PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
MINUTES
April 3, 2024
6:30PM

Place: Watertown Town Hall
Town Council Chambers
61 Echo Lake Road
Watertown, Connecticut

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Raymond Antonacci called the meeting to order at 6:30PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Raymond Antonacci, Chairman
Dan DeVito, Vice-Chairman
Ken Demirs, Secretary
Lou Cavallo
Dave Pope
Joe D’Uva
Jack McHugh

Members Absent: Richard Antonetti
Robert Marinaro
John Nygren

Jack McHugh seated for Richard Antonetti

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – none.
3. MINUTES

Regular Meeting January 3, 2024
Regular Meeting February 7, 2024
Regular Meeting March 6, 2024

Text of Motion: Approve Regular Minutes January 3, 2024, February 7, 2024,
March 6, 2024
Motion made by: Dan DiVito
Second by: K Demirs
All in Favor

STAFF REPORT

Mark Massoud reported:

1. The zoning consultant and I met yesterday and we are essentially done with any
revisions and reviews of the regulations. We are on the definitions which is the
last section. We would like to gather the committee together and propose some
dates for a meeting to review. After that we would bring it to the full
commission.

2. We are doing the final edits on the Affordable Housing Plan and that is in the
hands of the Town Manager and then it goes back to COG for some final edits
to review and then it will go to the commission for your review.

3. I am happy to report our long-term intern has found a job with SLR, the
consulting firm as a transit planner.

Chairman Raymond Antonacci asked about the item on the agenda regarding
Chipotle Mexican Restaurant having a public hearing. We have been doing
some research on that and there is apparently not a need for a public hearing,
would you go into that right now Mark, before we get to that item on the agenda.

Mark Massoud stated if you look at the table of uses in the B-SC zone a
restaurant with a drive through would be classified as a site plan and special
permit. Normally in one part of the regs it says that any approval given for a
use that involves a special permit would ordinarily be a special permit involving
a public hearing as a follow up. We asked the applicant to at least put a site plan
application in and my intent was to leave it to the commission to the thought as
to the regulations do call for a special permit so therefore it will follow to have
a public hearing. In a given conversation with our zoning consultant mirrored
that same train of thought. In doing further research and looking deeper in the
zoning regs even we look at them day in and day out can always find new
sections or new information each day that you look at them, which shows the
complexity of them. Hopefully with the new update it would be much easier. I
found a section that talks about the change of use and it essentially says that a
new site plan should be required for a change of use to a use that does require a
special permit or an expansion of existing building or addition of a new structure or additional of new parking but it does not call for a public hearing process that leaves it to the commission to approve that change of use under site plan. We are on track you do have a site plan in front of you, you do need to schedule a public hearing, I suppose you could if you decided that. I am saying theoretically on any change that you deemed to be pretty significant and worthy of public hearing, you have that right to do that. Under that section there is not a requirement to have a public hearing, you are free to review it under a site plan and make your decision accordingly.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – none.

OLD BUISNESS – none.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Site Plan/Special Permit 2024-01 Chipotle Mexican Restaurant, Ten Acre Mall, 595 Straits Turnpike, Watertown, CT, in a B-SC Zone.

