



CITY OF SHELTON
**JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING & ZONING/
 INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSIONS**
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 7, 2021
5:00 P.M., Auditorium
Via YouTube

The Shelton Planning and Zoning Commission held a Special Meeting with the Inland Wetlands Commission at 5:00 P.M. on April 7, 2021 at Shelton City Hall Auditorium, 54 Hill Street, Shelton, CT 06484.

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Virginia Harger, Chairperson of the Shelton Planning and Zoning Commission. Today is Wednesday, April 7th and the Special Meeting joint meeting of the Shelton Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands Commission and is being conducted entirely via zoom is hereby called to order at 5:06 pm.

Present: Virginia Harger, Chairperson
 Charles Kelly, Commissioner
 Ruth Parkins, Commissioner - (via phone)
 Mark Widomski, Commissioner - (via phone)
 Elaine Matto, Commissioner
 Jim Tickey, Commissioner - (via phone)
 Peter Laskos, Alternate Commission
 John Uysal, Alternate Commissioner - (via phone)

Also Present: Alex Rossetti, Planning & Zoning Administrator
 Josh O'Neill, Assistant Administrator
 Ken Nappi, Downtown Projects Coordinator
 Anthony Panico, Consultant-Present (via phone).

The protocol for this afternoon's meeting was previously reviewed by Corporation Counsel who indicated to me that it is compliant with the Executive Orders issued by the Governor and fair for those attending in person or watching from a remote location.

Mr. Wilson you want to call the order.

Good afternoon everyone I'm Charles Wilson. I'm Vice Chairman and I'd like to call to order the Inland Wetlands meeting at 5:07 pm. The Inland Wetlands Commission members:

Present: Charles Wilson Jr., Vice Chairman
 Robert Dunford, Commissioner
 Ken Nappi, Commissioner
 Michelle Kawalautzki, Commission

Absent: Gary Zahornasky, Chairman
 Jack Goncalves, Commissioner
 Joseph Riley, Commissioner

Also Present: John Cook, Inland Wetland Staff
 Sophia Belade, Recording Secretary

All those present stood and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

A couple points before continuing with this afternoon's agenda, this is the commission's 32nd meeting being done via live streaming process. Mr. Rosetti will act as the Zoom meeting host. While members of both commissions will be able to make comments throughout the meeting, the Chair asks that you please identify yourself and wait to be recognized by the Chair before speaking to make sure we are not all speaking over each other and to make sure that our recording secretary is clear as to who is speaking. So, we will begin with the presentation by our Mayor.

Mayor Lauretti would you like take the podium.

Presentation from Mayor Mark A. Lauretti on future development for the property known as the Mas Property and located by Assessor's Map 104, lots 28, 30 and 31 and other adjacent parcels. The plans incorporate parcels in PDD #11, the R-1 zone and with wetlands. Review, discuss and no action will be taken.

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti addresses the Commissions. Thank you very much. The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the continuation of Constitution Boulevard North. Many of you are familiar with Constitution Boulevard because you've been in town for so many years and you saw its evolution. Constitution Boulevard has been on the books and part of the Economic Development discussion for over 40-45 years in this city. This is really the last link that prohibits the continuation of a north south artillery arterial road for the city. That's what is showing up on the big screen. At the bottom is Route 8, Bridgeport Avenue and you see that we have charted the course for its continuation. It goes northerly and terminates at Route 108 Shelton Avenue and intersects with Nells Rock Road. And so, I want to say a year ago I came to the Commission and I afforded you a drone fly over that we did of Constitution Boulevard from River Road, right to 110 in the White Hills area. I did that because I thought it was pretty telling about how the development and the road has evolved over all this time and also to give you some indication as to what the Mas property which is the next leg looks like from the air and how it interacts with residential neighborhoods in and throughout this section of town.

Over the years we have acquired all the rights of way and and property necessary for the road the Mas property with it, which was purchased by the City in I want to say 1997, I'm not sure of the year. I want to see it later I'm not sure the year but we bought it up through the FDIC prior to that it was it was the very first planned development district that the city approved back in the mid 80's and it was a pretty intense development that obviously never came to conclusion or fruition I should say, probably because economic reasons. Let's go to the other picture please. So, you can see the yellow T is the extension of Constitution Boulevard that goes from Bridgeport Avenue through property that the City is negotiating for and it takes us to the Mas property, but it's not going to terminate there. We are in the process of trying to procure some funding through State and Federal Highway funds that may be available particularly now with this new economic stimulus package that was just approved and one of the regulations required that a road funding for a road cannot be dead-ended it has to be brought to its conclusion, there has to be a through road and quite honestly that's music to my ears because this road is it was an integral part of the traffic patterns that affected traffic from the White Hills to Huntington area into downtown to Route 8 to 110 North and South being able to people effectively across the City.

