

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MINUTES FOR ONLINE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2021, 7:00 PM

The meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board came to order at 7:00p.m.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

B. ROLL CALL

Members Present: N. Austin, J. Castignoli, J. Kader, P. Kearney, C.S. Moore, J. Mortimer, J. Quish, R. Satti, M. Zahariades

Not Present: B. Kaligian

Staff: Joe Griffith, DPLU Director, David Sulkis, City Planner; Meg Greene, Rec. Sec'y

C. NEW BUSINESS-None

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1) **Proposed Regulation Change #21-5** Petition of John Knuff, Esq., for changes to Article III, Section 3.9 Shopping Center Design District; Article V, Section 5.1 Parking and Loading Regulations; and Article XI, Section 11.2 Other Terms. **CLOSE BY NOVEMBER 12, 2021; VOTE BY DECEMBER 17, 2021.**

Attorney Knuff, 147 Broad St., addressed the board. He noted the presence of the Centennial team and stated that the applicants' requested regulations changes were modest. He reviewed the proposed changes, calling them a small step toward the evolution of the mall. He addressed questions raised at the last meeting. He emphasized that the request is to change zoning text does not impede future public hearings to scrutinize future applications. He listed changes from the original 2020 application made in response to the board's original comments. He listed the categories of revisions made, saying the CT Post is gladly shouldering new obligations without requesting any financial relief from the City of Milford. He contrasted visuals of the 2020 request with the new 2021 site plan featuring improved integration of all the new components of the mall. He commended architect Scott Pollack for achieving this integration due to his expertise in executing these types of design. He listed aspects of Special Permit and Accessory Uses application review that provide the board with oversight in the future. He noted that the design team is still open to any comments from the board. He displayed a bulk regulation criteria comparison and addressed previous concerns about height. He said the lot area reduction and height were the most significant changes but remained modest proposals. He listed obligations assumed by Centennial to meet the desires of the board.

Chairman Quish said he appreciated the work of the team and asked for public comment. Hearing none, he asked each board member to express their thoughts.

Mr. Castignoli asked Attorney Knuff for a phase 2 rendering. **Mr. Levin** commented that the overall goal is to manage the transition of the mall's current square footage into a more reduced, compelling space. He said it must be done in phases and the rendering shows a portion of the space being repurposed. They discussed other tenants that probably will be sustainable retail spaces such as Macy's and Boscov's. He said the portion being repurposed is the vacant area that Sears once occupied. **Attorney Knuff** emphasized that any residential development above the proposed zone-wide 300 units would require another legislative act by the board. **Mr. Castignoli** asked for details about Target's ownership rights and Macy's long-term lease. **Centennial Vice President Jon Meshel** said that from Macy's to Target, the mall functions as a mall should. **Mr. Levin** said the mall recently committed to a 10-year renewal with Dick's Sporting Goods store to further solidify that end of the mall with the main idea being reinvigorate the mall and to shrink it to a size that can sustained. **Mr. Meshel** pointed out that the universe of retailers has been reduced in absolute terms. **Mr. Satti** asked Attorney Knuff about any changes to the sustainability and affordability aspects of the proposal since last time; affordability features had been added. **Chairman Quish** stressed that the project isn't an 8-30g proposal; it is to create workforce housing that would only contribute to the city earning its points for under affordability statutes. **Mr. Satti** and Attorney Knuff discussed acreage for mixed uses and **Attorney Knuff** again stressed that the 300-unit limit extends to the entire zone, not just this parcel. He said the number of permitted unites are comparable to what would be possible under the current regulation and that the board should understand that it maintains total security in governing the limit of 300 units. **Mr. Moore** asked about tax implications. **Attorney Knuff** reiterated that the proposal is not an application for a specific project, that it just allows the next step in redeveloping the property, and that Sears is currently empty and not paying taxes. He stressed that Centennial is the city's biggest taxpayer and the amendment to the regulations would allow for a possibility of more tax revenue growth. **Mr. Mortimer** said he appreciated Centennial's willingness to work with the city. He expressed general approval to advancing the project. **Ms. Kearney** asked about regulation wording and was satisfied with Attorney Knuff's response. **Mr. Moore** asked about Target's ownership as it pertained to the regulation changes; **Attorney Knuff** again stressed that 300 residential units are a zone-wide limit, regardless of individual parcel ownership. **Mr. Satti** asked about contractual agreements between Centennial and its tenants. **Mr. Zahariades** said he still didn't like the idea of apartments at the mall. **Attorney Knuff** said he respected concerns about unexpected consequences but stressed that the multi-family use already exists in the current zoning regulation. He again noted the changes were made at the board's request. **Mr. Kader** recused himself due to being unable to review the video after being out of town.

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Chairman Quish asked if there was support for delaying a vote to allow Mr. Kader and Mr. Kaligian to participate. **Ms. Austin** said she was impatient to resolve the matter. **Mr. Moore** said the public hearing should be closed. After further discussion on the implications of leaving the hearing open, **Chairman Quish** decided to close the hearing.

- 2) **252-262 Depot Road** (Zone LI) Petition of Michael Welsh, Revolution Milford LLC, for a Special Exception for a basketball training facility at Map 92, Block 705, Parcel 1E of which MNBD, LLC is the owner. (Postponed from 9/8/21 meeting) **CLOSE BY NOVEMBER 25, 2021; VOTE BY DECEMBER 30, 2021**

Ben Wheeler, landscape architect, South Windsor, introduced the applicants and team, then addressed the board. He said Revolution Basketball training is focused on individual skill enhancement and the site will not be used for hosting games. He said there is a facility in Manchester, making the proposed Milford site the 2nd in CT with more planned for southern New England. He shared the existing conditions survey and proposed site plan. He displayed the office and gym floorplan. He said site improvements are in progress, but the parking would remain unchanged. He discussed the parking requirement for the entire parcel and then as allocated for the basketball facility. He said parking exceeded that required for the use. He discussed the hours of business versus the other uses on the site and stated that parking overlap was not anticipated. He said most customers are given weekly appointments with trainers. He said the conditions suggested by the city planner were acceptable.

Mr. Sulkis said the use is neither permitted nor prohibited in this zone, therefore a Special Exception is required. He read his summary, which was consistent with the applicant presentation. He referred to comments by the City Engineer.

Mr. Satti confirmed with Mr. Sulkis that the Special Exception is limited to 252 Depot Road, not to both 252 and 262 Depot Road. **Mr. Castignoli** asked if other businesses are leasing space. **Mr. Wheeler** said it's a mix of business and industrial use. He said he felt the parking information was adequate and offered a floor plan. **Chairman Quish** said the board preferred to review such information in advance and suggested the item be tabled to gain more clarity. **Mr. Sulkis** said the decision on parking adequacy should be based on clear information.

Mr. Castignoli moved to table the item.

Mr. Mortimer seconded.

Discussion: None.

The motion was approved unanimously.

D. **OLD BUSINESS** – None

E. **NEW BUSINESS** – None

F. **LIAISON REPORTS** – None

G. **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**—The next POCD meeting will occur on Wednesday 9/29.

H. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**—9/8/2021 minutes were approved unanimously.

I. **CHAIR'S REPORT** - None.

J. **STAFF REPORT** - None.

K. **ADJOURNMENT** was at 8:29.

Attest:

M.E. Greene

New Business, not on the Agenda, may be brought up by a 2/3's vote of those Members present and voting.

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