

Robert J. Bask

East Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission
Hybrid-Teleconference Meeting
November 8, 2023

2023 NOV 13 AM 11:07

TOWN CLERK
EAST HARTFORD

A Regular Meeting of the **EAST HARTFORD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION** and was held via Microsoft "Teams" at Community Cultural Center 50 Chapman PL Auditorium, East Hartford CT – November 8, 2023.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.
We have a quorum with 4 voting members.

Present:

John Ryan, Chair
Henry Pawlowski, Vice Chair *
Carol Noel, Secretary
Valentine Povinelli*
Stephen Roczynski
Sidney Soderholm
*came after roll call

Also Present

Carlene Shaw, Town Planner
Steve Hnatuk, Deputy Director of Planning Development
Eileen Buckheit, Director of Planning Development-via Teams

Absent

Peter Marra
Wesaneit Tsegai, Alternate

REGULAR MEETING

2. NEW BUSINESS:

A. SITE PLAN APPLICATION: 262 Connecticut Boulevard – Under Section 9.3;
Application for a Site Plan for the construction of a 2,080 square foot general retail building with associated improvements
Applicant: Joe Modugno
Assessor's Map/Lot: 5/132
Application Documents: 262 Connecticut Boulevard Application Documents

Chair asks if commissioners have any questions.
Comm. Soderholm – is this a new building?

Applicant Joe Modugno via Teams- Yes this is a new building; where the previous building was located.

Comm. Roczynski –what kind of retail?

We have nothing as yet. Although some businesses have come forward.

Comm. Soderholm comments with only 7 parking spaces, will limit the type of business.

Carlene Shaw states that per zoning regulations it is 4 parking spaces per 1000sqft.

Comm. Roczynski-are you widening the curb cut?

Yes we have a DOT permit.

Comm. Soderholm- comments it is confusing with the different plans and staff comments.

Carlene Shaw will delete previous versions.

Comm. Roczynski- issue with the storm drain?

Comm. Soderholm-read the following from engineering staff comments:

A permit will be required from the CT DOT for the storm drainage connection to their system. As there is no storm drainage report submitted with this application, it is unknown if there is compliance with either the State Water Quality Manual or the Town Manual of Technical Design.

Carlene Shaw- it is not a requirement

Chair Ryan-are the old fuel storage tanks removed?

Mr. Modugno –yes there is some contaminated soil; it is Exxon/Mobile’s issue and will be taking care of it. Will be starting next week, all permits have been applied for.

Comm. Pawlowski-is this a legacy issue, is money set aside for this? Exxon/Mobile’s issue so you have no control of timelines, can you elaborate on this?

Mr. Modugno- yes so they have been monitoring the ground water in that location. Exxon/Mobile did put in a deed restriction that no residential can be put up on that property. And right now what they are doing now is that they are removing and remediating. Yes it is Exxon/Mobile’s responsibility for removal and it is their money.

Chair- any other further questions? Hearing none. Any comments from staff?

Carlene Shaw –I removed the Planning Staff Conditions requirement:

Planning Staff is recommending that the applicant revises their proposal to include a color rendering of the facades of the building and considers adding additional brick to the facades of the building.

They did revise their rendering to put some masonry down at the bottom, if the applicant wants to add additional brick they may do so but it is not a requirement.

Comm. Soderholm- My question to staff is this a final approval from us?

Carlene Shaw-yes unless there are some major changes this is the final approval.

Comm. Soderholm makes a motion to approve SITE PLAN APPLICATION: 262 Connecticut Boulevard- Site Plan Application for the construction of a 2,080 square foot general retail building with associated improvements

Applicant: Joe Modugno

Assessor's Map/Lot: 5/132

Conditions which must be met prior to the endorsement and filing of final plans:

1. The Final Plans shall be revised to:

- a. To incorporate the final Certificate of Approval.
- b. The final plans, with all necessary revisions listed above shall be submitted to the Town Planner and Town Engineer for review and conformance with this approval.

Conditions which must be met prior to the Issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance:

1. File a single paper copy and PDF copy of the Final Approved plans incorporating all necessary revisions with the Town Planner to review for conformance with this approval. Plans shall be signed and stamped (ink & impression) by the Professional Engineer, Land Surveyor or Architect licensed in the State of Connecticut who is responsible for the work.

Conditions which must be met prior to the issuance of a Final Certificate of Zoning Compliance:

1. The applicant shall submit a final A-2 grade as-built survey depicting all installed site improvements including structures, parking lots, pins and drainage with spot elevations. Performance bonding may be allowed by the Town for outstanding site improvements should a Certificate of Zoning Compliance be requested prior to site completion.

