

SUFFIELD PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
May 20, 2024

Present: Mark Winne, Chairman
 Ginny Bromage, Secretary
 Brian Dunn
 Christine Sinopoli
 Leon Litvak
 Jeff Girard, Alternate
 Jacob Byrnes, Alternate
 Geoffrey Kaplan, Alternate

Absent: Erin Golembiewski, Vice Chairman

Also Present: Bill Hawkins, AICP, Director of Planning & Development
 Ellie Binns, Administrative Assistant

The proceedings of this meeting were recorded and are available on the Town website, along with all of the application materials.

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Winne called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM as a hybrid meeting with eight members in attendance. In the absence of Ms. Golembiewski, Mr. Winne appointed Mr. Kaplan as a voting member for the meeting.

Ms. Bromage read the legal notice for the public hearing.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

III. PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE

Request from MI 22, LLC (James McMahan) for a pre-application conference to discuss a project to convert the buildings located at 140 and 156 South Main Street into residential apartments per Section V.U. Adaptive Reuse Zoning Regulations.

James McMahan, owner of the properties at 140 & 156 South Main Street read the proposed narrative for each building giving a brief history and the plan for adaptive reuse of these buildings while reviewing the layout of the property. There has been a lot line revision between the 156 and 140 South Main Street properties and a free split to separate a back parcel which he referred to as lot 156A. Mr. Hawkins explained the process for free splits and lot line revisions and that the changes to the property do not show on the GIS maps because they were filed in March. Mr. McMahan gave a history of the rectory building and detailed the architectural plan to convert it to three, 3-bedroom market rate apartments. He also described the convent which currently has ten bedrooms and his plan to convert the building into two separate apartment units. The site plan also includes a garage for three cars and ten outside parking spaces which meets the parking requirement of 2.5 spaces per unit. He stressed that the plan would leave the exterior of the buildings unchanged. Mr. McMahan also reviewed the architectural plans for the

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

St. Joseph's Church building at 140 South Main Street and stated that he could have 16 apartments or 12 and asked the Commission if they had a preference. The 16 apartment plan would be for market rate with twelve 2 bedroom and four 1 bedroom units. The 40 parking spaces could be on the 140 South Main Street property or incorporated on the 156 South Main property. There was discussion about what would be preferable and no conclusion was drawn but easements would be needed to put the spaces on the 156 South Main Street property. It was noted that putting parking in front of the church would take away from the look of the property and trees would have to be removed. Mr. Winne noted that he would like to see some of the units as affordable. Mr. McMahon stated that all the units would be ADA compliant and he emphasized that in the plans for both buildings there would be no changes to the exterior of the building. There was discussion as to whether or not the existing buildings are non-residential so that they are eligible for the ADU application rather than filing a text amendment. Commission members requested that Mr. McMahon present a plot plan that was more legible indicating the property lines. They also asked for the plans for lot 156A and he indicated he had not yet decided on a plan for that parcel, but he has a traffic analysis, drainage analysis, and a capacity letter for 300 one-bedroom units for affordable housing. He noted that what happens with his applications for 140 and 156 South Main Street will impact his decision for the back property, explaining that he feels that he has presented a good plan for the front properties but if it is rejected by the Commission or approved and then appealed by a neighboring property owner, he will need to find a another use for the property as doing nothing is not an option. Ms. Sinopoli felt that this was "tantamount to a threat and that he was dictating the conditions" to the Commission.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

File 2024-1: Request from Christopher Legiadre for a Zoning Regulation text amendment to Section III.U. Accessory Dwelling Units.

Christopher Legiadre, AIA, presented the application on behalf of his client Nick Cianci the owner of the vacant lot at 200 South Main Street. In response to the national and State housing shortage he is proposing new verbiage to Suffield's current Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations to allow for a second ADU in areas with existing multi-family properties. He also showed a site plan with two ADU's and a new house on his clients' property.

Mr. Hawkins then read his report into the record. He noted that the application had been sent to the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) for their review and they found no apparent conflict with regional plans and policies or the concerns of neighboring towns. Mr. Hawkins explained that the proposal would apply to properties of at least 1.25 acres within 750 feet of at least two other parcels that have existing multifamily structures with a minimum of three units. He gave a list of qualifying properties in town that have 3 or more units. It was discussed that each ADU could not exceed 1,000 square feet and short term rentals are not permitted in Suffield.

