



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

1019 Main Street, PO Box 150, Branford, CT 06405

Tel: (203) 488 – 1255, Fax: (203) 315 – 2188

MINUTES

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

THURSDAY MARCH 20, 2025

REGULAR MEETING 7:00

This meeting was held remotely, solely via ZOOM.

Commissioners Present: F. Russo, J. Chadwick, J. Vaiuso, , C. Andres, M. Palluzzi,
D. Dyer

Commissioners Absent: S. Huttner. M. Liguori

Staff Present : H. Smith (Former Town Planner), Martin(clerk), John Guskowski (Interim Town Planner)

Chairman Andres introduced the commissioners and staff.

Secretary F. Russo read the Public Hearing Notice.

Chairman Andres reviewed the public hearing procedures.

H. Smith reviewed how to participate in the public hearings.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Lauren Wiggins-Applicant
Meadow Street Properties- Owner
151-155 Meadow Street
Special Exception-Church and/or Places of Worship
Application #25-1.8
A/R 2/6/25 & PH opened 2/20/25 & continued to 3/20/25

Lauren Wiggins (Applicant) was present with her husband and explained that this is a family run ministry located at 151-155 Meadow Street. They hold family meetings monthly and provide Christian education to the children of the ministry. She noted that they have had no parking issues. They were also approved by the Town Center Review Board,

John Guskowski reviewed the staff report and displayed photos of the site.
The commissioners asked a few questions.

PUBLIC INPUT: No one spoke

Chairperson Andres closed the public hearing.

2. Cedar Holdings, LLC c/o Jerry Saldutti-Applicant & Owner
48 Cedar Street
Special Exception- Dwelling Containing 4 dwelling units
Application #25-2.4
A/R 2/20/25 & PH set for 3/20/25

J. Pretti (Criscuolo Engineering) represented the applicant and noted that Jerry Saldutti was also present. He reviewed the site plan explaining that this is an existing 3 family house now. This proposal is to add a garage with a residential unit above it. The small parking area will be extended to the garage. He displayed photos of the house and said no exterior lighting will change. One tree may have to be cut but an arborist should decide that. Also, the arborvitae will be moved to the property line.

John Guskowski reviewed the staff report.

The commissioners had a brief discussion and asked a few questions.

PUBLIC INPUT :

1. Yvonne Ciufio- She asked how large the garage was.
2. Chairperson Andres noted a letter was received from the direct abutter at 50 Cedar St. with her concerns. The commission received it and read it. It mentioned a previous application for A lot split that was denied several years ago but this application is different.

Chairperson Andres closed the public hearing.

RETURN TO TABLE:

1. Lauren Wiggins-Applicant
Meadow Street Properties- Owner
151-155 Meadow Street
Special Exception-Church and/or Places of Worship
Application #25-1.8
A/R 2/6/25 & PH opened 2/20/25 & continued to 3/20/25

F. Russo made a motion to approve the applications with the Conditions below:

1. This approval shall not become effective until the Certificate of Actions has been filed on the land records.
2. Any signage shall require a separate approval, in accordance with Section 6.6.

M.Palluzzi seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2. Cedar Holdings, LLC c/o Jerry Saldutti-Applicant & Owner
48 Cedar Street
Special Exception- Dwelling Containing 4 dwelling units
Application #25-2.4
A/R 2/20/25 & PH set for 3/20/25

M. Palluzzi made a motion to approve the application with the Findings and Conditions below:

FINDINGS:

1. Subject to compliance with the conditions listed below, the Commission finds, Based on application materials presented, the proposed use of the property Is consistent with the Special Exception Criteria per Section 9.8.F.

CONDITIONS:

1. All conditions of any previous approvals shall remain in full force and effect as they May still apply.
2. Any proposed site lighting associated with the new structure shall be shown on the Record Site Plan, including lighting details compliant with Section 6.7 of the Zoning Regulations.
3. Site plans shall be modified to demonstrate sufficient bicycle parking facilities compliant with Section 6.5.D of the Zoning Regulations.

4. Should the existing oak tree be lost due to construction, it shall be replaced by a minimum of two native (1-2 caliper) shade trees.

J. Vaiuso seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Planning & Zoning Commission(C. Andres, Chair)-Applicant
Zoning Regulation Amendments
Application #24-12.1
A/R 12/19/24 & PH opened 1/16/25 PH closed on 3/6/25

H. Smith reviewed some of the items that were pending from the last meeting. He noted he sent a document to the commission right before the meeting.
The commissioners discussed a few of the changes and had a brief discussion.
They agreed they were ready to vote then.

F. Russo made a motion to approve the proposed packet of the zoning regulation amendments with the finding that they are in accordance with the comprehensive plan of zoning, and they are consistent with the Plan of conservation & Development with an effective date of April 11, 2025.

