

TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION
PLANS REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2022 SPECIAL MEETING

The meeting commenced at 8:00 AM through Zoom Video Conferencing.

Present: Subcommittee Members Robert Zanolungo, Sharon Purtill and Michael Botelho; Rebecca Augur, AICP, Director of Planning & Land Use Services and Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP, Planner

25 NEW LONDON TURNPIKE – proposal for exterior modifications: entry canopy; sign relocation; lighting revisions; and siding replacement – Town Center Zone – Lichtenstein Financial Office – Christine Lichtenstein, owner – John D. Scheib, Jr., Northeast Collaborative Architects, applicant

Architect John Scheib said the proposal is for changes to the site and exterior architectural changes to the former bank building at 25 New London Turnpike. He noted that the building, originally constructed in the 1970s, has a modern architectural style. Exterior architectural changes would include modifications to the existing exterior canopy over the front entrance, installation of new wall light sconces next to the front door and replacement of the existing brown/gray building siding. Mr. Scheib added that the new cladding would be dark gray on the sides of the building and lighter gray on the middle of the building. The existing canopy will be removed and replaced with new columns and new beams that are clad with PVC trim. Mr. Scheib continued, saying that site improvements would include relocating the business sign closer to the building and installation of a 12-foot pole-mounted LED down light. The ground sign will be repainted from purple and yellow to silver and black and will be illuminated with full cut-off ground lights. Sharon Purtill asked if the current sign location would be landscaped. Mr. Scheib said the area would be reseeded.

There was a discussion among the group regarding existing conditions versus proposed plans and the approval process. Bob Zanolungo stated that he was comfortable approving the changes administratively. Mrs. Purtill expressed concern about the design of the canopy. She added that she was not comfortable approving the changes administratively and suggested that the proposal be reviewed by the full commission. Mike Botelho stated that he felt the proposal was an improvement over what is there now and that he was also comfortable administratively approving the changes. Ms. Augur informed the group that the changes could be approved administratively or as a Section 12.9 Minor Change that would be reviewed by the full commission. Mr. Scheib requested that the changes be approved administratively. The group decided that the proposal could be approved administratively as a Section 12.10 Insignificant Change.

52 NATIONAL DRIVE – proposal for a 3,000 square foot building addition with parking modifications and water quality enhancements – Planned Employment and Flood Zones – Dutton Associates, LLC – Claudio Vecchiarino, New England Traffic Solutions, applicant

Jim Dutton of Dutton Associates stated the proposal is to construct a 3,000 square foot addition on the south side of the existing building. He said that the addition would be warehouse space for the applicant's business. Mr. Dutton then discussed the site itself; approximately half the property is encumbered by conservation easement. Wetlands are located at the south end of the property. Mr. Dutton stated that the proposal would reduce the number of parking spaces, however, the site would still meet the minimum parking requirement for the use. Mr. Dutton explained the due to the grade of the property the proposed addition would be elevated to ensure the finished floors of the building sections

matched. Mr. Dutton added that a ramp will be located along the back edge of building for receiving materials and shipping finished product. The plan includes reconfiguring the front sidewalk. Mr. Dutton explained that there currently is no water quality treatment on site. The proposal includes constructing a stone-lined swale with a concrete level spreader along the south end of the parking lot. The swale is designed to capture and treat 70 percent of stormwater that will sheet flow from the parking lot. To prevent cars from driving on the stone swale, bollards will be installed along the southern portion of the parking area.

Mr. Dutton said that the plan calls for additional landscaping and street trees. The landscape plan also calls for removing the paved area at the southwest corner of the site, which is currently used for parking. Mr. Dutton stated that there would be no change to site lighting. Tom Carlone, Project Architect, spoke about building colors, and a new canopy over the main entrance of the building. Mr. Botelho asked if the colors and materials of the proposed addition would match the existing building. Mr. Carlone replied that they would match. Mr. Carlone then stated that signage would be installed on the new canopy over the main entrance. Mrs. Purtill asked about the materials for the addition. Mr. Carlone stated that the exterior of the addition would consist of vertical ribbed metal siding. Mr. Botelho asked about the windows for the proposed addition. Mr. Carlone responded that they would be changing color but keeping the same window fenestration.

400 HEBRON AVENUE – proposal to relocate delivery area and provide employee parking at 366 Hebron Avenue and 7 Linden Street – Town Center and Residence A Zones – Attorney Andrea Gomes for H374, LLC (Allan Schwartz), owner/applicant

Attorney Andrea Gomes went over the proposal and gave background information regarding the site. She said that the proposal involved the parcels at 400 Hebron Avenue, 366 Hebron Avenue and 7 Linden Street. Attorney Gomes stated that H374, LLC owns 366 and 400 Hebron Avenue and is under contract to purchase 7 Linden Street. She noted that the building at 400 Hebron Avenue was approved in 2018 for restaurant, retail and office use. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned large restaurant spaces became less economically viable. To date the Hartford Baking Company is the sole tenant of the building.

