

TOWN OF VERNON  
**Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC)**  
Meeting Minutes - APPROVED  
**Thursday, August 3, 2023 7:30 PM**  
Town Hall Memorial Building- 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Council Chambers  
14 Park Place Vernon, CT 06066

RECEIVED  
VERNON TOWN CLERK  
23 SEP 13 PM 5:30

1. **Call to Order & Roll Call by Roland Klee, Chairman**

Commissioner Klee called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Commissioner Klee called for a Roll Call. Commissioners present: Klee, Lockwood, Miller, Baum, Ransom and Perrina. Commissioners absent: Bard, Nicholson, Mullan and Damsky. A quorum of the Commission was present.

Also present was Shaun Gately, Director of Development Services, Ashley Stephens, Town Planner and Leslie Campolongo, Recording Secretary.

Commissioner Klee requested that Commissioner Perrina be seated for Commissioner Bard, and Commissioner Ransom be seated for Commissioner Mullan.

2. **Administrative Actions/Requests**

- 2.1 Amendment/Adoption of Agenda - Additional business to be considered under agenda item #6 "Other Business" requires a Commission vote.

Commissioner Klee called for a motion to adopt the Agenda for August 3, 2023. Commissioner Lockwood motioned the adoption of the Agenda. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried.

- 2.2 Approval of the Minutes from **July 20, 2023**

Commissioner Klee called for a motion to adopt the Minutes from the July 20, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Lockwood moved to approve the minutes of July 20, 2023. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Ransom. Motion carried.

3. **New Application(s) for receipt, if any:**

Town Planner Ashley Stephens stated there were no new applications for receipt by the Commission.

4. **Public Hearing(s) and Action on Applications:**

- 4.1 **CONTINUATION PZ 2023-10 - 38 EAST MAIN ST.** - Application of Garrett Homes, LLC c/o Hallisey, Pearson & Cassidy Engineering Associates, Inc. on behalf of West Hartford Gas Inc. for a Site Plan approval to demolish the two existing buildings and construct a one-story 10,764 sq. ft. retail use building and 36 space parking lot and associated site improvements. The property is zoned Historic District—Downtown Business & Residential [DBR] and lies within the Rockville Village District Overlay Zone [Map # 40 Block # 0090-Parcel# 0001A]

Commissioner Klee called for Continuation of the Public Hearing PZ 2023-10 - 38 EAST MAIN ST. Town Planner Ashley Stephens read the Legal Notice into record. Legal Notices were published on July 8 and July 15, 2023.

Commissioner Klee called for those presenting on behalf of the applicant.

- Attorney Robin Pearson of Alter & Pearson, LLC in Glastonbury, CT spoke on the behalf of the applicant, Garrett Homes, LLC. citing Section 4.23 (HISTORIC DISTRICT—DOWNTOWN BUSINESS & RESIDENTIAL) (DBR); Section 14.1 (SITE PLAN REQUIREMENTS) and Section 24 (ROCKVILLE VILLAGE DISTRICT OVERLAY ZONE) of the Zoning Regulations. (RDVOZ)
- Jim Cassidy, Professional Engineer and Principal of Hallisey, Pearson & Cassidy, Cromwell, CT spoke on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Cassidy provided existing site plans and renderings of proposed redevelopment of the site. Mr. Cassidy explained the site, as proposed, would involve demolition of the two existing buildings and the removal of pavement. The proposed building will be one story footprint, 10,764 sq. ft. retail store. Placement of the proposed structure will be located in the front, northwesterly corner of the parcel, about 10 ft back from setback requirement on East Main Street. This is due to the road grade, a drop of about 2 feet. New sidewalk is designed to blend with existing sidewalk. There will be a connection from the front entrance of the building to a parking area and a sidewalk connection back to existing sidewalks along East Main Street. A new parking lot will be constructed with new access drive of one lane in and a right and left out. New driveway will be relocated more to center of Court Street for additional cueing along Court Street. There will be a total of 38 parking spaces, two of which will be ADA compliant. As part of the review process, additional considerations include a connection to the shopping center to the west, so an additional driveway is proposed to provide access to that shopping center. There will a concrete pad for a dumpster enclosure and a loading area. A raised stamped concrete island is proposed within parking lot to accommodate the maneuvering of tractor trailers.

