

SHELTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 14, 2024
Shelton City Hall (Virtual)
54 Hill Street, Shelton, CT 06484

PZC Commissioners Present: Virginia Harger, Chairwoman
Charles Kelly, Vice-Chairman
Elaine Matto, Secretary
Ruth Parkins
Jimmy Tickey
Peter Laskos
Robert Cristiano, Alternate
Matt McGee, Alternate

TRANSCRIBED, BUT
NOT YET REVIEWED OR
APPROVED BY SPZC

Also Present: Alexander Rossetti, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Alexandrea Castro, Asst. Planning and Zoning Admin.
Anthony Panico, Consultant
Sarah Vournazos, Recording Secretary

USB disks, correspondences, and attachments are on file in the City/Town Clerk's office and the Planning and Zoning office. Minutes are on the City of Shelton website: www.cityofshelton.org.

I. Call to Order

Chair Harger called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

All those who were present rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Chair Harger identified members present and gave the meeting protocol.

IV. Applications for Certificate of Zoning Compliance

1. Project Dance, 858 Bridgeport Avenue, for a sign.

Comm. Matto referenced the three rows of lettering and noted that the Sign subcommittee suggested a reduction of 10%. Ms. Castro pointed out that the proposed sign is 50.14 sq. ft.

Mr. Bryan Vasser from Archer Signs, Milford, CT, addressed the Commission on behalf of the applicant. He voiced his preference of the applicant not reducing the lettering 10%, "since we're under the allowable square footage." Chair Harger expressed that she would like "more conformity to the existing signage with the other storefronts." Comm. Parkins noted that the façade is wider than the storefront dimensions and Comm. Matto suggested to center the words, "Project Dance Center." Chair Harger requested the applicant submit revisions of the sign. Mr. Panico said, "be more consistent with what the elevation shows and what the detail of the sign shows."

Motion made by Comm. Parkins, seconded by Comm. Kelly, to table. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Tickey – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye	Comm. Laskos – Aye
Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Kelly – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

2. Mercato Wine Bar, 745-801 Bridgeport Avenue, for a sign.
Comm. Matto relayed that the Sign Subcommittee has no issue with the sign on the side of the building.

Attorney Dominick Thomas from Cohen & Thomas, Derby, CT addressed the Commission on behalf of the applicant and the property owner. He reviewed the proposed sign which faces the parking lot and showed a picture of the other Mercato Wine Bar located in Canton, CT.

Mr. Mark Blair, Architect, Weston, CT addressed the Commission on behalf of the applicant. He stated that Mercato Wine Bar is trying to provide a kind of a “unified, holistic, experiential, restaurant experience,” and therefore would like the sign to be brought to the pedestrian level. He mentioned there is another restaurant located in Southbury, CT.

Chair Harger inquired about the side sign not having any wood treatment. Mr. Blair responded that the side sign is high up on the building but the front-entry sign is where “we want to present our point of view.” Chair Harger suggested that the weathered beams and lettering be on the façade for better visibility. She then expressed she would like the applicant to clearly indicate to the Sign Subcommittee exactly what they’re looking for (e.g. awnings and background above the doorway).

Motion made by Comm. Kelly, seconded by Comm. Matto, to table. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Kelly – Aye	Comm. Tickey – Aye
Comm. Laskos – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

V. New Business

- A. Application #23-20, PDD #101 “Chromium Commons,” Dominic Thomas for Primrose Development, LLC., at 113 Canal Street (Assessor’s Map 129, Lot 31) for Final Site Development Plans for a mixed used development with 30 residential units and six retail units with onsite parking. Accept, review, and possible action.

Motion made by Comm. Tickey, seconded by Comm. Kelly, to accept for review. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins – Aye
Comm. Tickey – Aye

Comm. Matto – Aye
Comm. Kelly – Aye

Comm. Laskos – Aye
Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

Attorney Dominick Thomas from Cohen & Thomas, Derby, CT addressed the Commission on behalf of the applicant. He referenced the parking, noting seven parking spaces have been dedicated by Park Royal to Chromium Commons through the parking license. He indicated that there is WPCA approval and Mr. Rossetti noted he is waiting for comments from the City Engineer. Mr. Panico mentioned that the property line map needs to be reexamined in the area of the parking lot from where the proposed building is located.

Attorney Thomas suggested to table Appl. #23-20.

Motion made by Comm. Kelly, seconded by Comm. Laskos, to table.

Comm. Parkins inquired why the Commission should table Appl. #23-20, and Attorney Thomas apologized for using the word “table,” noting that Appl. #23-20 needs further review.

