

**CITY OF TORRINGTON
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
October 13, 2010**

Present: Richard Calkins, Chairman
Greg Mele, Vice Chairman
Paul Summers, Member
Doris Murphy, Member and Inland Wetlands Liaison
Donna Greco, Alternate
Jim Bobinski, Alternate
Christine Mele, Alternate

Also Present: Martin Connor, AICP, City Planner

Not Present: Greg Perosino, Member

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Richard Calkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., Torrington City Hall Council Chambers, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT

2. **Attendance/Announcement by Chairman:**

Chairman Calkins announced present and serving on the Commission this evening will be Commissioners Doris Murphy, Donna Greco, Greg Mele, Paul Summers, Jim Bobinski and Richard Calkins. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor.

Mr. Connor reviewed the questionnaire that the Planning and Zoning/Land Use Office Intern regarding sign regulations in the City of Torrington. Our intern, Nick Iannacitto is looking at what other towns are doing with sign regulations and he is also taking a class on completing surveys. He has prepared a survey which he plans on getting out to the public. A copy of the survey was provided to Commission members. Nick will be speaking with business owners in town, sign companies, etc., and also interview our former Zoning Enforcement Officer Mike O'Neil who did a fabulous job working with signs for years. Nick will also speak with one of the top land use attorneys Dwight Merriman about signage. Nick will be present at the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to receive any thoughts or suggestions from this Commission. We are looking forward to receiving a nice presentation in the future from Nick and perhaps some proposed regulations to consider. This is a great project as it is a very meaningful one.

Mr. Mele noted Nick attended the last Economic Development Commission meeting as well. The group gave Nick some good insight and direction. One of the components to reinforce Mr. Connor's position with lack of staff, to simplify the signage regulations. Nick took good notes, he is a hard worker and has been helping in the Land Use Office.

Mr. Connor informed the Commission Kim Barbieri and Jason Vincent of Planimetrics will be at the October 27, 2010 Commission meeting, reviewing the results of the Low Impact Development Committee, with a report for the Commission to review and if the Commission endorses some of the suggestions that are in the report, that will be an item to be taken forward with some of the changes that will be proposed to the Zoning Regulations. Last meeting we talked about making some changes to get our Zoning Regulations up to speed with the Municipal Development Plan and the Plan of Conservation and Development,

changing the General Business Zone to a DD, Downtown District and some changes that were recommended in the plan itself. Most of these changes can be accomplished at one time, over the winter.

3. Minutes for Approval:

a. 9/22/10

MOTION by Mr. Summers to approve the 9/22/10 minutes, seconded by Ms. Greco, unanimously carried. Commissioners Bobinski, Murphy and Greg Mele abstained from voting as they were not present at this meeting.

4. Old Business:

a. Site Plan 987

Applicant: Sam Mazzarelli

Location: 412 Oak Avenue

Proposal: Refuse container storage (empty containers only)

MOTION by Mr. Mele to table this application, seconded by Ms. Murphy, unanimously carried.

b. Change of Zoning Regulations

Applicant: Westside Package Store, LLC & MGZ Partnership

Proposal: Section 5.3 (alcoholic beverages) of the Zoning Regulations be re-enacted in toto. (Public hearing closed)

Discussion followed by Commission members. Mr. Connor briefly reviewed his recommendation to the Commission.

Mr. Calkins noted Commissioners who were absent at the August 25, 2010 public hearing on this matter: Greg Perosino and Doris Murphy. Mr. Calkins appointed Donna Greco as a voting Alternate Member on this matter, and Jim Bobinski will be the other voting Alternate Member.

MOTION by Mr. Mele to DENY Change of Zoning Regulations

Applicant: Westside Package Store, LLC & MGZ Partnership

Proposal: Section 5.3 (alcoholic beverages) of the Zoning Regulations be re-enacted in toto.

Motion seconded by Ms. Greco, motion unanimously carried with the following Commissioners voting in favor of the motion: Greg Mele, Donna Greco, Richard Calkins, Jim Bobinski, Paul Summers. Doris Murphy did not vote on this matter.

MOTION by Mr. Bobinski to add an item to the agenda by 2/3rds vote, Request from Berkshire Engineering & Surveying, Subdivision, Applicant: Stephen & Caroline Siegfried, Location: 272 University Drive, Proposal: Request for 90 day extension to filing recording mylar for two lot subdivision, seconded by Mr. Mele, unanimously carried.

MOTION by Mr. Summers to approve the above referenced request, seconded by Mr. Mele, unanimously carried.

At 7:21 p.m. Chairman called a recess prior to public hearings.

5. New Business:

None

6. Public Hearings scheduled for 7:30 p.m., October 13, 2010, Council Chambers, Room 218, City Hall, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT

Mr. Calkins announced that item b., for 187-189 Berry Street application has been withdrawn.

- a. Special Exception 10-248 and Site Plan 988
Applicant: Torrington Fire Department
Location: 111 Water Street
Proposal: Uses of the City of Torrington, construct new dispatch center

At 7:30 p.m. Chairman Calkins opened the public hearing and stated serving on the Commission this evening will be Commissioners Jim Bobinski, Doris Murphy, Donna Greco, Christine Mele, Greg Mele, Paul Summers and Richard Calkins. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor.

Commissioner Greg Mele read the legal notice which was published in the Republican American.

Deputy Chief Gary Brunoli of the Torrington Fire Department appeared representing the applicant. Mr. Brunoli gave a presentation of the proposal. Wetlands approval has already been received. Plans were presented and reviewed by the Commission.

