

2025 MAR -3 PM 4: 06

REC'D BY:



1

**SUFFIELD PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
February 24, 2025**

Present: Mark Winne, Chairman
Erin Golembiewski, Vice Chair
Ginny Bromage, Secretary
Brian Dunn
Christine Sinopoli
Scott Guilmartin
Jeff Girard, Alternate
Jacob Byrnes, Alternate
Geoffrey Kaplan, Alternate

Also Present: Bill Hawkins, AICP, Director of Planning & Development
Ellie Binns, Administrative Assistant
Dana Steele, P.E., Consultant Town Engineer
Carl Landolina, Commission Attorney

The proceedings of this meeting were recorded and are available on the Town website, along with 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 and one member remote.

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

II. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

III. PUBLIC HEARING

File # 2025-1: Site plan application pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-30g to convert the building located at 140 South Main Street (St. Joseph's Church) into 12 residential apartments. Applicant: James McMahan, Map 44H, Block 47, Lot 217.

Attorney Amy Blume on behalf of the applicant explained the application as a Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 8-30g affordable housing project with 12 apartments, 30% of which or four meet the affordability criteria in the statutes to qualify. Attorney Blume explained the income criteria to qualify as a tenant for the affordable units and gave examples of the type of workers that would fit into the income level to be eligible. She noted that the remaining eight units would be rented at market rates. Attorney Blume stated that they have spoken with the Executive Director of the Suffield Housing Authority (SHA) about being the administrator for the affordable units which they will consider. If the SHA does not agree, then a third party

administrator will be hired to take on the role of advertising the units and screening candidates to be sure that the affordability qualifications are met. Commission Attorney Carl Landolina has reviewed the required affordability plan submitted by the applicant and found it to be acceptable. In order to meet the CGS Section 8-30g requirements there will be a forty (40) year deed restriction requiring the four apartments to remain affordable. Attorney Blume stated that the Suffield Fire Marshall has approved the turning radius indicated on the plan as being adequate for the largest wheelbase vehicle which is 230 inches and referred to his letter dated January 26, 2025. There will be eighteen (18) parking spaces for the building on the adjacent property with one handicapped accessible space. There is an access and parking easement agreement document that has been reviewed and approved by Attorney Landolina for parking and access since they are on adjacent properties. The existing striping will be removed and the new parking area will be restriped.

Richard Reynolds, P.E, of LRC Group the engineer for the project reviewed the existing lighting on the plan and noted that there is no plan to change the lighting.

Attorney Landolina distributed a document to the Commission explaining the affordable housing land use appeals procedure and discussed the limited criteria to deny an application which must be based on substantial protection of public health and safety.

Mr. Hawkins then read his report dated February 20, 2025 into the record which reviewed the existing conditions and the proposed conditions with details of the proposed parking and site circulation as well as the travel pattern for fire apparatus. The report also explained density in the surrounding area and the mix of the units and affordability in the proposed plan. He noted that the trash receptacle locations should be noted on the final plan as well as the sidewalks from the building to the handicapped parking space.

Mr. Steele noted that there were no significant changes to the site but he stated that the current striping for the parking spots should be removed.

Ms. Sinopoli asked about the location and size of the affordable apartments. The applicant noted that they were put on the first floor for accessibility reasons.

Mr. Winne then opened the hearing to the public.

Eric Boone, 65 Barry Street distributed a 7 page document to the Commission which he read into the record. He stated that he represented 40 families in the neighborhood in his remarks. He stated in the document his concerns about public safety and disagreed with the Fire Marshal's analysis of the fire access road for fire equipment. He was also concerned about the inclusion of parking on 156 South Main and ADA compliance of the apartments. He also questioned if the affordable housing criteria was being met with this application.

Shawn Robinson, 130 South Main Street questioned if the site lighting met the regulations and suggested there should be a light study.

Dan Perakes, 161 South Main Street commented on the Town of Guilford's affordable housing rate.

Chelen Kost, 10 Barry Place was concerned about parking on Barry Place.

Bob Parks, 30 Barry Place questioned if there would be sprinklers in the building and the sewer connections.

Kelsey Gagne, 70 Ellison Street was concerned about tree clearing on the adjacent property.

In response to some of the comments from the public, Attorney Blume noted that she had not seen the document submitted by Mr. Boone, but that this application is new and any comments that he made about the previous application should be stricken from the record. She further stated that the Suffield Fire Marshall had cited the 2022 CT State Fire Code in his letter approving the access. She also pointed out that Mr. Boone's comments about the affordability calculations were not correct and that Attorney Landolina had reviewed and approved both the affordability plan and the access and parking easement agreement for this application.

Kevin Goff, 475 Thompsonville Road spoke in favor of the application noting that it is a good use of what is now a stagnant building.

Attorney Landolina explained the rent calculations in the affordability plan, how they were based on formulas in the statutes, and that they will be updated by the administrator of the affordable units when it comes time for renting them out.