The requirements of ROCKVILLE VILLAGE DISTRICT OVERLAY ZONE (RDVOZ) will pertain to the design of the building. Site wise, additional implementations include:

- 3 concrete pad areas for benches along frontage of parcel, (one on East Main St., one on Court St. and one on Brooklyn St.) with a trash receptacle at each location.
- Stormwater Management – Post-development impervious coverage decreases by approximately 12,500 sq. ft., a reduction in flow. Proposed at the back portion of the site is the creation of a small storm water management basin, functioned to treat storm water quality.
- Existing site utilities and water connections will be re-utilized.
- Photometric – post development light will not spray of light beyond property lines. Three 25 ft high light poles with high efficiency LED fixtures are proposed.
- Landscaping Plan – Significant green area along south side of parcel and along east side of parking will include a series of 6 new street trees, ornamental trees for island areas, and shrubs around the stormwater treatment area. Foundation plantings and shrubs are included as part of overall package.

- Doug Grunert, BKA Architects, Brockton MA. spoke on behalf of the applicant regarding the design of the building.

#### EAST MAIN STREET SIDE

- Proposed design is a 5/12 pitched gable roof, clad with red brick.
- Front of building will have a spandrel glazing system, three bays equally with a clear glazing system at angled entry where the doors are. The spandrel is frosted, light gray film, which is opaque.
- Per Local Historic Properties Commission (LHPC) comments and zoning regulations, building will have the appearance of a two-story building. Second layer will have the spandrel glazing, flanked by dormers on either side.
- Along the base, there will be a CMU base crowned with light gray precast cap to give windows an anchor.
- Front of building will have pilasters to give definition on façade.
- Decorative goosenecks will illuminate signage (dark bronze). A hardy board trim in a light cream color will crown the fascia.

#### COURT STREET SIDE

- Same materiality continues, with additional glazing of windows, due to longer side of building. Also, visible will be the dormers.
- Roofing material proposed is asphalt shingles, an alternative proposal is a standing seam metal roof.
- Covered portico for the entrance.

#### BROOKLYN STREET

- This is location of receiving area and dumpster.
- Same window glazing will take place along rear of the building
- Receiving area will have double doors. Both the dumpster and receiving area will have enclosures, with landscaping to conceal the dumpsters.
- Roof will have sheet flow on two sides.

#### ACCESS/ONE WAY ROAD

- Will be the side with the rooftop equipment, screened with same matching brick material as rest of building. Dormers also on this side of building.
- Materiality is consistent throughout the building.
- Window frame material/store front will be full framed and glazed.
- Shingle material color will be light gray/pewter.
- Signage Lighting will follow photometric plan.

Commissioner Klee inquired if there were questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lockwood inquired regarding roofing shingle material and a slate line. Mr. Grunert stated that the material has a profile of slate/shingle, but is asphalt.

Commissioner Lockwood inquired regarding the appearance of individual window panes of glass. Mr. Grunert confirmed they are individual panes of glass.

Commissioner Lockwood inquired regarding the signage color on the East Main Street side of the parcel. Mr. Grunert responded that the signage is proposed to be black.

Mr. Gately informed the Commission that the revised plans are found on page 28 of the Agenda Packet, and are revisions made in response to comments by LHPC.

Commissioner Miller inquired regarding material. Mr. Grunert confirmed material is anodized aluminum.