So all of the the property rights for this role are in place with the exception of the piece that you see here in yellow so we have we've gone out to design for this road and this design has been completed, actually it's changed the quite a bit from that from the very first attempt to design the road it affected the first drawing the first path of that road was over to the right for the green area that you can see that that's why the City bought that because we anticipated that we were going to be moving the road in that direction. But

that had a greater wetlands impact than the path that we're taking now, and so that said, where there's been a significant amount of interest for the light industrial development. Over the last nine months I've spent an awful lot of time dealing with a large company that wants to do a 275,000 square foot facility on this property. They want their corporate headquarters here. They're a manufacturer and they have to do distribution from the product that they manufacture. So, over the course of these months there's also been significant users from Connecticut companies, companies from New York are looking to relocate some of this is consolidation so they have companies that have multiple locations they want to consolidate it for one and they want to be in Shelton for a lot of reasons, so Alex let's go to the next slide. Before you do that, this is all this stuff that you see in terms of building placement on the Mas property are preliminary. Everything is subject to change I just wanted to quantify that because sometimes when people see something, they think that it's cast in stone and then it's obviously not. This property does have its challenges you know there's a lot of ravines and there's a lot of cuts and fills that have to be done to to put a building of that magnitude on a slab, some of these buildings will be terraced into the landscape along with the parking.

Alex, go to the next slide please. This is another version that was done for us what could look like you know some proposals could look like. Up in the top right hand corner of the building there is 200,000 square foot building the other one showed just 100,000 square foot building, so just below the 200,000 square foot buildings there's another piece the City owns right where there, not that piece Alex, but that piece there and we own right down to the Cott Street and so the only thing that we won't own is this block, I want to say it's about a five acre block right there Alex, a little bit more and that the city is also going to consider purchasing that as well, because by doing that, it gives us a significant other piece for a perspective buyer. So, if you look at that, go back to the five-acre piece Alex just right there, that piece is somewhat landlocked because we own, we're going to own everything around it there is access to the property through Cott Street but yet there's a significant wetland. It's also down by Cott Street that would impact access that property. So you know anybody that is the owner of that property that wasn't us would have to come to us to get access and so when I when I tell you that there is significant interest and for the light industrial application, I just highlighted the 275,000 square foot user, there's a 2000 square foot user and there are two 100,000 square foot users that we're currently in negotiation right now, but all of this is really contingent upon the getting access to the property and getting the road constructed. This is not going to be any small task because there's a lot of topographical challenges associated with the site but I think that it at this point in time the economic impact of the economic vitality for this type of a use and for the what this property is now there.

So, I wanted to familiarize the two commissions with this proposal with the completion of Constitution Boulevard with the fact that there will be development on the Mas property, with the fact that there's going to have to be a zone change for this property because the last time the zone was changed was back in the mid-80s. It was PDD #1 that has currently lapsed. My thinking behind all of this is is that the City would make application to do the zone change to LIP or if there is another preferable zone and I know that Fran Teodosio was supposed to be here today but couldn't make it, but he will be before the Commission to talk about what the zone should be to accommodate these uses. These uses are all compatible with one another, all these users, they all have the same thing. Their own manufacturers, they want to consolidate their corporate offices and they need to do their distribution from there from their manufactured product. So, the whole area would be very consistent in that it would be more like a manufacturing corporate park if you will. You know manufacturing today is very different than what we were used to 50-60 years ago down on Canal Street along the Housatonic River or anywhere in the northeast part of this country for that matter, where we made things and it was very intense type of manufacturing and as a result many of our waterways became polluted. Things are being done very differently today and I think that you know with the type of manufacturers that I'm going to be presenting to the City in the coming

months so people will be pretty impressed with who these people are and the type of products that they make. So, there's a lot of considerations here, I wanted to get it in your mind so that you know that there's an open dialogue.