Attorney Gomes announced that the applicant has secured a specialty grocery store as a tenant to occupy 12,778 square feet of the building. In order to accommodate the proposed tenant, the applicant is proposing the demolition of the buildings at 366 Hebron Avenue and 7 Linden Street to construct a delivery/loading dock, dumpster enclosure and pallet storage area on west side of the 400 Hebron Avenue building. There will also be fifteen, employee only, parking spaces added in this area. No patron parking will be allowed in this area and all patrons will continue to park at 400 Hebron Avenue. Attorney Gomes said that the proposed tenant expects two daily deliveries at off peak business hours. There will be a gated entrance to the new delivery area off Hebron Avenue. The gate will be operated by the proposed tenant and will only be opened for deliveries. Two parking spaces at 400 Hebron Avenue will be converted to a cart return and outdoor display areas. The applicant intends to merge the three parcels and leave 7 Linden Street zoned Residence A to restrict further non-residential building on this part of parcel.

Attorney Gomes then went over the architectural elevations and showed perspectives of the new dumpster enclosure area. She stated that the new delivery/parking area will have landscaping to buffer other uses. She added that the applicant made a concerted effort to make the delivery area more attractive. Mrs. Purtill announced that she had to leave the meeting but that her issues of concern were the cart return and outdoor display areas, the impact of the proposal on the approved compact spaces and

the screening of the parking to the south. Mrs. Purtill also expressed concern about the view of the gate from Hebron Avenue and the impact of the proposal on the approved signage for the building. Attorney Gomes said that the tenant would come forward with a separate sign approval request. She added that the applicant would address these issues prior to going to the full commission. Mr. Botelho asked about the size of the addition. Carmelo Rosa, Project Architect, replied that the addition is 742 square feet.

Jonathan Sczurek, Project Engineer, said there is an existing catch basin at 366 Hebron Avenue that will capture stormwater. He explained soil testing performed at 366 Hebron Avenue confirmed that infiltration could be used to capture stormwater. Mr. Sczurek noted that there was enough room to get infiltration structures under the parking lot to capture peak flows and comply with the Town's MS-4 permit. He explained that trucks would access the site off Hebron Avenue through the gate, which will remain closed at other times.

Mr. Sczurek then addressed the on-site truck-turning movements. There was a discussion among the group regarding truck turning movements and truck routes. Mark Vertucci, Traffic Engineer, further reviewed the truck-turning plan. He said that a WB-62 truck was used to develop the turning movements plan. He explained that trucks would enter the site by turning left off Hebron Avenue and heading south through the gate. From there the truck would pull forward to the south end of the parking lot and back into the loading area. To exit the site, trucks will turn right on to Linden Street, heading north and across Hebron Avenue and the roundabout to House Street and head north toward CT Route 2 at the Griswold Street interchange. There will be no ability for a truck to turn right on to Hebron Avenue to return to CT Route 2. Mr. Vertucci stated that he ran preliminary traffic generation numbers for the change of use. The previous approval for this location was a mix of uses including restaurant, office and retail. Mr. Vertucci said that the proposed small-scale grocery use would replace a portion of the restaurant, retail and office uses. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation rates were used to determine that the new use would create 20 additional trips in the A.M. peak hours and 53 additional trips in P.M. peak hours. He stated that most of the new trips would be turning left out of the parking lot onto Sycamore Street and then to the signal at the intersection at Hebron Avenue, Sycamore Street and CT Route 2. Mr. Vertucci stated that he did update the analysis from the initial project approval. The level of service (LOS) at the intersection will not change from existing level C in morning peak hours. He further stated that a level C could also be maintained during the P.M. peak hours with minor timing adjustments to the traffic signal. Any timing changes to the traffic signal would need to be approved by the CT DOT as they own the intersection. Attorney Gomes stated that up to 20% of traffic that will be "pass-by" traffic, or traffic that is already in the area. Mr. Vertucci said that the project analysis did not take credit for pass-by traffic. Attorney Gomes noted that CT DOT allows a project to take credit for up to 20% pass-by traffic.

Mr. Sczurek then explained the lighting plan. He stated that the lighting for the new parking/loading area consists of four or five 14-foot, pole-mounted lights similar to those at 400 Hebron Avenue. Mr. Sczurek added that they are still working on an Erosion and Sediment (E&S) control plan. Attorney Gomes said that screening along the south side of the lot would consist of landscaping with a fence.

Mr. Botelho expressed concern over several items. He felt that the area is tight in terms of truck traffic and he will look to the Town Engineer's comments regarding this issue. He also expressed concern that the site, although it may meet the parking requirements, may not meet the potential demand. He then asked if the parking area at 400 Hebron Avenue would be reconfigured and if the compact parking spaces would be removed. Attorney Gomes responded that the project complies with the requirements of the regulations. She added that the only change to the parking at 400 Hebron Avenue would be the two parking spaces which would be repurposed for a cart corral and an outdoor display area. Attorney

Gomes then indicated that the proposal was adding 15 parking spaces. Mr. Botelho asked if there is space for any other tenants once the grocer moves in; and did the proposal take into account parking for that space. Attorney Gomes confirmed that there would be approximately 5,000 square feet of space remaining and that the proposal did account for parking for the additional use. She stated that the proposal advances several principals of the Plan of Conservation and Development. She added that the application should be treated as a Section 12.9 Minor Change because it meets regulations. Mr. Zanolungo recommended that the applicant provide parking comparisons to other local grocery stores and that the applicant reach out to the Linden Street neighbors regarding the proposal. He also asked if the sign package would include changes to the building. Attorney Gomes responded that the development team would reach out to neighbors. She added that due to a Non-Disclosure Agreement, the applicant was not at liberty to state the identity of the tenant. As a result, the sign package will be done separately. Ms. Augur noted that the project is located in the Town Center Village District Zone and subject to review by the Architectural and Site Design Review Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP
Planner