Commissioner Perrina inquired about the extent of signage on the building. Mr. Grunert confirmed that what was presented is the only signage proposed. Mr. Cassidy indicated there will be a free-standing sign located at the northeast corner (intersection of Court/East Main St.) of the parcel. Currently the detail in the plan set shows as a typical Dollar General sign with black letters on a yellow background. They have been working with Dollar General for the option of black letters on a white background. Mr. Cassidy indicated this is a possibility if it is the preference of the Commission.

Mr. Klee inquired if staff has any comments. Ms. Stephens replied regarding the numbering on the building, to be located over the primary entrance of the building. Mr. Grunert confirmed that placement would be acceptable.

Commissioner Perrina inquired regarding the type of material for the dumpster enclosure. Mr. Cassidy indicated that the original plans submitted show a chain link fence. The revised plans shown in architectural/elevations show a wood fence enclosure. Discussion ensued. Mr. Cassidy indicated the applicant may entertain a vinyl fence as an alternative in a complementary color.

Ms. Stephens also noted that on the plan set beginning on C-2, references a chain link fence around the dumpster enclosure. If approved by the Commission, material changes should be reflected on plans. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Perrina inquired regarding the glazing if this was a permanent change to windows or can it peel. Mr. Grunert replied that the glazing is applied to the window pane, and should not peel or erode.

Commissioner Klee read into record a letter from the Local Historic Properties Commission, to the Planning and Zoning Commission, dated July 27, 2023.

Commissioner Klee also read into record an email, dated August 1, 2023 from Margaret Farrell to the Planning and Zoning Commission. There was no address provided.

Commissioner Klee inquired if there were members of the public who wished to speak.

Nancy Steffens, 224 South Street, Vernon spoke regarding the application. Suggestions and recommendation included that black lettering on a white sign is consistent with LHPC comments, asphalt shingles should be used versus metal, and should be architectural shingles, due to the roof line. Ms. Steffens also inquired and confirmed there were no awnings on the project. She confirmed window glazing was not peel and stick. She noted there was a lot of green space and suggested that a park could be incorporated into the plans. She also inquired and spoke regarding the brick material to be used for the building.

Bob Felber, 224 South Street, Vernon spoke regarding the application. He stated he believes signage should be black lettering on white background.

Maryann Levesque, 183 Bolton Road, Vernon, spoke regarding the application. She stated concerns about safety and the other two stores closing, and the storage of product, citing problems with other stores. She also inquired on names of trees, and low-level lighting as not to affect neighbors.

Jake Kalnenieks, 31 Reed Street, Vernon spoke regarding the application. Mr. Kalnenieks indicated the design appears to be in keeping with the LHPC's comments. He also spoke regarding the large parking lot, and the redevelopment of Rockville and suggested there might be other alternatives for the use of the site, and how will another Dollar General serve the community as they have 19,000 locations. Mr. Kalnenieks spoke regarding food deserts, and the potential for other smaller mom/pop businesses to close. He spoke about job creation, and how there are usually only two workers in these stores, products are in disarray and block the fire exits. He urged the Commission to evaluate the impact on the community.

Teri Rogers, 26 White Street, Vernon spoke regarding the application. She stated her reluctance to another Dollar General. She spoke in favor of the proposed design. She stated the condition of the interior and exterior of the business is up to management of the stores. She also spoke about the need to think of other businesses in town, carriages that will leave the site, and the upkeep of the property, ensuring that maintenance is in place.

Commissioner Klee asked if the applicant has met the concerns of the staff. Mr. Gately thanked the applicant for their patience as they met with staff to discuss the plans and make modifications. The intention of the regulations is to fit into the Village District. State Statute 8-2(j) permits Towns to establish village district in order to keep with the historic character of an area. Mr. Gately stated that retail use is a permitted use for this area. He stated the Town the town will remain vigilant ensuring there are no zoning infractions, property maintenance is adhered to, as the Town does with any other business. He stated the applicant has done a considerable amount of work to conform to the Regulations.