Mr. Winne opened the hearing to comments from the public.

Eric Boone, 65 Barry Place spoke in favor of the application on this particular parcel, but noted off street parking might be a problem in other areas.

Sharon Bruno, 159 Halladay Avenue was concerned about the precedent this would set.

With no further comments Ms. Sinopoli moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dunn and passed 6-0-0.

V. OLD BUSINESS

File 2017-11C: Request from Rayco Residential Development, LLC. to release the remaining maintenance bond for the Stonegate subdivision located off North Main Street. Map 42H, Block 45, Lot 322 (1-15).

Mr. Hawkins noted that the road was accepted by the Town in November 2022, and the bond was reduced to \$31,000.00 as a maintenance bond at that time. He reviewed the subdivision with the town engineering consultant and the Public Works Director conducted his own review of the remaining items on the bond and determined that it could be released. He noted that the sales trailer on the property will be removed.

Ms. Bromage moved to approve File 2017-11C to release the 10% maintenance bond for the Stonegate Subdivision. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved 6-0-0.

File 2024-1: Request from Christopher Legiadre for a Zoning Regulation text amendment to Section III.U. Accessory Dwelling Units.

The commission discussed the application and Mr. Litvak stated that the existing regulation for one ADU is enough. Both Ms. Bromage and Mr. Winne felt that it would be difficult to foresee other areas where this amendment would work well.

Ms. Bromage moved to approve File 2024-1 text amendment to Section III.U. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and denied by a 0-6-0 with no members voting in favor.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

File 2016-8A: Request under Section IX.E.4. of the Zoning Regulations for an internally lit sign to be located on the Hangar Pub & Brewery building located at 915 South Street, Map 30, Block 25, Lot 62-3. Applicant – Sign Dynamics

John Lemanski of Sign Dynamics presented the application for a new internally lit sign on the building for the Hangar Pub & Brewery which was the former Broad Brook Brewery at 915 South Street. He distributed a rendering of the proposed sign explaining that it would be an improvement and that it would help with people finding the location. He also noted that this is in the Light Industrial Zone and would not have any impact on residences. The application is based on Section IX E.4. of the regulations which gives the Commission authority to allow these signs on a case by case basis. Mr. Hawkins noted that the Commission had previously allowed an internally lit sign for the Windsor Marketing Group building which is in the same zone. Mr. Girard, who is also a member of the Economic Development Commission spoke in favor of the proposal. He further explained that the EDC feels that the sign regulations are prohibitive for businesses and that there should be more flexibility especially in the light industrial area. Ms. Bromage spoke in favor of the application noting the location. Mr. Winne stated that the Town

has worked hard to replace signs that were internally lit and he was not in favor of making an exception because others will also ask for that type of sign. Ms. Sinopoli agreed that it would be inconsistent to allow this sign. Mr. Winne felt that the EDC and the PZC should jointly meet to discuss the signage regulations.

Ms. Bromage moved to approve File 2016-8A for an internally lit sign at 915 South Street. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and denied on a 1-5-0 vote with Ms. Bromage voting in favor.

File #2024-2- Request for a special permit/site plan approval to convert the buildings located at 156 South Main Street into residential apartments per Section V.U. Adaptive Reuse Zoning Regulations. Applicant: MI 22, LLC., Map 44H, Block 47, Lot 216.

Ms. Bromage moved to accept the application and schedule the public hearing for the June 17, 2024 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Litvak and approved 6-0-0.

VII. REPORTS

Chairman – None

Director of Planning & Development – Mr. Hawkins noted that there is a Freedom of Information Act Presentation on Wednesday, May 29th from 7:00-9:00 PM and commission members are encouraged to attend. Changing Commission members' email addresses to a town email address was discussed and staff will help facilitate this for those that want one.

VIII. MINUTES

Ms. Bromage moved to approve the March 18, 2024 minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sinopoli and approved 5-0-1, with Mr. Litvak abstaining as he was not at the meeting.

IX. CORRESPONDENCE – None

X. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to come before the commission, Ms. Bromage made a motion to adjourn at 9:29 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kaplan and approved 6-0-0.

Submitted,

Ginny Bromage, Secretary

cc: Assessor, Building Official, Conservation Commission, Selectmen, Town Clerk, Town Engineer, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Commission Counsel