

SHELTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, August 27, 2025  
Shelton City Hall (In-Person and Virtual)  
54 Hill Street, Shelton, CT 06484

TRANSCRIBED, BUT  
NOT YET REVIEWED OR  
APPROVED BY SPZC

PZC Commissioners Present: Virginia Harger, Chairwoman  
Elaine Matto, Secretary  
Ruth Parkins  
Robert Cristiano  
Win Oppel, Alternate (Seated for Comm. Kelly)  
Jimmy Tickey (Virtual)

PZC Commissioners Excused: Charles Kelly, Vice Chairman  
Matt McGee, Alternate

Also Present: Atty. Francis Teodosio, Corporation Counsel  
Alexandrea Castro, Asst. Planning and Zoning Admin.  
Dominick Di Gangi, Professional Engineer  
Evan Gutierrez, Recording Secretary  
Stephanie Charboneau, Stenographer

USB disks, correspondences, and attachments are on file in the City/Town Clerk's office and the Planning and Zoning office.

- I. Call to Order  
Chair Harger called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance  
All those present rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. Roll Call  
Chair Harger identified members present and gave the meeting protocol.
- IV. Other Business
  - A. 8-24 Referral for the sale of City of Shelton-owned land along Bridgeport Avenue (CT Route 714) at the intersection of Long Hill Crossroads.  
  
Atty. Teodosio was recognized before the Commission and read the referral aloud.  
  
Motion to Report Favorably on the 8-24 Referral made by Comm. Parkins, seconded by Comm. Cristiano. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:  
  
Comm. Parkins: Aye      Comm. Cristiano: Aye      Comm. Matto: Aye  
Comm. Oppel: Aye      Comm. Tickey: Aye      Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

V. Applications for Certificate of Zoning Compliance

- A. BRES-25-209, Discussion about possible invalidation of August 13, 2025 approval for an ADU at 395 Shelton Avenue.

Chair Harger stated that the person who filed the application and appeared before the Commission was not the property owner; and that the property is owned by an LLC. Upon request by Zoning Staff, the LLC's agent member filed paperwork on August 22 indicating that the person was authorized to act on behalf of the LLC. Chair Harger asked if any Commissioner would like to make a motion waiving any future application fees for the LLC. Ms. Castro clarified that the LLC has not yet paid the application fees.

Motion to Rescind Prior Approval for an ADU and Deny without Prejudice made by Comm. Cristiano, seconded by Comm. Oppel. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins: Aye	Comm. Cristiano: Aye	Comm. Matto: Aye
Comm. Oppel: Aye	Comm. Tickey: Aye	Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

VI. Public Hearing

- A. Appl. #25-17, Robert Bellitto for TJ Donohue for a Text amendment to Schedule A, Permitted Uses line 6C, allowing non-residential child-care facilities within the LIP district via a Special Exception Application.

Chair Harger shared the protocol for the public hearing. Atty. Bellitto and the Applicant, Atty. Donohue, were identified before the Commission. Atty. Bellitto explained that childcare is an acute need throughout Fairfield County. Atty. Bellitto contended that an LIP district is an ideal location for childcare due to the proximity of residential neighborhoods and businesses, which would be useful for employees of these nearby businesses. Atty. Bellitto also mentioned that Shelton is a growing town in need of more childcare facilities; and that his proposal would allow greater access to childcare in Shelton.

Chair Harger asked if Atty. Bellitto and Atty. Donohue had a specific property in mind with this proposal. Mr. Donohue stated that he did, and he is under discussion for a property on Constitution Boulevard. Comm. Parkins asked if the Applicant's proposal would change the LIP designation of the district. Atty. Bellitto said no, and explained that the proposal would allow for an LIP district to use an existing building or construct a new building for the purposes of childcare. Comm. Oppel asked if the childcare facility was proposed to be in an existing building or if it would be a freestanding operation. Atty. Bellitto responded that the Applicant plans on using an existing building. Atty. Donohue elaborated that he plans on using a vacant property at 175 Constitution Boulevard South that was formerly a data center. Chair Harger asked if the childcare facility would occupy the whole building. Mr. Donohue said that it would not occupy the whole building, but that there would be no tenants or subtenants. Chair Harger asked for the square footage of the building. Mr.