Approved Plans:

1. "Proposed Retail Site Plan Application 262 Connecticut Boulevard East Hartford CT", Prepared by Design Professionals, Dated October 30th, 2023.
2. "Department of Transportation Bureau of Highway Operations State of Connecticut Encroachment Permit 262 Connecticut Boulevard", Dated April 3rd, 2023.

Comm. Noel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion approved.

3. MISCELLANEOUS:

A. UPDATE ON THE 2024 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD) REWRITE:

- i. Review results from meetings with stakeholders, Town Departments, and Boards & Commissions
- ii. Review draft Social Pinpoint online survey
- iii. Review draft format for the November 28th public workshop
- iv. Review relevancy of 2014 POCD goals
- v. Review Draft Plan Introduction, Populations, and Land Use/Zoning Findings

Tom Madden Associate Principle and Christine Jimenez Senior Planner from BFJ Planning presented power point slides of POCD project.

Here to give a quick update on where we are on the project.

Reviewed project status and stakeholder meetings and key takeaways.

Stakeholder meetings largely complete (Historic District Commission meeting November 14)

- Conducting initial mapping on Founders Plaza and Town overall
- First meeting with Port Eastside developer on Founders Plaza (next meeting November 14)
- Data analysis on Town wide demographics largely complete, Founders Plaza market analysis in-process
- Prep for November 28 public workshop and launch of online engagement

Next steps:

- Visioning stage of project: Social Pinpoint online engagement and November 28 workshop
 - Begin work on draft POCD chapters
 - Complete existing conditions and market analysis of Founders Plaza; launch engagement for this component
 - December 13 P&Z meeting: confirm overall POCD vision statement and topic-specific goals
- Topic specific goals which will come out of the workshop on the 28th.

Chair Ryan –you talk about the Emergency management plan for the town; what exactly are you talking about?

Mr. Madden - so you do have flood control systems. The need for an overall emergency plan to handle all sorts' emergencies to be in place with in the town. Once the plan is in place, every department will know what they need to do. And to be able communicate the plan to all residents. Shelters and where they are.

Chair – did you get this information from the Fire department? This where the emergency management center is controlled.

Yes but it's getting that emergency plan put into place. So that each and everyone knows their specific roll.

Discussions held on goals. Ms. Jimenez looking for thoughts/questions on goals.

Comm. Pawlowski comments- you mention climate change. East Hartford is probably not as vulnerable at the shoreline communities but we are near the river and have a lot of flat land and flood zone areas. Would like further discussion to educate ourselves. Also businesses in downtown and best use of space.

Mr. Madden –other municipalities are looking with in their parks and areas and tree canopies in regards to falling on power lines during storms, should they be removed.

Comm. Soderholm- a couple of words have caught my attention-the word character has been misused to keep blacks out of neighborhoods. We don't want to go anywhere near that. Is there a better word? Can you use two or three words? You mention tree canopy is that part of the character you're talking about? What do we really mean about character in this goal?

Mr. Madden-so in terms of character when you talk about goals in a community, it's an all-encompassing word. Has many meanings to it. We can change the word.

Comm. Soderholm-frankly thinks some of our residents would like that word removed.

Goal #4-Create linkage among open space. Maybe include retail and service establishments, advocate retail services, walking and biking. You can't safely walk to some of these establishments. Key elements that are not here are retail services and walking and biking.

Mr. Madden again we are trying to keep this as broad as possible to create these discussions when we are sitting in those meetings.

Comm. Pawlowski-connectivity of neighborhoods. Town has many cul-de-sacs making it difficult to connect.

Steve Hnatuk-we passed out the 2014 goals at last meeting in more detail. Seems to be a sticking point that connectivity and infrastructure for cycling and walkers to connect to retail. Seems a sticking point that we want to elaborate more from the last POCD.

Comm. Soderholm-have one comment on the quality of life goals-I would like health included-my focus of walking and biking. Really important, not sure where you would add it. Should we add the word health somewhere?

Mr. Madden-yes can add it into the quality of life. It's important to get all this information into our goals.

Chair any other questions?

Ms. Jimenez reports on the upcoming community engagement and the Idea Wall on the website. Resident will go to this site. Residents can click on all these icons about any of the concerns or ideas. Comments on when to get this out to the residents?

Comm. Pawlowski-overall getting information to residents is a great idea.

Chair Ryan-how are you going to drive people to this website and comment?

Ms. Jimenez-we can get out flyers to all residents, newsletters. Mr. Madden finds the Nextdoor neighborhood site a great place to put the information out.