Ms. Stephens reminded the Commission that if a decision is made contrary to the LHPC's four recommendations, to state the reason on record. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Klee reiterated the four recommendations were the 1) Location of the structure 2) Building Materials 3) Building Height and 4) Monument Sign.

For the Record, Attorney Robin Pearson addressed the following items from the LHPC letter.

**4) Monument Sign** – Attorney Pearson confirmed the applicant will commit to the white background with black lettering. Commissioner Klee inquired as to the placement of the Monument Sign. Mr. Cassidy referenced the drawing for the placement of the sign, indicating the corner of the parcel. He indicated the Plan Set shows present detail of sign.

**1) Location of Structure**– Mr. Cassidy stated the parcel is a retail use. Public parking is needed near the front of the building. Proposed placement of Building is situated as close to road frontage as possible due to road grade. Attorney Pearson referenced the comment made by the LHPC that a corner entrance be more in proximity with East Main and Court Streets and that the proposal is the most effective way to situate the building. Commissioner Klee commented that a placement at the corner would mean a more expansive asphalt, and proposed location closes that gap a bit.

- Mr. Cassidy spoke regarding the public comment of introducing a 'pocket park.' There is a 22,000 sq. ft green area. He believes they can work with Staff and the Applicant to

incorporate a walk way and some seating areas with some additional plantings for that area versus placement of benches around the perimeter, which could be a nice feature.

- Mr. Cassidy also spoke regarding public comment of the operation of the business/amount of product in the store. He stated that Dollar General on Hartford Turnpike is 7,500 sq. ft., and the store on Talcottville Rd is 9,100 sq. ft. Proposed store is 10,764 sq. ft., almost 20% bigger than the biggest Dollar General in town. He indicated the other two stores will remain. Dollar General is aware they will need to have more area for product within the store and also to manage the product well inside the store.
- Attorney Pearson asked Mr. Cassidy to speak regarding public comment of tractor trailers stored outside. Mr. Cassidy confirmed there will be no Tractor Trailers stored outside, and are they not permitted. Attorney Pearson added that a Tractor Trailer visits the site usually once or twice a week.
- Attorney Pearson clarified the tile on the roof as architectural shingle. Mr. Grubert confirmed that the shingle proposed is an architectural grade shingle, which is what the LHPC requested.
- Commissioner Lockwood inquired about the landscaping plan, specifically the trees. Mr. Cassidy responded that there are six (6) street trees along frontage consisting of (2) Red Maple, (2) American Hornbeam (2) Ginkgo Biloba called for in the plan. There are another ten (10) ornamental trees in the parking area, and shrubs. He reiterated that it would be beneficial to work with Staff and Applicant to incorporate a pocket park on the site.
- Commissioner Lockwood confirmed that the applicant agrees to place a street number over the entrance. Mr. Cassidy confirmed yes, and that it would be the same color (black) and style lettering as the sign.
- Commissioner Lockwood confirmed the type of dumpster enclosure. Mr. Cassidy confirmed, as proposed, it would be wood slat fence. He understands concern about maintenance and will work with applicant to go to a vinyl fence for durability and maintenance purposes, recommends not white vinyl, but something that will complement the design of the building color-wise.
- Commissioner Baum inquired regarding a stipulation regarding advertisements in the windows. Mr. Cassidy responded that the window design prevents access from inside of the building, so advertising wouldn't be seen from outside as you are unable to see through. The front entrance will have regular glass.
- Mr. Grubert indicated that typically for Grand Openings, Dollar General likes to use a vinyl banner which is removed once grand opening is concluded. Mr. Gately indicated that a permit is required for a temporary sign for this event. Mr. Gately also stated that there are regulations for signs that are on corners, referencing the free-standing monument sign, which must conform to zoning regulations.
- Attorney Pearson stated that Site Plans can be conditioned, and the Commission could stipulate that there will be no signage at the entrance of the store also.

