

ENFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
Thursday, September 9, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
ENFIELD TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
820 ENFIELD STREET - ENFIELD, CT

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Roll Call

Commissioner Higley took the roll and present were Commissioners Frank Alaimo, Ken Nelson, Virginia Higley, John Petronella, Linda DeGray and Alternates Commissioners Vinnie Grillo and Kiran Majmudar. Absent were Commissioners Richard Szewczak and Mary Scutt.

Also present was Laurie Whitten, Director of Development Services.

Chairman Nelson seated Alternate Commissioners Grillo and Majmudar.

Approval of Minutes

- a. July 22, 2021 – Regular Meeting

Motion: Commissioner DeGray made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higley, to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2021 Regular Meeting.

The motion passed with a 6-0-1 vote with Commissioner Majmudar abstaining.

Votes: 6-0-1

- b. August 5, 2021 – Special Meeting

Motion: Commissioner DeGray made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alaimo, to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2021 Special Meeting.

The motion passed with a 6-0-1 vote with Commissioner Majmudar abstaining.

Votes: 6-0-1

Town Attorney Report-August 26th, 2021

Chairman Nelson asked if there were any questions for the Town Attorney; there were none.

Zoning Enforcement Report

Ms. Whitten stated that Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) Ricardo Rachele was out this week so they do not have a report.

Public Participation

Chairman Nelson asked if anyone in the public would like to speak; no one came forward.

Bond Release(s)

- a. **SPR#1761-** 191 Moody Road (Martin Brower Site Improvement) – Bond release request for a Site Restoration Bond in the amount of \$152,500.00.

Commissioner Petronella recused himself.

Ms. Whitten stated that this is a Site Restoration Bond release, which is no longer required. She stated that ZEO Rachele recommends that the bond be released.

Motion: Commissioner DeGray made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higley, to approve the bond release in the amount of \$152,500.00.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

New Public Hearings

- a. **PH#3015** - 1695 King Street – Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review Application to operate a retail outlet in an existing building and for the future construction of a 2,880 sq ft building to serve as a chocolate manufacturing facility; Northern Nurseries, Inc., Owner; Nel Group LLC, Applicant, (Attn: Rachel Breslin) Map 14; Lot 24; I-1 Zone

Commissioner Higley read the legal notice and took the roll and present were Commissioners Frank Alaimo, Ken Nelson, Virginia Higley, John Petronella, Linda DeGray and Alternates Commissioner Vinnie Grillo and Kiran Majmudar. Absent were Commissioners Richard Szewczak and Mary Scutt.

Rachel Breslin of Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey, LLP addressed the Commission as a representative for the property owner. Ms. Breslin presented a slideshow presentation of the proposed project, describing the existing features and location of the property. She provided a history of the Snelgrove's Company, explaining that they would like to convert the existing building to Snelgrove's headquarters with a chocolate wholesale and manufacturing facility and a small retail storefront. Ms. Breslin went over the required zoning approvals and offered to answer any questions the Commissioners may have.

Commissioner Higley asked if the proposed building in the back will be manufacturing chocolates, to which Ms. Breslin replied that it will.

Chairman Nelson asked for an explanation of the waiver for the buffer on the side yard. Ms. Breslin stated that the property is adjacent to a residential zone, which requires a 500-foot buffer. She stated that given the use and the layout, there is sufficient protection for the residential district and the 500 feet is not fully required.

Ms. Breslin stated that the second building will not be constructed until 2022, and in the meantime there will be a retail storefront in front and a workshop/office space in the back in the existing building. Chairman Nelson asked if the Commission is approving the second building at this time or a later date, to which Ms. Whitten replied that they are approving both buildings tonight. She stated that the building in the back will not be visible from the front.

Chairman Nelson asked if there will be any tours or a window that people can see through. Mr. Snelgrove explained that they were not allowed to have a window in the current East Granby location but he always wanted to have one. He stated that they also hope to have tours for educational purposes.

Chairman Nelson asked what sort of buffer there is from the existing house and new building to the residential property next door.

Marek Kement from Barton & Loguidice pointed out the existing buffers on the site map as well as the proposed limited clearing they would like to do. He went on to point out the wetlands on the property, stating that all proposed activity is outside of the upland review area.

Chairman Nelson stated that if the buffer requirement is waived, then headlights from the parking lot will be shining onto the property next door. He suggested that the applicant fill in any holes in the buffer with something like arborvitaes. Mr. Snelgrove stated that the existing sign and proposed porch will help prevent this as well. Mr. Kement stated that there is an existing parking lot there now, which they are shrinking.

Ms. Breslin stated that a lot of the retail sales will be done virtually and there are minimal bodies going into the shop. She stated that there should not be such an overflow that it will negatively impact the neighboring property.