Motion made by Comm. Kelly, seconded by Comm. Laskos, to rescind the motion to table.

- B. Application #23-31, Home2 LLC., at 757 Long Hill Avenue, (Assessor’s Map 21, Lot 36) for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance for a Residential Care Home to allow the resident occupancy of up to seven unrelated persons in a single-family residence with onsite parking. Accept, review and possible action.

Motion made by Comm. Tickey, seconded by Comm. Matto, to accept for review. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins – Aye
Comm. Tickey – Aye

Comm. Laskos – Aye
Comm. Matto – Aye

Comm. Kelly – Aye
Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

Attorney Meaghan Miles from Carmody, Torrance, Sandak & Hennessey, New Haven, CT addressed the Commission on behalf of the applicant. She indicated that the applicant is going through the state permitting process to receive a license as a residential care home at the property for seniors with dementia. She said, “it is not medical, it is rather a residential home where they can live together with supportive care and they’re aging in place at home.”

Attorney Miles mentioned the regulation, noting the definition of “family,” permits up to six unrelated individuals. She indicated the applicant is

requesting to allow a total of seven unrelated individuals, since there is room in the home as well as a wait list for the site. She stated that the seniors are “extremely quiet” and would be a “very low burden on public infrastructure.” She then referenced her meeting with Mr. Rossetti, who recommended additional parking spaces for visitors.

Ms. Deirdre Virvo, Shelton, CT addressed the Commission. She referenced the bedrooms, which have their own bathroom, and that one bedroom has room for two seniors since it is 250 sq. ft. Comm. Matto inquired about how this residential care home differs from assisted living. Ms. Virvo replied that there are two care givers “at all times,” and the seniors will share communal living spaces (e.g. lounge area, dining room) and “are free to roam around.” She stated, “my goal and mission are to bring better quality of living and life to seniors here with dementia.”

Comm. Parkins inquired if the seniors could sit outside in a fenced in area to enjoy the outdoors. Ms. Virvo replied that although the property is not fenced in, it is very set back from the road, the gates are locked on the decks and “they won’t be outside alone ever.” Comm. Parkins expressed her safety concern for the seniors without there being a fence. Ms. Virvo mentioned there is a house manager in addition to the two care givers.

Ms. Virvo referenced her other residential care home in Shelton, CT called Dogwood Home. Comm. Parkins inquired about home inspectors checking in and Ms. Virvo replied that the Fire Marshal and inspectors from the Department of Health pop in on her property.

Motion made by Comm. Tickey, seconded by Comm. Laskos, to approve Application #23-31, contingent with receiving the state license. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye	Comm. Laskos – Aye
Comm. Tickey – Aye	Comm. Kelly – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

- C. Application #24-01, PDD #107, Dominick Thomas for B-WIZZ, LLC., at 453 River Road, (Assessor’s Map 66, lots 3 &4 and portions of 19 & 20) to amend the PDD by adding a 20’ strip of land that was intended to be conveyed to the adjacent property owner at 261 Coram Road. Accept, and set public hearing.

Motion made by Comm. Parkins, seconded by Comm. Kelly, to accept for review and set a public hearing. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Laskos – Aye	Comm. Tickey – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye
Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Kelly – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

- D. Application #24-02, PDD #91, Dominick Thomas for Fountain Square LLC., at 745-801 Bridgeport Avenue, (Assessor's Map 28, Lot 18) for a Major Modification of the PDD, Amendment to the Statement of Uses and Standards, and Final Site Development Plans for a 170-unit residential rental use in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes 8-30g. Accept and set public hearing.

Motion made by Comm. Tickey, seconded by Comm. Kelly, to accept for review and set a public hearing. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye	Comm. Laskos – Aye
Comm. Tickey – Aye	Comm. Kelly – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

- E. Application #24-03, Viktor Qosja, at 111 Center Street (Assessor's Map 117B, Lot 38) in a CA-2 zone for a Site Plan Application to allow a Membership Club under Schedule A, Use Line #16. Accept and set public hearing.

Motion made by Comm. Kelly, seconded by Comm. Matto, to accept for review. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Laskos – Aye	Comm. Tickey – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye
Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Kelly – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

Mr. Viktor Qosja, Shelton, CT addressed the Commission. He indicated that he is the Manager and the hours of operation are from 7:00 a.m. – 10/11:00 a.m. and again from 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. The membership fee is either a monthly fee of \$25-\$50 or a yearly fee of \$350-\$450. He mentioned that he will supply the water and coffee but the members would need to bring their own alcoholic drinks.

