

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
October 28, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Commission Members Present: Peggy Sayers, Alan Gannuscio, Tamie Quagliaroli, Michael Christianson, David Weigert (Alternate), Roger Susaya (Seated)

Commission Member Absent: Ricardo Rachele, Julia Terra (Alternate)

Town Staff In Attendance: Carl Landolina, Dana Steele

I. Call to Order

Chairwoman Sayers called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken.

Chairwoman Sayers seated Mr. Susaya for Mr. Rachele.

III. Approval of Minutes from the following meeting:

a. October 10, 2024 Special Meeting

It was MOVED (Susaya) and SECONDED (Christianson) and PASSED (5-0) to APPROVE the October 10, 2024 Special Meeting minutes.

IV. Receive New Applications

None.

V. New Business

a. 295 Ella Grasso Turnpike – Site Plan

Attorney Paul Smith addressed the commission as representative for the applicant along with David Ziaks, professional engineer & principal of F A Hesketh & Associates. Mr. Ziaks briefly described the existing property, a large warehouse since 1963, and shared the proposed site plan modifications. They are looking to improve traffic flow around the building, provide additional parking spots, add truck docks, and outdoor storage. It was noted the size of the building would not change. The proposed changes come as the applicant is looking to re-tenant

the property and due to market conditions the proposed changes would likely open up the possibility of multiple tenants.

It was shared the existing building has an underutilized office space due to lack of parking near its entrance. Mr. Ziaks noted there would be no changes in parking on North side of the building but they are looking to restripe. Along the Southern side of the building, they are looking to add 9 depressed truck docks.

Mr. Ziaks continued and shared the applicant would like to leave the existing doors and fire lane. They would like to repave the existing railroad spur line, the existing gravel roadway to accommodate small box or delivery trucks access to that side of the building. It was noted the applicant is looking to bring the driveway across the front of the building up to ADA code. 16 additional parking spaces for maintenance vehicles, trucking and employee parking are proposed as well as 22 additional parking spaces along the Southern side. It was noted the impervious surface, about 70%, would remain the same. The Easterly side would become the proposed outdoor storage.

It was noted Mr. Ziaks worked with staff, multiple conversations, and he felt the 1st three comments in the Town Engineer's report had been addressed or will be addressed. A 2021 site plan approval was briefly noted. It was highlighted the OSTA certificate previously submitted to the State will be updated after the Commission's action.

In closing Mr. Ziaks briefly discussed the architecture and neutral color palette design updates to the look of the existing building. Attorney Smith noted there was no fire comment provided for this application and none was received for the 2021 application either.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments. None were made.

Mr. Steele addressed the commission regarding his report dated October 20 2024. He shared he reviewed the latest plans and the applicant had made changes based on Staff feedback. It was confirmed the existing building is 1 giant slab, no stairs. Item # 3 was briefly discussed, geotechnical fabric. Item # 5, the outside storage, was noted, if the Commission approves this application it would be consistent with the past approval. To conclude it was confirmed the catch basin is raised.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments. None were made.

Mr. Ziaks confirmed the rail road tracks are abandoned.

There was a brief discussion with Mr. Weigert concerning the widening of the gravel road to be paved and maintaining the nonconforming status without making it worse. It was noted by Mr. Steele the Fire Marshall has the authority to require marking after the Commission takes action.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments. None were made.

It was MOVED (Gannuscio) and SECONDED (Susaya) and PASSED (5-0) to APPROVE the 295 Ella Grasso Turnpike – Site Plan subject to the Town Planner comments/recommendations of items 1-3 in their report dated October 28 2024 and to obtain Fire Marshall feedback and add it to the file.

VI. Public Hearings

a. 5 & 11 Ella Grasso – Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review under Section 407.5

Chairwoman Sayers shared this application was rescinded by the applicant and the public hearing would not be held.

b. 255 Main Street – Special Use Permit with Site Plan Review

The recording secretary read the legal advertisement and Mr. Gannuscio read the rules for conducting a public hearing.

Town Attorney Carl Landolina addressed to the commission regarding the existing drainage easement as the proposed application would reroute pipes. He noted this was brought to his attention by Mr. Steele. He highlighted this is not an engineering concern. The existing pipe is located under the area for the proposed buildings. The pipe has been in use since 1973. He shared he spent some time with representatives from Trinity to discuss the right to take water through the property and giving the “right to drain.” Trinity would take 100% responsibility and the Town of Windsor Locks would be held harmless. Attorney Landolina shared he reviewed the Town Charter and did not see anything that would lead to Town Meeting or Board of Selectmen involvement. He noted a “right to drain” agreement would be satisfactory to his office from a legal perspective as would pass the obligation to Trinity.