This map that you have in front of you right now, Alex can you pull it up, just over here, you can see in the middle of property there is significant wetland piece, we kind of subdivided that out of the development area and left it alone as open space. There's going to have to be some wetlands mitigation that is going to that will need to be done on this site and so you know that's going to require some outside expertise for the Wetlands Commission. I want you to know that we're going to provide that and so you know maybe at some point in time the Wetlands Commission will start to workshop and prepare for the coming of this and start to talk about you know what what could go on the site, how some of these wetlands could be mitigated and you know trying to get ahead of the curve because many people don't understand that the hour is now. The economic cycle comes once every 10-15 years and if you miss it you get left behind, now that's just the way it is and then when people are ready to put their underwater you know we have to be ready as well. So, put quite a bit of information out there for you. I'll stop there or entertain a few questions or as I said expect to see Fran and I back before these commissions in the very near future.

Chairperson Harger stated, Mr. Mayor the only question that came to mind is just an assurance for the residents that the access to these properties would continue to be the extension of Constitution Boulevard that it wouldn't be from Bridgeport Avenue up to Shelton Avenue, there wouldn't be any connecting streets to the small streets that we have on either side of the neighborhood.

Mayor Lauretti responded at the onset I referenced the drone flyover so that people would be able to see how we've been able to meld residential neighborhoods along with this type of an application and it's pretty telling. Everybody needs to take another look at that, there is no plan to have anything in a city street other than Constitution Boulevard intersect into someone's private property, into someone's manufacturing facility.

Chairperson Harger replied thank you. Anyone else from the Zoning Commission have a question?

Vice Chairman Wilson stated, I guess the first thing we'll have to do is have Planning and Zoning have a zone change to the light industrial and I was concerned also about the impact on the residential areas surrounding the area which you just touched on, I think it would be good if we could all get another look at that drone flyover again. I know it's been a while since we looked at that and then in the future walk the property getting to get an idea of the wetlands impact as far as our commissiob is concerned.

honister a question that comes to mind is just an insurance for the residents that the access to these properties would continue to be the extension of constitution Blvd Blvd there would be from Bridgeport Ave up to Shelton Ave would be any connecting streets to the small streets that we have on either side of the neighborhood I referenced this drone fly over so that people would be able to see how we've been able to build residential neighborhoods along with these this type of an application and it's pretty telling you need to everyone needs to take another look at that in there is there is no plan so that have anything in a city street other than constitution Blvd intersect into someone's private property into someone's manufacturing facility thank you any one else family zoning Commission I have a question mark what I guess the first thing we'll have to do is go planning zoning have the of his own change to the light industrial and I was concerned also about the impact on the residential areas surrounding the area which you just touched on I think it would be good if we could all get another look at that drone fly over again I know we've been awhile since we looked at that and and in the future walk the property getting to get an idea that wetlands impact as far as our Commission is

concerned. Mayor Lauretti replied, yeah I mean the drone flyover it tells you a picture. I mean it's pretty obvious about what some of the challenges will be, where the wetlands are because it was done when the leaves were off the trees so you've got a clear vision and John, Cindy has it on her computer so she can email that to you, then you can send it to all your Commission members so that they can start to look at it. I think that's really a good starting point. Chairperson Harger suggested that also be done by Alex for the Zoning Commission as well. Mayor Lauretti continued, you know I had some of these renderings made up because I wanted to give people a flavor for where buildings would or could go subject to some some type of movement depending on what the challenges may be. You know with employee parking and truck traffic in and out of their properties for or distribution, receiving and shipping. You know there's a big part you know all of this all this manufacturing is all enclosed so there's no noise on the perimeter, there's no movement around the perimeter other than traffic and I dare say that they are not intense traffic issues because of employees coming and going all at once like you have with the corporate world. Some of these manufacturers do 2-3 shifts, so if they have 200 employees it spread over a 24-hour period of people coming and going. It's a lot less intense.

Commissioner Kelley stated but they would have to be done tastefully, that any of the architectural features of the building had to be done tastefully (inaudible). Commissioners via phone could not hear the comment. Mayor Lauretti interjected and stated that the comment was that any of the architectural features of the building had to be done tastefully so as to not create any type of a blight on surrounding residential neighborhoods, am I phrasing that right Charlie? Commissioner Kelley agreed.

Mayor Lauretti continued well again I think that one needs to just take a ride around, go into these areas, go up on Waterview Drive and see what's transpired up there, go down Ivy Brook and see what's transpired there, see how we've been able to put these manufacturers, these buildings into the landscape up against residential neighborhoods and made it work. Commissioner Kelley stated I realize that, we just have to make sure it's done that way.