There were no further comments from the public and Mr. Guilmartin suggested the hearing be continued so that the Commission members could review the document submitted by Mr. Boone. Mr. Guilmartin moved to continue the public hearing for File # 2025-1 to the March meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Golembiewski and passed unanimously. 6-0-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Note: Attorney Landolina left the meeting for the discussion of this application

File # 2024-6: Request for site plan approval for the 32-unit Phase II of the Eastwoods age restricted condominium development located off Juniper Lane. Map 78H, Block 47, Lot 91. Applicant: MJL Realty Investments, LLC. (Tabled from December Meeting)

Attorney David Sherwood of Moriarty, Paetzold & Sherwood representing the applicant noted that the Commission was now in receipt of a will serve letter from the Connecticut Water Company which completed the necessary documents needed.

Mr. Hawkins did not have an additional report for this application.

Mr. Steele then read his report dated February 14, 2025 into the record noting that the applicant had addressed and revised the plans based on his comments at the previous Conservation and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings. He made suggestions for conditions of approval which would require specific infrastructure be completed before any Certificate of Occupancies (CO) could be issued. Commission members added the completion of sidewalks prior to CO issuance to these conditions.

Mr. Guilmartin moved to approve File # 2024-6 with the conditions detailed in Mr. Steele's report dated February 14, 2025 with the additional condition of the completion of sidewalks as shown on the plans. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dunn and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

Attorney Landolina rejoined the meeting at this time.

File # 2019-2B: Performance bond review and possible increase pursuant to Section 1103 of the Subdivision Regulations for the Kings Meadow subdivision located off of East Street South. Map 79H, Block 45, Lots 1-34.

Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Steele have been working with the developer Mark O'Neill to come to an agreement about the work that needs to be completed and the cost associated with those items. Mr. Hawkins stated that staff received information the afternoon of the meeting regarding the wetland plantings and need time to determine if that item can be removed from the bond. As a result, he suggested tabling this item to the March meeting. Attorney Gregory Picuch representing Mr. O'Neill distributed a copy of a letter dated September 25, 2024 from Attorney Scott Lingenfelter to Mr. O'Neill which he suggested had complicated the installation of the sidewalks and street trees. Attorney Picuch also noted that they are trying to get information on the road construction from the subcontractor that did the work and again agreed that they would not seek any further certificates of occupancy until the bonding matter is resolved. The Commission discussed alternatives for the trees that homeowners did not want on their property. Attorney Landolina will also review the bond.

Mr. Guilmartin moved to table the bond review until the March 17, 2025 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Golembiewski and approved unanimously 6-0-0.

File # 2025-1:

The hearing on this application was continued to the March meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

File # 2025-2: Site plan application for a ground mounted solar array on Suffield Academy property. Map 33H, Block 30, Lot 101. Applicant: CTEC Solar

Patrick Booth of Suffield Academy and Jin Tao, E.I.T with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. presented the application for a solar array on the western side of the Suffield Academy property near Hill Street which was approved by the Conservation Commission on January 28, 2025. This solar array will provide electricity directly to the grid.

Mr. Hawkins then read his report into the record, giving a description of the location and noting that it will not likely be visible from Hill Street. The project meets or exceeds all regulations for height and setbacks.

In an email report of February 23, 2025 Mr. Steele recommended conditions of approval for the plans to be revised detailing the maximum panel height of 10 FT of lowest clearance and minimum of 16 FT spacing between arrays, monitoring steep slopes to ensure stabilization after construction and additional erosion control measures will be required if there are erosion concerns. He recommended that fields within the work area be seeded to establish vegetation before the start of construction. Mr. Steele also noted that the agricultural fields will be converted to wild flower and grass seed mix to reduce runoff and sediment impacts downstream.

Ms. Bromage moved to approve File # 2025-2 with the three conditions detailed in Mr. Steele's email report dated February 21, 2025. The motion was seconded by Ms. Golembiewski and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

File #2025-3: Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24 Referral - Transfer of 0.65-acre town owned cemetery on Phelps Road to the Mountain Burying Ground Association. Map 5, Block 10, Lot 4.

Mr. Hawkins explained the CGS Section 8-24 referral process and read his report of February 19, 2025 into the record noting that the Mountain Burying Ground Association had been maintaining this cemetery since 1867 and for insurance purposes would like to own the property. Mr. Hawkins described the original deed that turned the property over to the Town of Suffield and Granby in 1788. He explained that the Granby Board of Selectmen voted to relinquish their interest in the property in January. As a result, the CGS 8-24 report is the first step for the Board of Selectmen to consider the request and explained that the Commission either makes a positive or negative recommendation.

Ms. Bromage moved to issue a positive report to the Board of Selectman under CGS Section 8-24 to transfer the Phelps Road cemetery property to the Mountain Burial Ground Association. The motion was seconded by Mr. Guilmartin and approve unanimously 6-0-0.

VI. REPORTS

Chairman – None

Director of Planning & Development – Mr. Hawkins reported that he plans to work on prioritizing the Affordable Housing recommendations for the Commission's review in March.

VII. MINUTES

Ms. Golembiewski moved to approve the January 23, 2025 special meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dunn and approved 6-0-0.

Ms. Golembiewski moved to approve the January 27, 2025 regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dunn and approved 6-0-0.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE – CT Federation of Planning & Zoning Agencies annual meeting will be on March 28th and anyone who is interested in attending should contact staff to be registered for the dinner.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to come before the commission, Ms. Bromage made a motion to adjourn at 9:37 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dunn and passed 6-0-0.

Submitted,

Ginny Bromage, Secretary

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

**THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY
LEFT BLANK**