- Commissioner Lockwood inquired as to the operational hours of Dollar General. Attorney Pearson responded that they are typical hours of operation. Opening at reasonable time in the morning and close by 10 pm. Commissioner Miller stated that the website indicates 8:00 am to 10:00 pm
- Commissioner Ransom inquired from Mr. Gately, the number of other applications for this space. Mr. Gately stated that the applicants meet the conditions of the regulations.

Commissioner Klee moved for a motion to close the Public Hearing

- Teri Rogers, 26 White Street, Vernon spoke regarding utilization of the existing Ladd and Hall sign. Mr. Gately responded that the sign is on property not owned by the applicant.
- Bob Felber, 224 South Street, Vernon recommended that the anodized aluminum around windows be colored black. Mr. Grubert stated that there is no problem making the color dark bronze which looks black.
- Nancy Steffens, 224 South Street, Vernon suggested that black color be used as it is more consistent with other Town buildings.
- Commissioner Klee confirmed that windows will not be transparent. Mr. Grubert responded there will be real glazing but not transparent. He also stated for the record that they will commit to dark bronze for the framing of the windows.

Commissioner Klee moved for a motion to close the Public Hearing. Motion was made by Commissioner Lockwood to close the Public Hearing. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried. Public Hearing closed at 8:47 pm.

Ms. Stephens reminded the Commission that if a decision is made contrary to the LHPC's four recommendations, to state the reason on record, and that if a recess is needed, the Commission may do that.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Lockwood moved that the Planning & Zoning Commission **Approve PZ 2023-10**, an application for a site plan of development to demo the current buildings and propose a 10,764 sq. ft retail use building because we have confirmed that all safeguards have been taken to ensure that the use will not affect surrounding businesses or parcels; the application meets all of Section 24 and the proposal is compatible with the architecture of existing buildings in the vicinity and with the following condition:

- A. The 'Dollar General' sign (Monument sign) shall be white background with black letters; and
- B. The Placement of the sign will conform to Town Regulations; and
- C. The Building Number will be added above the entrance of the building; and
- D. The window panes will be anodized aluminum in a dark brown color; and
- E. The Commission will not require the building placement to be moved closer to the corner of Court Street and East Main as requested by the Local Historic Properties Commission, as the topography makes this request not feasible; and
- F. Fencing for the dumpster enclosure shall be constructed of vinyl and in a complementary color to the building itself. It shall not be white in color.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Miller. Commissioner Baum commended the application. Commissioner Klee inquired to any further discussion or comments from the Commission. There were none.

Commissioner Klee called for a vote on the application and restated the motion made by Commissioner Lockwood and seconded by Commissioner Miller. The motion carried with 6 members in favor, 0 members in opposition and 0 members abstaining from the vote.

5. **8-24 Referrals, if any**

Ms. Stephens indicated there were none.

6. **Other Business/Discussion**

6.1 Ms. Stephens informed the Commission there is an appeal on a recent approval by the Commission for 212/218 Talcottville Rd. Discussion ensued.

7. **Public Comments Received**

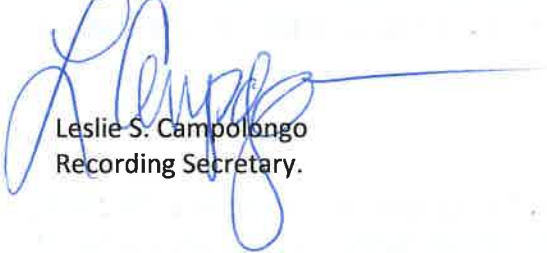
Maryann Levesque, 183 Bolton Road, Vernon thanked the Commission for the volunteer work. She also suggested that the Planning and Zoning Department send the entire packet for public review. Mr. Gately responded that storage on the town website/email has been consumed quickly by the volume of material. Staff does send a link to the material which can be accessed on the Town website.

8. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Lockwood motioned for adjournment of the meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Ransom. Motion carried. There were no objections or abstentions.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.

Respectfully Submitted;



Leslie S. Campolongo  
Recording Secretary.