Luke Morrow, Senior Project Manager with Solli Engineering, Office located at 501 Main Street, Monroe stated we are looking to change it to a Chipotle with a lane which is simply a pick-up window. The property itself is on the south side just over the Middlebury Line on the eastside of Straits Turnpike. This property is about 9.2 acres and is located within the business shopping center, the BSC zone. Mr. Solli showed a view of the site plan for the property. There is a 3,33 square foot bank in the northwest corner with 434 total parking spaces. There is a 3,000 square foot bank building with a black roof. There are 13 parking spaces located to the north or left of the building. There is an existing drive-up teller window with a 12-car cue. There used to be an ATM also on the north side which is no longer in operation. The site plan before you tonight is for a simple conversion of the existing bank into a Chipotle. No expansion of the square footage itself they are going to renovate that internal space for their operation. As part of the upgrades associated with the site plan, we would be modifying the parking lot on the north side to bring it into ADA compliance. We would be installing an outdoor patio area, a refuse area for two dumpster pads as required by the tenant and there is a number of ADA sidewalk and pedestrian upgrades as well. In the area of renovations we would be doing new asphalt lip curbing, new widened sidewalks on the east side or at the top side of the building for increased pedestrian safety. It’s not like a typical McDonalds or Burker King where you can drive up to the menu board, place an order, go to the window pay and then they are cooking the food and you get it. Everything is done ahead of time through the app. You place your order, you do the payments on your app, you set your pickup time on the app and we are told by Chipotle it is a 30 second transaction. You get it into the lane, you know what time to show up in the lane, you tell them your name they hand you the food and you pull out. Generally, they don’t see cues getting in the busiest times to more than
four to five cars but we do have that existing twelve car cue which should be more than adequate for their purposes here. If you need to order on site you need to go into the building and do so at the counter. To talk about the safety and pedestrian upgrades we are showing on the top side of the building a cross walk over to the parking area location on the east side of the building across the main isle drive. There we were going to add some stop signs to the approaches from the side drive aisles for increased safety especially in that area of the pedestrian crossing. We are also proposing at the crosswalk a fluorescent yellow yield sign to make it known that there is pedestrian crossings there. There has been some discussion back and forth it was recommended that we look at like a speed table with a raised crosswalk for additional pedestrian safety reasons and the developers are agreeable to do that. We do that in concert with those yellow fluorescent pedestrian crossing signs for that additional safety measure if it pleases the commission.

Vice Chair Dan DiVito stated I would definitely like to see a speed table there and asked about the lighting?

Luke Morrow answered it would be essentially as is, assuming those fixtures out there are in compliance with the regulations. There may be a need to swap out with more energy efficient LED light something we could go over with Mark for a conditional of approval.

Vice Chair Dan DiVito asked do you know where the existing lighting is?

Luke Morrow answered by where the ATM was. There is a shoe box fixture over there and I believe there is going to be a couple of building mounted fixtures as well.

Vice Chair Dan DiVito asked if we could get one over by the crosswalk as well.

Ken Demirs asked do you have anything that shows the layout on the inside of the building?

Luke Morrow answered we have a preliminary layout with 58 sets inside. It is a split 1,500 feet for the kitchen and 1,550 for the patron area with two restrooms and the main entrance will be located on the left side where the parking lot is. Right now, the entrance to the bank is kind of on the opposite side. They are going to move the kitchen to the right side and then the main entrance will be located where you see that sidewalk on the left side of the building.
John McHugh asked about the hours of operation?

Luke Morrow answered they are not open for breakfast and I believe open around ten or eleven and they close nine or ten o’clock at night. No twenty-four hours or anything like that.

John McHugh asked about signage, will there be signs on the building and a free-standing sign on the road?

Luke Morrow answered they will have their typical prototype signage on the building. As I understand it you will go through a separate signage process. It would not be a new sign to the structure.

Vice Chair Dan DiVito asked on the exterior, do you have any visions to what that it is going to look like?

Luke Morrow answered they are going to be painting with a grey tone over the existing stucco facade, the bumps out or arches are going to be replaced with glass pane windows and they are going to do a four foot effuse at the top.

Chair Raymond Antonacci asked if there are any photos or pictures of the sign for the pedestrian warning sign and is it lit independently.

Luke Morrow answered the sign itself is not lit independently and is on the site plan we submitted under sign detailed. There is one on Straits Tumpike right down the block in the middle of the street, it is essentially the same sign mounted on both sides of the crossing.

Lou Cavallo asked on the opposite side of the patio what’s there just open space.

Luke Morrow answered just a lawn.

Ken Demirs asked stated that raised sidewalk I think that is a must.

Mark Massoud, Land Use Administrator stated we have had preliminary discussions with the applicant expressing some concerns or issues with regards to pedestrian parking, cross walks etc. They have answered all questions and I do not have any further questions or concerns.
Chair Raymond Antonacci asked if he had a prepared resolution on this.

Mark Massoud answered I do not.