Comm. Matto inquired if Mr. Qosja has the proper criteria for the designation. Ms. Castro relayed that he applied for a business occupancy described as a membership club. Chair Harger requested that staff contacts Corporation Counsel for further clarification (e.g. intent, right use line).

Motion made by Comm. Kelly, seconded by Comm. Laskos, to table. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye	Comm. Tickey – Aye
Comm. Kelly – Aye	Comm. Laskos – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

VI. Old Business

- A. Application #22-26, Dominick Thomas for Agim Ismaili & Shprza Ismaili, at 2 Mohawk Drive (Assessor's Map 12, Lot 4) on .76 acres for a Planned Development District (PDD) to include 40 apartments with onsite parking under CGS 8-30g. Review, discuss and possible action.

Mr. Rossetti, read aloud the unfavorable resolution.

Motion made by Comm. Parkins, seconded by Comm. Kelly, to move the resolution for discussion. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Kelly – Aye	Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Laskos – Aye
Comm. Matto – Aye	Comm. Tickey – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

Chair Harger expressed that Mr. Rossetti used “very good reasoning” throughout the resolution and the Commissioners agreed.

Motion made by Comm. Matto, seconded by Comm. Kelly, to approve the resolution and to deny Application #22-26. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Kelly – Aye	Comm. Parkins – Aye	Comm. Matto – Aye
Comm. Tickey – Aye	Comm. Laskos – Aye	Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 6 to 0.

- B. Application #23-15, Dominick Thomas for 740 River Road LLC., at 740 River Road, (Assessors Map 21, Lot 50) to establish a PDD and approve Initial Development Plans for 51 side-by-side residential condominiums and onsite parking. Review, discuss and possible action.

Chair Harger indicated that the public hearing opened on September 27, 2023 and closed on January 17, 2024. She voiced her concern that approving an application for a PDD for a residential project at this location would remove the existing IA-2 zoning designation and said, “approving this project doesn’t bring any particular benefit to the community.” Comm. Matto expressed that the project is too dense and Comm. Kelly mentioned the condominiums are too condensed with the neighbors only 15 ft. apart. Comm. Tickey, Laskos and Parkins agreed with the comments of the other Commissioners.

Chair Harger directed staff to prepare an unfavorable resolution.

- C. Application #23-16, PDD #72, Dominick Thomas for Bishop Development of Shelton LLC., at 762 and a portion of 740 River Road (Assessors Map 21,

Lots 35 and 50) for a Major Modification of a PDD, Modification of Initial Development Concept Plans, and Amendment to the Statement of Uses and Standards for three-story, medical building with onsite parking. Review, discuss and possible action.

Chair Harger indicated that the public hearing opened on September 27, 2023 and closed on January 17, 2024. She voiced she is in favor of Appl. #23-16 and said, "I feel it's an appropriate proposal for this location." Comm. Matto, Comm. Kelly, Comm. Tickey and Comm. Parkins agreed with Chair Harger. However, Comm. Laskos opposes this project since it would be taking away from an industrial use.

Chair Harger directed staff to prepare a favorable resolution.

VII. Public Portion

1. Mr. Tom Harbinson, Shelton, CT addressed the Commission. He indicated he is in favor of the residential care home for seniors having dementia. He said, "I think it's an interesting concept that the City of Shelton should give attention to as an opportunity to give an option for the care of elder individuals with Alzheimer's or memory care issues."

Mr. Harbinson referenced the City of Shelton's many applications and their engineer being out on medical leave. He pointed out that the Town of Trumbull employs eight engineers, of which five are licensed professional engineers, two are civil engineers and one is in training.

VIII. Other Business

A. Comments from Chairwoman and Subcommittee Chairpersons

Chair Harger reported that the recodification of the zoning regulations will be reviewed by Mr. Panico. Comm. Parkins, Alt. Comm. Cristiano and Chair Harger will prepare a final version after Mr. Panico's review. She then reminded the Commissioners that the meetings will resume to being hybrid (in-person and virtual) beginning in March.

B. Staff Comments

None

C. Minutes for Approval

i. January 17, 2024

Chair Harger referenced Appl. #23-23 and clarified that the word is "trade" instead of "trait." Comm. Matto expressed that she would like the phrase "not native plants" after the words "azaleas and rhododendrons," also in Appl. #23-23.

Motion made by Comm. Matto, seconded by Comm. Tickey, to approve the PZC Regular meeting minutes of January 17, 2024 with changes. On a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Laskos – Aye Comm. Tickey – Aye Comm. Kelly – Aye
Comm. Parkins – Abstain Comm. Matto – Aye Chair Harger – Aye

The motion passed 5 to 0 to 1.

IX. Adjournment: Chair Harger adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Vournazos
Recording Secretary