Mr. Connor reviewed his memo to the Commission dated 10/4/10.

Discussion followed between the Commission and Mr. Brunoli regarding how the emergency dispatch operations would work in the future with this addition.

No comments from the public.

At 7:41 p.m. Chairman Calkins declared the public hearing closed.

MOTION by Mr. Mele to APPROVE Special Exception 10-248 and Site Plan 988

Applicant: Torrington Fire Department

Location: 111 Water Street

Proposal: Uses of the City of Torrington, construct new dispatch center

with the following recommendation:

1. The applicant follow the recommendations of Fire Chief John Field as contained in a memo to the City Planner dated 9/27/10.

Motion seconded by Mr. Summers, unanimously carried.

- b. Special Exception 10-249
 - Applicant: Gabrielle P. Peters
 - Location: 187-189 Berry Street
 - Proposal: Convert two family house into three family house
(Application has been withdrawn)

Mr. Calkins announced this application has been withdrawn by the applicant.

- c. Special Exception 10-250
 - Applicant: Connecticut Academy for the Arts
 - Location: 61 Main Street
 - Proposal: Educational Use

At 7:43 p.m. Chairman Calkins opened the public hearing and announced serving on the public hearing this evening will be Commissioners Jim Bobinski, Doris Murphy, Donna Greco, Christine Mele, Greg Mele, Paul Summers and Richard Calkins. Also in attendance is City Planner Martin Connor.

Commissioner Greg Mele read the legal notice which was published in the Republican American.

Theresa Sullivan, P.O. Box 789, Bantam, CT, 06750, appeared before the Commission representing the applicant. Ms. Sullivan presented her neighborhood notification receipts and verified a public hearing sign was posted on the property.

Ms. Sullivan gave a presentation of the proposal and their plans to create an educational facility for the Arts. With recent cuts in the school arts programs, they have recognized a need in the community for education outside of the regular school system for the visual arts. Their ideas work well with the City's plan of development for the City. They have had meetings with James Patrick of the Warner Theatre to work hand in hand with them. It would be beneficial for the community in general. They are a non-profit, and would like to have a gift shop in the front that students can use to sell their goods and the proceeds would go back to the school to help with scholarships and education. Lecture series would be offered that would be educational for the community as a whole, not just their regular students.

Mr. Calkins noted this is the former Brooks Bank Building and inquired what type of art. Ms. Sullivan responded visual arts, as opposed to dancing and performance arts. Visual arts would encompass everything from film making, film festivals, graphic design, fashion design, industrial design, anything with a computer, arts photography, etc. Painting is a visual arts as well.

In response to a question from Mr. Mele, Ms. Sullivan responded they are taking the basement, the first floor, and the Masons are on the second floor and they will remain on the second floor.

Ms. Sullivan said programs will be for the whole population, Pre-K will come in with their parents, senior programs will be created, continuing education, and students preparing to go to higher education will have programs to build portfolios so they can get into good schools. This facility will be to help people have a career in the arts, which means not just painting, traditionally people think visual arts is only painting which is very hard to make a living at. There are so many wonderful areas in the arts where a person can make a living, but there is

no one teaches this in any of the schools, this is what they are hoping to bring to the community.

Mr. Summers inquired about parking, and Ms. Sullivan provided explanation of the back parking lot and interior layout. They have 25 spaces of parking in the back. They will be looking for staff volunteers to teach. Probably maximum would be two classes a day of ten students each. Occasionally they would have lectures which would hold more people. Ms. Sullivan had a walk through meeting with Tim Tharau of the Fire Department.

Kevin Purcell of 147 College Avenue, Torrington appeared before the Commission. He has a connection with the Warner Theatre and Brooker Memorial, he is not speaking on behalf of those groups. He is hear to speak on behalf of children and their education and the arts. The arts are incredibly important to youngsters, they are being cut back in the schools as that is one of the first items pared when budgets are reduced. This is a unique opportunity for Torrington to embrace, it will bring added vitality to downtown Torrington. The arts will be a major player in downtown Torrington.

Michael Yurgolis, President of the Board of Trustees of Artwell Gallery and Community Art Center appeared before the Commission. Artwell has been providing galleries and education to the community for 15 years now and they will continue to do so. He is representing Artwell's Board in welcoming this proposal. They feel when it comes to the arts and downtown renewal of Torrington, the more the merrier.

No further comments from the public. Mr. Connor reviewed his memo to the Commission dated October 4, 2010.

At 7:59 p.m. Chairman Calkins declared the public hearing closed.

MOTION by Mr. Mele to APPROVE Special Exception 10-250

Applicant: Connecticut Academy for the Arts

Location: 61 Main Street

Proposal: Educational Use

with the following recommendation:

1. The applicant follow the recommendations of Fire Chief John Field, Jr., as contained in his 10/7/10 letter to the City Planner

The Commission hereby waives the full site plan requirements per Section 8.4.4 of the Zoning Regulations. Motion seconded by Mr. Summers, unanimously carried.

7. Public Hearing scheduled for 7:30 p.m., November 10, 2010, Council Chambers, Room 218, City Hall, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT

a. Proposed Changes to City of Torrington Zoning Regulations

Applicant: City of Torrington Planning and Zoning Commission

Proposal: Zoning Regulation Amendment, Section 6.6.1, Junkyards and Definitions, Section 2.2, Junk and Junkyards

Passed until November 10, 2010.

8. Adjournment:

Motion by Mr. Mele to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Summers, unanimously carried at 8:00 p.m.

Lona Kirk, Land Use Office
Planning and Zoning Commission