Dan Drazen, Vice President of Development for Trinity Financial addressed the commission to accept the proposed right to drain proposal from Attorney Landolina.

It was confirmed for Mr. Gannuscio there is no need to involve inland wetlands. Mr. Steele agreed. There was a brief discussion began by Ms. Quagliaroli regarding the pipe by Country Side Apartments.

Attorney Landolina noted there would be no need to continue the public hearing concerning the right to drain issue as it will be handled by his office and this topic is not an impediment.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments. None were made.

Mr. Drazen addressed the commission and thanked them for the holding a special meeting. He shared their presentation would be 35-40 minutes and introduced their presenters; Architect – Amenta Emma, Adam Palmer, AIA, Engineer – Fuss & O’Neill, Inc. , Ron Bomengen, PE, LEED AP, Landscape Architect – Lemon Brooke, Josh Burgel, RLA, and Traffic Engineer – Fuss & O’Neill, Inc., Mark Vertucci, PE, PTOE.

The presentation was shared as a PowerPoint presentation. Trinity Financial with headquarters in Boston has accomplished \$3 Billion in development. Examples of projects in Dorchester MA, Brockton MA, Norwalk CT, as well as Stamford CT were shared on the screen. It was discussed the Ashmont was accomplished in 2 phases and Soundview Landing was accomplished in 3 phases. To conclude Mr. Drazen shared the State is investing in the relocation of the train station as a way to activate this section of Main St.

Mr. Palmer addressed the commission to review this history of Windsor Locks and noted growing up in Windsor he found it interesting to learn about our Town. An image of 1877 Windsor Locks was shared as well as historic photos of Windsor Locks’ Former Main Street. The Urban Renewal development project in 1975 was touched on as well. He concluded with a context diagram slide sharing the applicant is looking to reactivate Main Street in 2 phases; a u-shaped building, pedestrian corridor, ground floor retail space and courtyard. It was highlighted the proposal complies with 418.G, 418.H and 418.I.

Mr. Bomengen addressed the commission to share a compilation map as well as an ariel view of the location from September. He shared the proposed site plan eliminates all existing curb cuts and will share the driveway with the new train station. He reviewed the parking summary; 130 parking spaces, 5 dedicated for charging, and 8 additional if demand requires them, 7 accessible priority parking and 1 loading space to be compliant. He noted the set back for the project is 41 feet and briefly discussed the Norther sightline. Mr. Bomengen highlighted Fuss & O’Neill are involved in the future design of Main Street. He continued on to reference the grading plan to limit the amount of earthwork and the addition of a 3 tier retaining wall. He highlighted Hydrodynamic Separators used for treatment of water quality. He noted the use of 3X4 foot and 8X6 foot box culverts, adequate capacity. The site will have utility services with WPCA, CT Water and Eversource. To conclude, he shared emergency generators would be incorporated for the buildings as well as erosion control matting.

Mr. Burgel addressed the commission to present on the proposed landscaping. He noted the addition of a bike and pedestrian sidewalk along Main Street. He shared Fire access had been vetted with the Fire Marshall. He shared gray permeable pavers will be used and a “Tot Lot” is proposed as well as shade trees to create outdoor living rooms. He highlighted all native trees to Connecticut would be used and bike parking will be available throughout the site. It was shared site lighting will be shining down, full cutoff and the proposed fixtures are compliant with Town guidelines.

Mr. Vertucci addressed the commission to present the traffic impact study. He shared 5 intersections were studied along with the site driveway intersection. They gathered projected volumes provided by DOT, and used general retail as well as coffee house to be conservative. He noted the site already has generated traffic in the past. The study determined the proposed project will not deteriorate any of the studied intersections during peak hours. He referenced the UConn Crash repository and no significant crash history or abnormal crash patterns were identified in study area. He concluded the proposed development will have no significant impact to traffic operations in the study area. To close Mr. Vertucci shared the project will require Administrative Decision Review by the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA) if the Commission approves the application.

Chairwoman Sayers asked Mr. Steele to share his report.

Mr. Steele shared his report dated October 25 2024 noting his bullet points on page 1. He noted he has Mr. Voelker's report he could share as well. Mr. Steele provided a summary of the project in his report noting it would be completed in 2 phases. He shared the proposal improves water quality and generally would make the site better. He shared he was satisfied with the traffic report and noted OSTA will review it as well. He went through each of his suggested conditions of approval for the commission. Item 1 was in regards to the 3 easements shown on the survey. Item 2 discussed the storm water easement and right to drain discussed and worked through earlier in the meeting. Item 2 was updated to read as "The existing storm water easement in favor of the Town of Windsor Locks will be replaced by a right-to-drain in favor of the Town of Windsor Locks such that the property owner will be responsible for the maintenance of the drainage pipes on their property. A right to drain instrument shall be submitted to the Town Attorney as agreed in the public hearing for review and approval and filed on the land records prior to start of construction."