Donohue answered that the building has 13,994 square feet of office space and an additional 6,000 square feet in warehouse space.

No elected officials or members of the public wished to participate in the public hearing.

Motion to Close Public Hearing made by Comm. Cristiano, seconded by Comm. Matto. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins: Aye	Comm. Cristiano: Aye	Comm. Matto: Aye
Comm. Oppel: Aye	Comm. Tickey: Aye	Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

Motion to Approve made by Comm. Cristiano, seconded by Comm. Oppel. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins: Aye	Comm. Cristiano: Aye	Comm. Matto: Aye
Comm. Oppel: Aye	Comm. Tickey: Aye	Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

Motion to Modify Approval to Include an Effective Date of September 5, 2025 made by Comm. Cristiano, seconded by Comm. Oppel. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins: Aye	Comm. Cristiano: Aye	Comm. Matto: Aye
Comm. Oppel: Aye	Comm. Tickey: Aye	Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

- B. Appl. #25-13, Dominick Thomas for Katherine Benedito, for a text amendment to Shelton Planning and Zoning Regulations Section(s) 24.11, 24.11.1, 24.11.2, and 24.11.4 to permit interior lots of the same square footage as the underlying zone, less the square footage of the access way.

Comm. Matto shared the legal notice, and Chair Harger declared a brief recess at 6:29 p.m.; the Commission reconvened at 6:34 p.m. Chair Harger shared the timeline of the Application. Atty. Thomas was identified before the Commission. Atty. Thomas stated that his client requested that she obtain an interior lot on a property owned by her parents, and that she plans to build on the lot when she gets married. Atty. Thomas indicated that the amendment would affect R1A (120,000 sq. ft. lots), R1 (40,000 sq. ft. lots), R2 (45,000 sq. ft. lots), and R3 districts. Atty. Thomas also showed a map to demonstrate the number of lots the amendment would affect. Atty. Thomas asserted that the amendment would increase the number of single-family homes in Shelton.

Comm. Cristiano stated that the amendment would restructure the entire City of Shelton. Atty. Thomas stated that the amendment is the only way for the Applicant to fulfill her desires of building on her parents' property. Comm.

Cristiano emphasized that the amendment would affect an incalculable number of properties, and that a long-term calculation on the water pollution control system in Shelton cannot be made. Comm. Oppel mentioned that the amendment would reduce existing setbacks for regular lots, and asked for an explanation. Atty. Thomas said that he didn't feel they had any planning point. Chair Harger stated that the Applicant should have compiled a list of how many lots this amendment would affect. Comm. Oppel added that the amendment is essentially a rewrite, and the proposal is gutting most of the existing Regulations. Mr. Di Gangi asked if it is the intent to use the access way as a common driveway. Atty. Thomas replied that it is not the intent and that it would have to be a part of the application.

Mr. Fred Balmer, residing at 391 Shelton Avenue, chose to speak. Mr. Balmer expressed that he believes most Shelton voters are unaware of the issues presented to the Commission; and they rely on elected officials to decide what is in the City's best interests. Mr. Balmer said that it is sad to see this phrase removed from the text; and for a single applicant to change the lot sizes and setbacks in the City is not in the best interests of the City, but are in the best interests of the developers. Mr. Balmer contended that the amendment would change the character of the City, and asked the Commission to deny the application.

Mr. Thomas Harbinson of Shelton chose to speak. Mr. Harbinson stated that Shelton needs a city planner. Mr. Harbinson said that he researched the application and found the property in question, and noticed that several parcels in the same neighborhood would be able to utilize the zone change. Mr. Harbinson added that a city planner would be able to review these potential changes and determine if they are in the best interests of the City.

Atty. Thomas stated that a city planner would be beneficial in cases like these, in increasing the number of new single-family homes, and could be good for the City as a whole.

Comm. Parkins commented that she is opposed to changing the text for a single applicant. Comm. Matto agreed with these concerns. Chair Harger expressed her discomfort with approving the application due to the unknown impact the amendment would have on the City.