Commissioner DeGray asked what kinds of trucks are being used for pickup and deliveries. Mr. Snelgrove stated that the items are delivered mainly by high school kids in their personal vehicles. He stated that he takes everything to the airport himself for shipping. Mr. Snelgrove stated that they are looking into ways of eliminating traffic on Route 5, such as having trucks pull down Corporate Drive and hand-truck items to the store.

Commissioner Majmudar stated that the proposed building on the site plan will be hidden behind the existing building. He asked if there is a way to make it more visible as the architecture is beautiful. Ms. Breslin stated that they are not trying to hide the new building but the main focal point will be the existing building and front porch.

Commissioner Grillo asked what will be sold out of the retail store, to which Mr. Snelgrove replied that it will be flowers, candy and ice cream. Commissioner Grillo stated that he is concerned with the number of parking spots. Mr. Snelgrove stated that they have never had an issue with filling up twelve parking spots, but there is a large empty lot next door if they did. Commissioner Grillo asked if there is a way to add more parking spots.

Ms. Breslin stated that if they add more parking, it will start to encroach more into the wetland area. Mr. Kement stated that they can do additional parking but they are trying to get around it as they do not have a lot of time to open prior to the holiday season.

Ms. Whitten stated that she lives near the current location in East Granby and the parking lot is rarely full. Mr. Snelgrove explained that the operations have changed a lot due to COVID and a lot of the operations have moved to online and curbside pickup.

Chairman Nelson asked if the entire operation is being moved to Enfield, to which Mr. Snelgrove replied that it is.

Chairman Nelson asked if the dumpster pad will be fenced, to which Mr. Snelgrove replied that he does not like to look at dumpsters so it will.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if there will be a full basement under the front porch, to which Mr. Snelgrove replied that he does not believe he can afford it. Chairman Nelson stated that with a full basement under the porch he will have to worry about setbacks.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if there are specialty molds for special occasions, to which Mr. Snelgrove replied that they do a lot of custom work and molds.

Chairman Nelson asked three times if anyone in the audience would like to speak in favor or against the application; no one came forward.

Motion: Commissioner Alaimo made a motion, seconded by Commissioner DeGray, to close the Public Hearing.

The motion passed with a 7-0-0 vote.

Votes: 7-0-0

Mr. Snelgrove went over the reasons his business is special and what makes Snelgrove's unique. Commissioner Alaimo asked if the applicant makes chocolate covered cherries like the ones Crand's Candy Castle used to sell, to which Mr. Snelgrove replied that they do. He went on to state that they also make fudge and caramel apples.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner DeGray, to approve the waiver from the buffer yard.

The motion passed with a 7-0-0 vote.

Votes: 7-0-0

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner DeGray, to approve PH#3015 with the addition of two site specific conditions: arborvitaes to be added to the north side of the property and fencing around the dumpsters.

The motion passed with a 7-0-0 vote.

Votes: 7-0-0

Old Business

- a. **SPR# 1868** – 1 Prior Road – Site Plan Review Application for modifications to the Enfield Twin Rinks building to accommodate a window associated with the existing snack bar to allow snack purchases from outside; The Hillebrecht Group LLC, Owner; Keith Hillebrecht, Applicant; Map 68/Lot 92; R-33 Zone.

Commissioner Majmudar recused himself.

Keith and Christine Hillebrecht addressed the Commission. Mr. Hillebrecht stated that the snack bar has been closed due to COVID and they would like to get it opened back up again while minimizing the amount of people in the lobby. He stated that they would like to add a window to the existing snack bar, which would only be open when the rink is open.

Commissioner Alaimo stated that he is good with it as long as there are no comments from the Health Department.

Commissioner Alaimo asked how people in the rink will get food from the snack bar. Mr. Hillebrecht stated that most of the parents drop their kids off and leave. Chairman Nelson stated that last year parents were not allowed in with their kids and had to wait in their cars, so having the snack bar available for parents waiting outside is a good thing. Mr. Hillebrecht stated that having some revenue back from the snack bar will be helpful.

Commissioner Grillo stated that he does not want to see any large lit-up signs, to which Mr. Hillebrecht replied that is not their intention at all.

Ms. Whitten asked if the applicant is planning on putting a sidewalk or walkway, to which Mr. Hillebrecht replied that it already exists. She went on to state that there should be a trash can outside; Mr. Hillebrecht stated that there are two. Commissioner Alaimo stated that the Health Department should be commenting on this.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner DeGray, to approve SPR# 1868.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

Votes: 6-0-0

New Business

- a. Informal Application Review-190 Elm Street- Noble Gas; Mike Frisbie, Applicant; Map 64/ Lot 91; BL Zone

Michael Frisbie addressed the Commission, explaining that he is the owner/operator and not a developer. He stated that there is an existing service bay facility on the property now and he would like to put a new Noble fueling facility there. He stated that the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency (IWWA) was receptive to them mitigating some of the wetlands in the front to the back, so this next step is to come before the PZC to re-zone the parcel.

