen to close the public hearing regarding Application #23-04 at 7:17 PM. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

**B. Application #23-05 – K SFR East Granby Owner, LLC – Modification to Special Permit
1-47 Old Deerfield Circle, East Street Lot 43, 2-80 Bramble Bush Circle
(rec'd 05/09/2023) (h/d 06/13/2023) (d/d 08/17/2023)**

A motion was made by Charlie Allen and seconded by David Brassard to open the public hearing regarding Application #23-05. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Guy Hesketh, licensed professional engineer with F. A. Hesketh & Associates represented the applicant, K SFR East Granby Owner, LLC. Joining Mr. Hesketh were Reggie Kronstadt and Perry Gold of Krown Point Capital. Mr. Hesketh introduced the project and reviewed the new site plans for the development. Two developments were previously approved by the Commission for the property. Bramble Bush Circle to the north consisted of 28.65 acres with 66 lots. East Granby Meadows to the south was a 47-unit single parcel condominium project on 26.29 acres. The current proposal merges the two parcels, extinguishes the lot lines between the two, and extinguishes the individual lot lines for the 66 separate parcels. The existing town road through the Bramble Bush parcel will become a private road with a utility easement bounding it. Almost all of the infrastructure for the development was already established during initial site work completed between approximately 2008 to 2011.

The new plan calls for 58 duplex units on Bramble Bush Circle for a total of 116 rental units with a clubhouse, swimming pool, maintenance building, and mail kiosk, making the entire two combined parcels a rental development. The application is for approval of the development as a whole. Mr. Hesketh noted that East Granby's regulations allow for a density of up to 4.0 units per acre. With the parcels merged and with the proposed 116 dwelling units in Bramble Bush and the 47 dwelling units in East Granby Meadows, the resulting density is 3.8 units per acre which meets the requirement.

Mr. Hesketh then reviewed parking, landscaping, drainage, erosion control, and utility plans for the site. East Granby's regulations require 2.5 spaces per dwelling unit. The plan proposes 428 spaces, 20 more than required, in a combination of garage, driveway, handicap, and on-street parking which includes EV spaces. Each unit will be built with the capacity to install a 50- or 60-amp Level 2 EV charger in the garage if desired. The landscape plans show the plants and shrubs to be used as well as the three types of seed mixes for the various areas: lawn treatments, a conservation mix adjacent to wetlands which provides a transition area for wildlife, and a wetland mix for the drainage basins. The drainage infrastructure has already been constructed, including the street catch basins, storm drainage pipes, maintenance holes, discharge points, and three stormwater quality basins. All three stormwater basins will be enlarged, primarily to meet the DOT's updated requirements utilizing NOAA Atlas 14 data and also due to a slight net increase in impervious area. There is a small section of the sanitary sewer that will be reconstructed near the entrance to correct a sag in a pipe. The only additional utility not already in place that will be brought to the site is natural gas.

Reggie Kronstadt of Krown Point Capital reviewed the different units that will be offered in the development, which are similar to those located at their Granby property, The Grand. Mr. Kronstadt noted that living preferences have changed and full-service living is highly desirable. Different layouts are available to meet the needs of a wide variety of residents and not just cater to one specific cohort of people. Models A and B are traditional 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath two-family attached homes. Model C units are 3+ units, which offer an additional room for home office space or an additional bedroom. Model D offers the master bedroom on the first floor.

Central amenities that tie both parcels together include a full 4,000 SF foot clubhouse featuring a fitness gym, workstations, and rec room; a resort-style pool; two pickleball courts; a dog park; firepits and grilling stations; and communal car charging stations.

Mr. Kronstadt stated that they are mindful of unit placement so that there is not row after row of the same front elevation and so that each unit has its own look, with high-level landscaping for curb appeal and privacy fences between duplexes. He encouraged anyone interested in seeing examples of their work to visit The Grand complex in Granby, which is fully leased. They currently have five projects in Connecticut, including one in Bloomfield, and one in New York.