Motion to Close Public Hearing made by Comm. Oppel, seconded by Comm. Cristiano. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins: Aye	Comm. Cristiano: Aye	Comm. Matto: Aye
Comm. Oppel: Aye	Comm. Tickey: Aye	Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

Motion to Deny made by Comm. Parkins, seconded by Comm. Oppel. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins: Aye      Comm. Cristiano: Aye      Comm. Matto: Aye  
Comm. Oppel: Aye      Comm. Tickey: Aye      Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

- C. Appl. #25-16, PDD #8, Dominick Thomas for CT03 LLC., at 1001 Bridgeport Avenue for a Major Modification to a PDD, modifying the Statement of Uses and Standards to convert the current hotel use to a multi-family residential use with a maximum of 96 units and additional onsite parking spaces.

Comm. Matto shared the legal notice, and Chair Harger shared the timeline of the Application. Atty. Thomas was identified before the Commission. Atty. Thomas indicated that the PDD was originally approved in 1987 for an extended-stay hotel. His client, Bluevale Capital, wishes to convert the 96-room hotel into 96 apartments. Atty. Thomas echoed the concern of extended-stay hotels regarding transient visitors who tend to create issues. Atty. Thomas asserted that the apartments would provide needed housing in Shelton and attract vetted and consistent residents to the PDD. Atty. Thomas mentioned that eighteen percent of units (19 units) would be affordable housing at 80% area market income (AMI). Atty. Thomas affirmed that the proposal would be beneficial to the town, and the change of use would increase the property value. Chair Harger asked if the renovations would be strictly internal. Atty. Thomas responded that some exterior improvements will be done, but the bulk of the work will be interior renovations.

Ms. Chrissy Martel, the Director of Stakeholder Relations for Bluevale Capital, was identified before the Commission. Ms. Martel stated that Bluevale Capital is an ESG-focused real estate development and investment company specializing in real estate conversions for underutilized commercial buildings. Ms. Martel stated that Shelton needs more housing options, especially for young professionals and couples. Comm. Parkins voiced concerns that the affordable housing set at 80% AMI is not affordable for the average Shelton worker. Atty. Thomas responded that the formula is created by the state, and this proposal would help to stabilize rent prices by increasing supply. Comm. Oppel agreed with Comm. Parkins' concerns and asked if rents could be lowered from the cap of \$1592, and if rent on all 96 units could be set at 80% AMI. Ms. Martel stated that the market housing will be set at or below workforce housing limits (i.e., 120% AMI). Comm. Cristiano stated no applicant has been questioned on rent prices, and found the line of questioning to be inappropriate. Comm. Matto agreed. Comm. Parkins emphasized that she has no ill will towards the applicant, but restated her frustration with state standards. Ms. Martel cited data collected by the state, which showed that 48% of Shelton residents are cost-burdened (i.e., more than 30% of their monthly income is spent on housing). Atty. Thomas cited a study that reaffirmed that building more housing stabilizes rent. Atty. Thomas added that the affordable housing projects built recently in other cities have been subsidized, and Bluevale Capital would be privately funding this project.

Mr. Luke Mauro of Solli Engineering was identified before the Commission. Mr. Mauro presented the site plans. The site currently consists of 96 units and 106 parking spaces, which he proposed to increase to 120 total parking spaces. According to the Urban Land Institute, 116 units would be required for a complex of this size, and they managed to add four more spaces. Chair Harger asked if the additional four spaces would be separated. Mr. Mauro responded that they would be a 6-inch concrete curb, and they would be painted with white stripes. Mr. Mauro added that due to the extreme slope on the site, it would be difficult to provide any additional parking over the proposed 120 spaces. Mr. Mauro also mentioned the other exterior improvements the Applicant wished to make. The brick dumpster enclosure needs repair, and will be re-mortared, and the gate in front will be replaced. In order for residents to easily access the dumpster, a smaller side entrance to the dumpster has been proposed in addition to an at-grade concrete pad leading to the parking lot. The compactor currently in the dumpster will be removed, and the dumpster will be relocated so that it is in the enclosure and screened from view. Chair Harger asked if there was consideration to add a second dumpster on the other side of the property. Mr. Mauro responded that the single dumpster would meet the garbage capacity of the property according to the information provided. Comm. Parkins added that it might be beneficial to add a second dumpster. Comm. Oppel agreed and stated that the dumpster could be put in place of one of the surplus parking spaces. Mr. Mauro also noted that the stop bar at the exit of the property faded, and there is no existing stop sign; so he proposed that a stop sign be installed and that the stop bar be repainted. Mr. Mauro added that the traffic study showed that the trip generation would be negligible and there would be no adverse traffic impact.