Chair Raymond Antonacci stated I would like to hear a motion for approval of this application. I would like the motion to take into effect the speed table, lighting for the crosswalk area and overall lighting reviewed with staff.

Text of Motion: The Commission determined that the application is considered a site plan only.
Motion made by: Dan DiVito
Second by: Ken Demirs
All in Favor

Text of Motion: Approve site plan for Chipotle Mexican Restaurant, Ten Acre Mall, 595 Straits Turnpike, Watertown, CT in a B-SC Zone; lighting parking and crosswalk details will be reviewed with and approved by staff.
Motion made by: K. Demirs
Second by: Dan DiVito
All in Favor

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Attorney James Strub – Site Plan/Special Permit #2024-04 Burr Hall Farm, LLC for development of a 68.6-acre parcel of land for farming/commercial uses (permanent farm store 2,975 Sq. Ft.) located on Aunt Olive Road, Watertown, CT., Map 167, Block 22, Lot 2.

Attorney Strub, Secor, Cassidy & McPartland stated corresponding with Carol, our extension has already been submitted. The plan is better we have a third-party review from SLR related for the flood plains, I think it went well in the end. It verified Emily’s suggested design approach with some modifications that probably do make the plan a little better. It may have taken a little longer than I may have thought at first, I do think it has been a productive process. Their hearing is closed they have 35 days from when that hearing closed to act on it which is essentially next Tuesday where they will be in a position where they will have to act on the application, we of course hope that they will approve it and then we will be back to you next month with their report as required by the regulations and hopefully from there we can close this process up with you and move forward as well.
Emily Jones, Professional Engineer, Civil One stated since we have not been here in a few months and we have done some work with wetlands, I will go over very briefly over the plans and the changes why we come to where we are with Wetlands. As you are probably aware the proposal is for a farm store and other associated agricultural buildings on about 65,68 acres in the R40 zone on Aunt Olive Road. We are proposing to bring the driveway in off of Aunt Olive Road with a gravel driveway serving a 50-car parking lot. This parking lot is probably oversized for quite a bit of the year. But we did want to utilize that space in the event of peak summer hours. There is a farm store right at the end of the parking area. The V shaped building is a grain milling and lavender barn and the building further up the hill is a bee and butterfly barn. All the fields associated with that are highlighted in green on the diagram are orchards, bee and butterfly conservancy watch, flower fields and lavender fields. Essentially as we are going with this process with Wetlands and felt that Hopbrook runs through the property and that there is a FEMA flood plain associated with that. The mapping was inadequate, we did some analysis and came up with a flood plain through 100-year elevation with Hopbrook. We also developed a storm water treatment plan not entirely traditional because it doesn’t have a traditional detention basin sometimes like you see in chambers or large basins. We went through that process because it was a little unique. Inland/Wetlands hired SLR to do an independent view of our analysis and we generated a lot more calculations because we assume that we didn’t need a detention when we were so close to a water course. That water runs quickly into the watercourse and essentially has gone down before the water comes from where it is above Litchfield. We did a huge watershed analysis and came up with the confirmation of that assumption. We got a clean letter from SLR for our flood plain analysis for our recommendation of no traditional detention. Instead, we are doing a lot of low impact preparation throughout the site and they had a few minor comments about adding a swale on the uphill of the driveway. We incorporated all their comments, everyone seems satisfied and we closed the public hearing. We are happy how this turned out, it is really an interesting project. I hope to see this come to fruition.

Attorney James Strub added the last time we were here Dr. McHugh mentioned lighting we have spoke to the client and they are going to defer to their architects. We are going to include for the next meeting a lighting plan. Other than that, we continued to communicate with Mark and their office.

No Commission action prior to decision by CC/IWA

Text of Motion: Continue Public Hearing to May 1, 2024
Motion made by: Ken Demirs
Second by: Da. DiVito
All in Favor
COMMUNICATIONS AND BILLS – none.

NEXT MEETING DATE: MAY 1, 2024

6. Motion for Adjournment

Text of Motion: Adjourn at 7:15PM
Motion made by: Dan DiVito
Second by: Ken Demirs
All in Favor

Ken Demirs
Secretary