Charlie Allen confirmed with Town Planner Robin Newton that this development will complement the Village Center Plan. Daniel Velcofsky commented that people are needed in order to develop a thriving village center, and this development will help facilitate growth.

Commissioners' inquiries included questions about garages, basements, similar developments, possible market saturation, and property taxes. Reggie Kronstadt stated that each garage is private to the unit with a full wall separating them, and that the construction is slab on grade but storage is incorporated into the design of each unit. It was discussed that Schoolhouse Landing and Sanford Ridge are East Granby's existing developments most similar to this proposed development, but both are planned unit developments and not rental communities. Mr. Kronstadt stated that even with the other new apartment complexes currently under construction in Granby, there is still a lack of high-quality rental housing in the area. He feels that their model of development attracts those that desire more space than a traditional apartment. Property taxes for the entire development would be the responsibility of the development owner and would not be different than property taxes paid by individual unit owners.

Thomas Derlinga opened the floor to public comment.

Paul Thulen, Sunrise Terrace resident and Chairman of East Granby's Economic Development Commission spoke in favor of the project, noting that almost 100% of the 140+ resident participants of the recent Village Center Master Concept Plan public focus groups identified retail as a desired element for East Granby's Village Center. Mr. Thulen stated that he feels the project will bring needed population density to the Village Center to spur retail development.

Local business owner Tim Brignole commented that the project will generate additional tax revenue to the Town, since owners of rental properties are not only taxed on the value of their properties, but also on the income generated from those properties. Mr. Brignole stated that he feels there is no downside to the development, as the owners and not the Town will be responsible for road and property maintenance and the project will bring added rooftops within a one-mile radius of the center of town which will then attract business development in the community.

Chris Wrubel, resident of Glen Hollow and Board of Finance alternate member stated that development of the parcel would be beneficial to the town for both aesthetic and financial reasons. According to Mr. Wrubel, the development will boost small businesses in the area such as the one owned by his fiancée and will also provide needed housing for young professionals in the aerospace industry who desire a quality home but are not prepared to purchase a house due to the transient nature of their careers.

Celeste Fersch stated that her son lives in a complex in Simsbury and pays approximately \$2,500 a month for a small, unremarkable unit. She commented that she would like to have a grocery store in East Granby and feels that youthful residents would stay in town for this development instead of moving away to other places in neighboring towns.

Frank Grillo, owner of Advanced Auto Body, stated that he is pleased with the prospect of development in East Granby. He recently purchased a property across the street from the site and feels that the project would bring needed retail to the town.

Nelson Torres of Crystal Drive commented that he lives across the street from the project site and while he likes the plan for the new development, he is concerned about a potential increase in traffic in his neighborhood area, as well as the potential impact on the school system, since the annual school budget is already a contentious topic in town.

Carolyn Blake of Crystal Drive agrees that while there is currently a shortage of housing, she is very concerned with how additional traffic will be handled as there is already a problem with vehicles speeding past her daughter's bus stop. She also questions whether the schools are prepared to handle an increase in students because in her experience people move to East Granby expressly for the school system.

Jay Tran asked whether plans for School Street will address the intersection of Route 20 and East Street. Robin Newton stated that the street will be realigned to that intersection. She noted that there is an approved OSTA permit for the prior approved development which is pending an administrative upgrade. Scott Hesketh, licensed professional engineer with F.A. Hesketh & Associates confirmed that the project was issued an OSTA certificate in 2007 for the original developments of 66 and 47 units and that they have reapplied for an update. The increase in vehicles is projected to be nominal based on the fact that the change from single family detached housing to single family attached housing results in a different type of user with less associated traffic generation.

Mr. Hesketh stated that as part of the previous development, OSTA required that the intersection of East Street and Route 20 be widened to a two-lane approach, which has already been completed. They have reapplied to OSTA to notify them of the change to the proposed use, that there will be a handful of additional vehicles during peak hours, and that the improvements which OSTA previously required have already been done. According to Mr. Hesketh, OSTA has provided one round of comments consisting of typographical revisions to their master plan, and they anticipate that should the Commission issue an approval for the project, OSTA will also issue an administrative decision indicating that there are no significant impacts to the roadway traffic.