Commissioner Matto asked are they going to be selling those articles individually subdividing this property splitting parcels as they as you get customers? Mayor Lauretti responded that's where the trend is right now.

Commissioner Widomski stated, Mr. Mayor the vision is great, I love it, this us what we were planning for when this whole plan came together decades ago and I know that at some point that road was supposed to go through and I think you mentioned that in order to get federal funding you cannot have a dead-end road and I didn't quite hear, it was a little broken up, but are you planning to get the federal funding to bring this up to Shelton Avenue is that what I heard correctly? Mayor Lauretti responded yes, that's what I said. Commissioner Widomski continued ok, my next question would be since we're going to get federal money that would it behoove us at the same time, I know it's putting the cart before the horse, but I'm looking further down the road specifically for the traffic in Huntington center with a lot of the construction that's going to be going on in there. At some point I'm sure it's going to happen but would it behoove us at the same time the complete Constitution Boulevard North up to the 110 area like we like it was originally envisioned to reduce that traffic in the center. Would it be wise to lump all that together at the same time with this project?

Mayor Lauretti replied I think that would be a little ambitious. You know there's only so many resources out there and for me this is the priority. This is the biggest missing link in this row, this will accommodate a lot of much of what you talk about in my opinion, you know we had this discussion 20 years ago about about completing all right at the White Hills but I think if you could get to 108 you're certainly going to pick up a big portion of it because you know people people coming out of the White Hills area can pick

up the northernmost portion of Constitution and then again down at 108. So, so in my view I think this is the single biggest impact that that we can make at this point in time is to connect this missing gap. Commissioner Widomski responded OK.

Commissioner Nappi stated, Mr. Mayor we talked about a consultant as we did in Shelter Ridge, I think it would be a good idea if we could somehow get the go ahead to move with the consultant since there is significant wetlands and a lot if it based on what we can do with the wetlands. The faster we could get someone out there to look at it, the faster the project could move. Both road construction and envision. Mayor Lauretti stated look as you remember right, I said a moment ago that I think it's important to workshop this to start working, you know workshopping it and understanding the complexities of this piece, let's not get into a situation like we did with Shelter Ridge. You know this is also a 70-acre parcel with significantly much more wetlands what Shelter Ridge had on it. John, correct me if I'm wrong.

Inland Wetlands staff John Cook replied in the 1980's plans there was actually environmental study done in conjunction with that development which the developers themselves identified the significance of some of those resources not only on this piece but as you go continue on through so something identification and prioritizing is going to be an important facet. Mayor Lauretti continued you know it's those wetlands feature that really has attracted some of these corporate manufacturers to this site because that big pond in the middle of the property is about 600 feet long and 250-300 feet wide so that means that that waterway right there, you know they envision walking trails through this through this area for these corporate manufacturers. So the people who are interested in this thing, this site, are real professionals and they're name brands, national name brands, I'm not at liberty to tell you who they are right now but you know I think that I'm far far enough down the road now that we we need to have this discussion and as I said with the economic climate right now that is significant that we start to accelerate our activities. I'll give you another example that was before this is Commission, well the Zoning Commission not too long ago, was Gary plastics from Bronx, NY. 200,000 square foot manufacturing you know not insignificant so you know and then they're bringing a lot of jobs to this area.

Chairperson Harger asked if there were any other Zoning Commission questions. There were none, Chairperson Harger referred to Vice Chairman Wilson of the Inland Wetlands Commission.

There were none from the Inland Wetlands Commission.

Mayor Lauretti stated that there are people in this room who understand this property because we've been around for a while, you understand the concept of Constitution Boulevard and the extension of it and now we need to perfect it so I don't know if I answered your questions but absolutely if the commissions, if the Wetlands Commission needs to engage in some professional outside services then that's what we're going to do. OK, I think we're done for today and I thank you for your time and you'll be seeing a little bit more of me in the coming months.

Commissioner Kelley motioned to adjourn the Planning & Zoning Commission portion of the Special Meeting. Commissioner Widomski second the motion.

A voice vote was taken; motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Nappi motioned to adjourn the Inland Wetlands Commission portion of the Special Meeting. Commissioner Kawalautzki second the motion.

A voice vote was taken; motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned as of 5:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sophia V. Belade
Sophia V. Belade
Clerk – Inland Wetlands