Mr. Steele continued on to Item 3 regarding the multi use trail and suggested the 8 feet be increased to 10 feet for consistency. Item 4 was in regards to drainage concerns, item 5 was regarding raising the grade of the multi use trail, and item 6 discussed an egress door. The applicant agreed to address. Item 7 also referenced the grade, item 8 asked for details on the culvert boxes and item 9 requested a revised photometric plan submitted for staff review. Item 10 was technical in nature, it discussed the need for concrete thickness to support the weight of Firetrucks and item 11 asked for clarifications on the proposed pavers.

Mr. Steele shared the last 3 items are standard conditions prior to starting construction; erosion control bond as well as an as built reminder.

Mr. Gannuscio suggested the applicant respond to Mr. Steele's comments before Mr. Voelker's report was shared. Mr. Bomengen shared the applicant agreed.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments. None were made.

Mr. Steele read Mr. Voelker's report dated October 25 2024 into the record.

Mr. Steele shared the email from the Fire Marshall, noting they were comfortable with the proposal.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments.

Mr. Weigert asked for additional information on what the area between the parking areas would look like. Mr. Bomengen shared they have proposed a privacy fence between the site and the train station as well as tall grasses. He shared they considered a gate in their design.

Chairwoman Sayers asked when the gray building would come down, on behalf of concerned residents, as she is approached often and asked. Mr. Drazen advised their goal is the end of next year.

Chairwoman Sayers asked for public comment in favor of the application.

Norm Weigert, no address provided, asked for the breakdown of the 120 proposed units.

Chairwoman Sayers asked for comments in favor, twice more. No additional comments were made. She then asked for comments in opposition, three times, no comments were made.

Mr. Palmer advised the breakdown of 120 units would be done between 2 phases, 50 One Bedroom, 62 Two Bedroom, and 8 Three Bedroom.

Mr. Drazen confirmed for Ms. Quagliaroli the units would be a mix of affordable, 80%, and market rate, 20%. He also shared the 2nd phase would be separate financing.

Mr. Susaya expressed concern for the parking, as all units would be provided 1 space. Mr. Drazen share this 1:1 ratio is workable and feasible with close proximity to transit.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments.

Mr. Gannuscio addressed the applicants noting they listened to the residents of the Town when feedback was offered during sessions.

There was a brief discussion concerning the right to drain topic.

It was MOVED (Gannuscio) and SECONDED (Christianson) and PASSED (5-0) to CLOSE the public hearing for 255 Main Street – Special Use Permit with Site Plan Review.

It was confirmed by Mr. Steele for Ms. Quagliaroli the right to drain agreement would be relying on the Town Attorney's guidance that the Town would be protected.

It was MOVED (Gannuscio) and SECONDED (Christianson) and PASSED (5-0) to APPROVE the 255 Main Street – Special Use Permit with Site Plan Review by Trintiy Financial subject to conditions 1-14 of the Town Engineer’s report.

VII. Old Business

None.

VIII. Public Input

Robert Kruzel of Oak Street addressed the commission to revisit the discussion on small scale manufacturing. He shared he followed the commission’s recommendation to visit EIDC and noted they were ecstatic to hear of the desire of a young business owner, but they advised there was nothing they can do. He shared he has an appointment with the 1st Selectman next week and would like to keep the ball rolling.

It was discussed the dilemma lies in the lack of a full time Town Planner. It was shared Goman & York will be providing part time planner (s) as Mr. Voelker would be leaving soon.

Mr. Kruzel asked at what point does he leave Windsor Locks as he is looking to make additional income, while paying the appropriate taxes and start a business but feels opportunity may be elsewhere as there has been no movement on this topic.

It was briefly discussed the various hobbies allowed such as woodworking, but not for income.

Mr. Kruzel shared a small C & C machine is no noisier than businesses already near his home, a multifamily, where he has tenants so he feels he has a stake in keeping the noise level low.

Chairwoman Sayers shared she would be interested to see what other towns have in terms of regulations and wonders if Windsor Locks could tweak them.

Mr. Gannuscio shared Mr. Rachele might have insight on Enfield’s regulations.

IX. Communications and Bills

Mr. Gannuscio and Chairwoman Sayers briefly discussed the budget staying on track concerning newspaper legal publications.

X. Adjournment

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or comments. None were made.

It was MOVED (Gannuscio) and SECONDED (Susaya) and PASSED (5-0) to adjourn meeting at 9:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ashley Malec, Recording Secretary
Windsor Locks Planning & Zoning Commission*