J. Chadwick seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2. Kim McCabe & Charles Watts-Applicants & Owners
38 Howard Avenue
Special Exception for Grading (Sec. 6.8) within 100 feet of a wetland
Application #25-1.7
A/R 2/6/25 & PH set for 4/3/25
3. Mariners Landing LLC c/o Robert Sachs (Member)-Applicant & Owner
52,54,56,58 aka 60 Maple Street
Special Exception- Approved Residential Development w/Mixed Use
Application #25-2.5
A/R 3/6/25 and PH set for 4/24/25
4. Mariners Landing LLC c/o Robert Sachs (Member)-Applicant & Owner
52,54,56,58 aka 60 Maple Street
Site Plan Modification & Coastal Site Plan
Application #25-2.6
A/R 3/6/25 & PH set for 4/24/25

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Zackary Cianciolo-Applicant
Thomas Kelleher-Owner
1100 West Main Street
Site Plan/Change of use to Fast Food (no drive thru)
Application #25-3.1
To be A/R

John Guszowski reviewed the application and displayed a photo of the site, noting the only change is signage. No other changes to the exterior are proposed.
The application is for a smoothie shop.

He then mentioned that we have been receiving many of this type of application for a change of use with little or no site changes. He displayed Section 9.6.B of the zoning regs and he reviewed it. Simply stating that if an application meets all the 4 criteria listed, then the past practice has been that these types of applications can be approved by staff.

Chairperson Andres and H. Smith agreed.

J. Chadwick made a motion to approve the application with the Condition below:

1. No additional signage or new or replacement lighting shall be installed without the Planning & Zoning Commission approval, or that of its staff, whichever may be appropriate, for compliance with the proposed signage or lighting with the Zoning Regulations.

M. Palluzzi seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2. Cheri's Sugar & Spice Bakery c/o Patrick Gargano-Applicant
116 North Main St. LLC c/o Alex Vigliotti- Owner
116 North Main Street
Site Plan / Change of use to a Bakery
Application #25-3.2
To be A/R

John Guszowski reviewed the application and displayed a photo of the site.
This is a change of use to a bakery. There are no exterior changes except restriping of the parking lot. The commission discussed whether this should be made a condition of approval.

J. Chadwick made a motion to approve the application with the Conditions below:

1. No additional signage or new or replacement lighting shall be installed without the Planning & Zoning Commission approval, or that of its staff, whichever may be appropriate, for compliance with the proposed signage or lighting with the Zoning Regulations.
2. The parking lot shall be striped in accordance with the site plan prior to the issuance Of a certificate of zoning compliance.

M. Palluzzi seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

MINUTES: 3/6/25

F. Russo made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

J. Chadwick seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

John Guszowski noted that there is Land Use training this coming Saturday via zoom. This would be a good opportunity to get training credits and It's very interesting and informative.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Interpretation of Section 4.8.H.3 (Caretakers Quarters)
J. Ellis (ZEO) explained to the commission that there is no definition in the zoning regulation book for "Caretaker". For background, the owner of 168-195 Main Street has a tenant for the retail store on the ground floor. Currently, above the store there is approved office space and storage. This is in the BL zone and Accessory apartments are not permitted.
The owner would like an interpretation of the term "Caretaker Quarters" which is allowed in that zone with special exception approval. The tenant who will be running the retail store has stated in

interest in living above the store to be able to keep an eye on it.

The commissioners asked a few questions and discussed this. They asked the ZEO a few questions.

M. Palluzzi suggested maybe Jane could go back and get more info from the property owner.

The final consensus was that the commission felt it was close to the pretext of an Accessory Apartment but if the owner can show that maybe the other convenience stores, he owns have been vandalized then he could show that having someone live above the store would be a deterrent for this to happen there. Or, if he could answer J. Vaiuso's question of why would someone have to be there at off hours? Why would you need a caretaker for a convenience store?

Another option for them is to apply for a variance for an Accessory Apartment.

2. Informal Discussion- Possible Residential Use at 100 Commercial Pkwy

Attorney Tim Lee (Montowese St. Branford) represented the applicant (Vigliotti Construction) who has a contract to purchase the property (2.4 acre parcel) at 100 Commercial Pkwy. He had met with E. Breining a few weeks back and discussed the possibility of submitting an affordable housing application (8-430G). E. Breining suggested having an informal discussion to get the commissions thoughts. Ray Sullivan (project Engineer) is also present and has some conceptual plans to display.

Ray Sullivan then displayed architectural sketches of one three-story building with approximately 80 residential units. They then showed an aerial view of the site.

Chairperson Andres verified this project would have 30 % of the units be affordable.

Attorney Lee noted that there has been some sewer issues there in the past but they are in the process of working them out.

The commissioners gave their thoughts and asked Attorney Lee some questions. The applicant displayed a floor plan.

The commission felt the location was appropriate, maybe a bit dense, they questioned why the need for an 830-g application?

Concerns over future housing markets, if the needs change.

The commission asked about what the rent would cost per month.

3. Planner's Report

John Guskowski spoke and noted he was initially hired to help E. Breining (Asst. Town Planner) When H. Smith retired. A new town planner has been hired and is scheduled to start in mid-April. John said his contract states he will be in the office one day a week, which is currently on Mondays. But he is also available by email or text.

He asked the commission to formally appoint him as the Interim Town Planner in the meantime so he can sign documents as needed.

F. Russo made a motion to appoint John Guskowski as the acting planner until the new planner starts.

J. Chadwick seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Chairperson Andres noted he was present at the new planners' interview, and he seems very qualified.

He also thanked the commission for all the time they spent reviewing the zoning regulation changes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.