Jan Tran asked if a turning lane would be created on East Street for the development, and Scott Hesketh stated that there is no proposal to widen East Street with a left turn lane since the volume of traffic associated with the development does not necessitate one. He noted that East Street traffic may be beneficially slowed by vehicles turning into the development. Guy Hesketh commented that the development will have one entrance initially but in its ultimate developed condition, there will be two entrances on East Street with interconnectedness between Bramble Bush and East Granby Meadows.

Commenting further on questions raised about traffic volumes, Scott Hesketh noted that the previous OSTA certificate approved 71 morning trips and 101 afternoon trips. The requested update adjusts the numbers to 77 and 91 trips, a slight change that does not necessitate additional traffic counts. Resident Nelson Torres did not agree with this assessment.

Lisa Mendes of Crystal Drive, attending virtually online, indicated that in her opinion a lot of the traffic on East Street is due to vehicles coming in from Massachusetts and traveling to warehouses in Windsor, as well as truck traffic coming from Russell Road. She echoed Mr. Torres' comments concerning the need for additional traffic studies and reiterated the dangers of turning left off Crystal Drive onto East Street due to a blind spot and vehicle speeds. The truck traffic is noisy and shakes her house. Ms. Mendes also submitted a letter to the Commission to express her opposition to the Bramble Bush/East Granby Meadows project because it does not provide single family homes, creates an additional traffic burden on East Street, and does not include affordable housing units. Her letter requested that the Commission allow the public hearing to continue into next month as the public may need additional time to review the project.

A motion was made by Daniel Velcofsky and seconded by Charlie Allen to close the public hearing regarding Application #23-05 at 8:33 PM. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Thomas Derlinga then called for a short recess at 8:34 PM. The meeting was called back to order at 8:43 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH APPLICANTS

A. 50 and 50-2 Russell Road – JET Transportation – Warehouse Trucking Facility

Dave Ziaks of F.A. Hesketh & Associates informally addressed the Commission on behalf of Joneser's Express Transportation, also known as J.E.T., to receive Commission feedback regarding a proposed project for a transportation center for trucks. Mr. Ziaks was joined by owner Todd Jones. The proposed site of the project is the open field area of the Mark's Auto Parts property on Russell Road. Mark's Auto Parts will continue as is, but the three adjacent parcels, assessor's lots 50, 50-1, and 50-2, would be purchased by J.E.T. The existing house on parcel 50-1 would remain as a rental property, with the remaining 10.44-acre site developed around it. The properties are within the Commerce Park Transition Zone, which allows for warehousing. A 40,000 SF single-story building is proposed to be built, oriented in the north-south direction with the short side on Russell Road. Mr. Ziaks noted that the site slopes from west to east toward Mark's, which is ideal as the facility needs a four-foot drop for truck loading activity. Trucks would be loaded on the east side of the building and exit by their own driveway with a right turn onto Russell Road, avoiding East Street upon their departure. The west side of the building would be used for employee parking and outdoor parking for truck boxes. Topsoil from the site would be used for berming with substantial landscaping and the existing white split rail fence surrounding the property would remain.

Charlie Allen commented that due to the public concern just voiced regarding East Street traffic, he appreciates the fact that trucks will be routed one way so that there will not be two-way traffic to the site, but he expressed concern regarding residents in the area and wondered if consideration had been given to the aesthetics of a truck parking lot located to the rear of their properties. Dave Ziaks appreciated the comment and noted that while he does not have a specific answer to address that concern at the moment, there is an existing heavily wooded line at the location now and landscaping would be added.

Dave Ziaks noted that the Bramble Bush development is farther south on East Street from the proposed project site and Mark Oquisanti confirmed that across East Street from the site is the Windsor Rod and Gun Club, with the horse rescue property that is currently for sale just north of it.