Chairman Nelson asked if there are two separate buildings in the proposed project. Kevin Solli of Solli Engineering, LLC stated that the site is currently zoned BL. He stated that the gas station is a grandfathered use on the property but they decided that pursuing a zone change from BL to BG would be the best path forward.

Mr. Solli provided overhead plans of the proposed project and pointed out the EV charging stations, retail building and existing wetlands.

Chairman Nelson asked if there is a current tenant for the additional building, to which Mr. Frisbie replied that there is not. Mr. Frisbie provided the Commission with a history of other projects he has worked on and explained his vision for a clean, safe and high-quality establishment.

Ms. Whitten explained the differences between BL and BG zones, stating that the BL zone does not allow gas stations but this one is grandfathered. She stated that a lot of the uses the applicant might like to do will fall under the BG category. She explained how this is in line with the current Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD).

Commissioner Higley stated that the proposed project will be good for Enfield. Commissioner Petronella stated that vehicles trying to take a left onto Elm Street from the property could be problematic but that is his only concern.

Commissioner Majmudar stated that Elm Street is a state highway so the state will be dictating traffic flow more than the town.

Commissioner Alaimo stated that no other applications have ever made it past the Wetlands Commission and congratulated the applicant.

Commissioner DeGray asked if this property is part of the Elm Corridor study, to which Ms. Whitten replied that it is not. She stated that she can bring the Commission up to speed on where they are at with the Elm Corridor study after this application.

Commissioner Alaimo asked about the timeline for the project, to which Mr. Solli replied that they plan to submit a zone change application in the next week. Mr. Frisbie stated that if all goes well they can begin construction early next year.

Other Business

- a. **Extension Request for PH#2983**-Special Permit one-year Extension request - 20 Louise Drive – Special Permit application and Site Plan Review to allow a hair stylist as a home occupation; Alison Bosco, owner/applicant; Map 53/Lot 310; R-33 Zone.

Ms. Whitten stated that the applicant had a hard time opening due to COVID and is looking for another year.

Motion: Commissioner Higley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner DeGray, to allow the one-year extension.

The motion passed with a 7-0-0 vote.

Votes: 7-0-0

Commissioner's Correspondence

Commissioner Alaimo stated that the light on Hazard Avenue in front of the Johnson surgical center is not functioning correctly and traffic is backing up to the Lulu's intersection. He stated that when the assisted living center opens the traffic will get worse, so they should address it now.

Commissioner Petronella stated that the red light on 190 exiting Broadbrook Road lasts over four minutes and needs to be looked at.

Director of Development Services Report

Ms. Whitten stated that they are meeting with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) tomorrow. She stated that they are still trying to find a replacement for Assistant Town Planner Jennifer Pacacha.

Applications to be Received

Ms. Whitten read through the following applications to be received:

- a. **PH# 3013** – 51 Enfield St – Special Permit & Site Plan Review application to convert a non-conforming use to a less intensive non-conforming use for auto wash and detailing motor vehicle facility; Diane Pagano, Owner/Applicant; Map 35/Lot 206; BL Zone.
- b. **PH# 3014** – 113 Brainard Rd – Special Permit & Site Plan Review application for an existing in law apartment; Patricia Ferreira, Owner/Applicant; Map 36/Lot 237; R-33 Zone.
- c. **PH#3015** - 1695 King Street – Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review Application to operate a retail outlet in an existing building and for the future construction of a 2,880 sq ft building to serve as a chocolate manufacturing facility; Northern Nurseries, Inc., Owner; Nel Group LLC, Applicant, (Attn: Rachel Breslin) Map 14; Lot 24; I-1 Zone.
- d. **PH# 3016** – 113 Brainard Rd – Special Permit & Site Plan Review application to park two company commercial vehicles on rear of the property; Patricia Ferreira, Owner/Applicant; Map 36/Lot 237; R-33 Zone.

Ms. Whitten stated that she would like to move the Aquifer Protection Agency meeting on September 23, 2021 to 6:00 from 6:30 as they have a long list.

Chairman Nelson explained that there is conflict between the town and some of the property owners in terms of aquifer protection, so he agreed to the meeting in order to come up with a resolution. The Commission agreed that this is a good idea.

Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner DeGray made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higley, to adjourn.

The motion passed with a 7-0-0 vote.

Votes: 7-0-0

Prepared by: Elizabeth Bouley

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Szewczak, Secretary