Comm. Soderholm knows the Town has Facebook and other social media but sees nothing regarding Planning & Zoning. Who is responsible for updating these?

Steve Hnatuk -the Mayor's office does this and the schools will also participate through Parent Square and newsletters to parents. We will be circulating through social media this week. We can also go to senior center, libraries and YMCA to place flyers.

Comm. Soderholm-we need to hold each other accountable to help get the word out.

When would you like this Ideas wall launched? Should we make an announcement at the public workshop?

Comm. Soderholm-I would think you'd want it up by the time of the workshop. The people might be on their phones at the workshop and want to see it and interact. Chair Ryan and maybe show some live commentary.

Ms. Jimenez will make sure it is live for the workshop.

Chair Ryan-will the site be monitored, will someone be able to take down negative comments?

Ms. Jimenez- yes we will be monitoring it, we have access and ability to remove comments. We have upcoming in person workshop on 11/28/23 from 7-9 at the Senior Center. This is the first of three workshops.

Comm. Soderholm-we haven't scheduled workshops 2 & 3? What's the general timeline?

Mr. Madden - the second will be January/February and the third will be March/April.

Comm. Soderholm-will these flyers be larger for the senior center? Just ask you to make sure seniors will be able to read it.

Mr. Madden- discusses the rest of the slides in the PowerPoint. Demographics and trends. Population and projection growth.

Demographics –age stability, race & ethnicity, household size, education, jobs, language and migration. Pointing out key trends.

Ms. Jimenez- Presents the PowerPoint slides on Land Use & Zoning. Explains the major changes since the last POCD.

Much discussion held. As the process goes forward it will be explained.

Comm. Soderholm –there is a lot of information here to go over tonight.

Mr. Madden suggests to take this home, make notes and forwarded to him.

Comm. Soderholm – can staff send the PowerPoint slides to the commissioners?

Steve Hnatuk –if anyone one would like to sit down and discuss this with Carlene and myself we can. Tom well we be discussing the 2014 POCD and their relevancy at the workshop?

Yes we will. Looking at our December meeting we will be rehashing some of our goals and the recommendations for the workshop and sort of consolidating them and working towards a vision statement. *Yes we take a lot those and look for the themes. We try to group them together.*

Questions or comments? Next item.

B. Draft 2024 Planning and Zoning Meeting Schedule

Steve Hnatuk-with the POCD tying up a lot of our time if we find we have a full docket of applications we may have to schedule special meetings.

Comm. Soderholm has a procedural question. As we are in a Planning & Zoning meeting we are commissioners but when we are in this public workshop will we need a quorum? Yes at least 4. And we can't talk with each other about applications outside a meeting. Can we talk about this with each other? Steve not sure, will check into it.

Comm. Noel motion to accept Planning and Zoning Meeting Schedule for 2024. Motion seconded by Comm. Pawlowski. All in favor. Motion approved.

C. Planning and Zoning Commissioner Re-Appointment

Carlen Shaw it is my understanding that Peter, Carol, Val and John your terms end next month if you want to be reappointed submit form to town clerk and Mayor's office. Carol Noel does not want to be reappointed. Carlene will email the link to them. Must be done before the end of the calendar year.

D. Commission Training

Must complete 4 hours of training before the end of the year, one must be on affordable housing.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes-October 11, 2023

Comm. Soderholm has two corrections -minutes states 6 voting members, I know the chair only votes if there is a tie but shouldn't we have 7 voting members? And I was surprised to read that I wanted north end researched, I said south end.

Motion by Comm. Soderholm to approve minutes as corrected. Seconded by Comm. Roczynski. All in favor. Motion approved.

Comm. Roczynski last month we talked about the out buildings. Just to make sure we look at that. Second question - regarding the demolition of Silver Plaza and the timeline.

Mr. Chairman I have a couple things; this is Eileen Buckheit. The project being put out to bid by CRDA-should be by December just the back building.

I need the commissioners to do the trainings by the end of the year. We have mentioned this several times. I would prefer you do the one Steve sent you and would like you to attend as a group. Please rearrange your schedules to attend as the Planning and Zoning Commission representing the town. We would really appreciate it.

Comm. Soderholm – we need to make sure that we have, Wes our only alternate, we need to invite her to go with us as a group.

Chair –one quick question -convenience store on Governor Street any word on that?

Steve Hnatuk – working out details with DOT. Saw in the newspaper that they closed on the property.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ryan entertains a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Com. Noel to adjourn meeting, seconded by Com. Pawlowski. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Next meeting is December 13, 2023 at 7:00 pm

Location Community Cultural Center Auditorium

Respectfully submitted,

Sana Hart, Clerk