The consensus from the Commission was that minimizing the impact to existing neighboring residences will be important at this site. Mr. Ziaks pointed out that by siting the building as far east as possible toward Mark's will help to keep the site relatively quiet.

MINUTES

A motion was made by David Brassard and seconded by Thomas Charlie Allen to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2023 meeting as submitted. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

A motion was made by David Brassard and seconded by Thomas Charlie Allen to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2023 special meeting as submitted. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission received:

- Connecticut Federation of Planning & Zoning Agencies Spring 2023 Newsletter
- Farmington River Watershed Association Spring 2023 Newsletter
- Inland Wetlands/Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – April 5, 2023 & May 3, 2023
- May 2023 Zoning Enforcement Report
- Memo from Town Attorney Scott Lingenfelter dated June 13, 2023

OLD BUSINESS

A. Zoning Enforcement Report

The May 2023 Zoning Enforcement Report was received.

B. Planner Report – Administrative Site Plan Approvals

Robin Newton reported that there was an administrative site plan approval for 20 Connecticut South Drive for a parking lot expansion and repaving. The new owner of the property will be adding five new parking spaces, repaving the lot, and updating the drainage.

C. CRCOG Regional Meeting Report

The previous CRCOG Regional Meeting was attended by Todd Zessin, who was not in attendance this evening.

D. Application #23-04 – Dattco, Inc.

**Zone Change from CP-A to CP-B – 32-34 Hazelwood Road
(rec'd 05/09/2023) (h/d 06/13/2023) (d/d 08/17/2023)**

A motion was made by John Welsh and seconded by Thomas Derlinga to approve Application #23-04 by Dattco, Inc. for a zone change from Commerce Park A to Commerce Park B for property located at 32-34 Hazelwood Road which abuts property in Windsor. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

E. Application #23-05 – K SFR East Granby Owner, LLC – Modification to Special Permit

**1-47 Old Deerfield Circle, East Street Lot 43, 2-80 Bramble Bush Circle
(rec'd 05/09/2023) (h/d 06/13/2023) (d/d 08/17/2023)**

A motion was made by Daniel Velcofsky and seconded by Amanda Thompson to approve Application #23-05 by K SFR East Granby Owner, LLC, Bramble Bush Circle for 116-unit multifamily development at Bramble Bush Circle subject to the four conditions listed in the June 7, 2023 Town Planner's staff memo.

John Welsh commented that he agrees that the town needs to develop critical mass. He noted that current market forces are driving the successful development of complexes like the one now proposed, not regular subdivisions or regular planned communities. He feels that population growth will infuse the center of town with the potential for retail because of an increase in roofs, a factor more important than the number of vehicles passing through town. Mr. Welsh then recused himself as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission to state that as a member of the East Granby Board of Education, he feels that decisions being made regarding an increase in the town's population need to take into consideration all impacts to the school system and its physical plant. Mr. Welsh then resumed commenting as a member of the Planning

and Zoning Commission and expressed that he supports the project. Regarding traffic, Mr. Welsh commented that the issue is not unique to the East Street area as all neighborhoods in East Granby have been impacted by commuters passing through at a high rate of speed, which is not necessarily something that the Commission can remedy.

Town Attorney Scott Lingenfelter cautioned the Commission against using factors such as the potential impact to the school system in deciding an application.

Charlie Allen commented that the project under consideration is by people vested in the community and ties in well with plans for the Village Center area.

Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Charlie Allen left the meeting at 9:13 PM. Jay Tran was named as alternate in his place.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Discussion of Ongoing Litigation and Possible Settlement of Brignole vs. Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of East Granby

A motion was made by Daniel Velcofsky and seconded by Thomas Derlinga to enter into executive session with Town Planner Robin Newton and Town Attorney Scott Lingenfelter at 9:14 PM. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

The Commission returned to their regular meeting at 9:31 PM.

DECISION

A. Possible Action on Brignole vs. Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of East Granby

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by John Welsh and seconded by Thomas Derlinga to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 PM. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hall
Building & Land Use Administrative Assistant