Comm. Parkins inquired about how the staff at the property would affect parking. Ms. Martel said there would be a leasing agent on-site during regular business hours. There will also be two maintenance workers, and one will always be on the property every day of the week. Mr. Di Gangi asked if there would be recycling on the property. Ms. Martel responded that it is a possibility, and they are considering making the dumpster enclosure larger and adding recycling. Comm. Matto asked about the amenities. Ms. Martel answered that the pool and gym facilities currently present on the property will remain, and the gym equipment will be upgraded. Comm. Oppel asked if the property has WPCA approval. Atty. Thomas stated that the property is already connected to the sewer, and the property will remain residential, but the only problem was that the seller did not pay the necessary WPCA fees last year. Comm. Parkins asked how tenants will be billed for utilities. The Applicant responded that all units will contain a metered panel, and the tenants will be billed solely for the utilities that they use.

Ms. Paula Dressel, residing at 586 Huntington Street, chose to speak. Ms. Dressel stated that her property shares a 260-foot border with the extended-stay hotel, where there is currently a five-foot privacy fence with a buffer. Ms. Dressel wanted to ensure that the buffer stays in place because people throw

garbage into her yard. Ms. Dressel also expressed concern about a light from the hotel that shines directly into her second floor, and stated that she did not want any existing or future lighting to shine into her yard. Ms. Dressel also asked if there would be quiet hours or someone to manage noise.

Mr. Mauro stated that he does not intend to reduce the buffer and that they can relocate a parking space that is near the buffer. Regarding lighting, Mr. Mauro stated that no new fixtures will be installed and that fixtures that do need replacement will be replaced with energy-efficient LED fixtures. Mr. Mauro mentioned that all lighting is dark-sky compliant, and all lighting is recessed. Chair Harger asked if existing fixtures will be fixed to ensure they don't shine onto neighboring properties. Atty. Thomas suggested that Ms. Dressel identify the specific light that shines onto her property so it can be addressed or removed. Comm. Parkins asked if there will be any upgrades to the site. Ms. Martel responded that broken fencing around the HVAC condensers will be replaced, the parking lines will be repainted, the potholes on the site will be addressed this season, and the parking lot will be repaved next season. Regarding interior improvements, all unit interiors will be repainted, and upgraded door locks will be installed in each unit. The existing reception area will be converted into a resident clubhouse, and the equipment in the fitness center will be fully upgraded. Ms. Martel added that all tenants will sign regulations that include a noise limit. Chair Harger asked about landscaping. Ms. Martel replied that the landscaping is currently in good condition, and the existing landscaping company will be kept. Comm. Parkins asked if there will be charging stations for electric vehicles. Ms. Martel stated that they have contacted vendors and received quotes, and the contract will be awarded after the zoning on the property is approved. Comm. Parkins asked who will manage the property. Ms. Martel answered that Imagineers, an experienced property management company based in Hartford, will be hired. Comm. Parkins asked if the property management company will file annual compliance reports regarding affordable housing. Ms. Martel said yes.

Motion to Close Public Hearing made by Comm. Oppel, seconded by Comm. Matto. In a roll call vote taken by Chair Harger, the PZC voted as follows:

Comm. Parkins: Aye	Comm. Cristiano: Aye	Comm. Matto: Aye
Comm. Oppel: Aye	Comm. Tickey: Aye	Chair Harger: Aye

Motion passed 6 to 0.

Comm. Parkins stated that the Commission should not act on this application during this meeting, but should move towards a favorable resolution. All Commissioners agreed that the Commission should put forward a favorable resolution in the future.

VII. Adjournment: Chair Harger adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Evan Gutierrez*  
Recording Secretary