

**CITY OF TORRINGTON  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 20, 2024**

Present: Greg Mele, Chair  
Greg Perosino Vice Chair  
Diane Carroll, Alternate  
Starley Arias, Alternate  
Tom Telman, Alternate

Also Present: Jeremy Leifert, AICP; City Planner

Not Present: Donna Greco, Member  
Jim Bobinski, Member  
Donovan Riley, Member

**1. Call to Order:**

Chair Greg Mele called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Attendance is by Zoom or in-person at City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT.

**2. Attendance/Announcement:**

Chair Mele announced present and seated on the Commission are Commissioners Diane Carroll, Greg Perosino, Starley Arias (serving remotely) and Greg Mele. Also present is Commissioner Tom Telman (serving remotely). Also present in the auditorium is Jeremy Leifert, AICP, City Planner.

**3. Minutes for Approval:**

a. February 28, 2024

MOTION by Diane Carroll to approve the February 28, 2024 minutes, seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

**4. Public Hearing beginning at 7:00 p.m., March 20, 2024, City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT**

a. Special Exception 23-06  
Applicant: AJK, LLC  
Location: 637 and 659 Winsted Road  
Proposal: Renewal of existing earth excavation permit, Section 6.4  
(public hearing continued from February 14, 2024)

At 7:02 p.m., Chair Mele opened the public hearing (continued from February 14, 2024).

Chair Mele announced seated and serving on the Commission for this hearing are Commissioners Diane Carroll, Greg Perosino, Starley Arias and Greg Mele. Also present are Tom Telman, Commissioner and Jeremy Leifert, City Planner.

Present representing the applicant AJK, LLC were Wes Clow of AJK, LLC and Dennis McMorrow, PE, Beach Street, Goshen, CT.

Mr. Leifert reviewed last month we left off with a few questions, one of which is regarding DEEP stormwater permitting. Wes Clow had provided some information and stated all the paperwork was submitted to DEEP. Mr. Leifert noted the bond estimates were received from Zaharek for overall restoration and remaining work on the Elks property. The third consideration is the waiver to increase the overall acreage of site work from 12.5 acres to 13.1 acres and we needed engineering input on this issue in terms of whether or not restoration can be done elsewhere on site to offset this increase in overall acreage.

Dennis McMorrow, PE, appeared in person. Mr. Leifert screen shared the site map and Mr. McMorrow provided details on the acreage and site. Sheet S1 was displayed and reviewed and details of the site provided by Mr. McMorrow. There won't be any additional requests for expansion, as this is the full mine. The access drive and other site features were reviewed by Mr. McMorrow with additional details shared by Mr. Clow.

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing for comments in favor of the proposal, there were none.

Mr. Mele opened the public hearing for comments in opposition to the proposal.

Polly Jean Bulkeski, Country Living, Winsted Road, Unit 66 appeared in opposition as she has much damage to her garage floor and basement. The blasting completely shakes her building. Her father owned a small quarry, and they never had any problems with blasting.

Mr. Leifert noted the operation started in 2008 or 2009, and every two years there has been a renewal.

Ms. Polly Jean Bulkeski stated this project is not safe.

Mr. Dan Fisher, 289 Fairlawn Drive appeared on behalf of the Elks as their leader. Their first concern is the safety and health of their members and families. They have a rising star camp during the summer for nine weeks for special needs children, and the general public is in attendance. The Elks have concerns about blasting, dust and damage. They did have an incident of fly rock coming onto their property during the summer session of camp as reported by camp counselors. The camp kids are up against the property lines, utilize the pond, etc. The Elks do get a 72 hour notice, and they would like a 24 hour notice and one hour notice as well.

Mr. Fisher stated he has thirty years of experience in blasting. The previous blaster on this site gave proper notice. Over the last several years, the applicant moved further into the property. They no longer have a seismograph placed on their dam as was agreed upon in 2011 and to the best of his knowledge, it has not been there since 2018 when Bay State took over the blasting.

Mr. Fisher is requesting a seismograph be placed on the dam closest to their property line if this project is approved. By law, this must be done. During the nine week summer camp, the Elks is requesting blasting only on Fridays for nine weeks while camp is in session. Prior to camp opening, the counselors are usually there for one week setting up and training. He will get exact dates for this activity. Not blasting during camp activity will be a lesser chance of someone getting hurt or killed.

The Elks wants a representative to come to the property on blast day to make sure the property is clear, and this is a very fair request considering the close proximity. The Elks have not been getting new site plans as agreed upon. There are concerns about encroachment and nothing has been done. Also, fencing is not required, but for the safety of everyone, fencing is important as some children from camp wander off, and there is a 50 foot or so bench, when a six foot fall can kill someone.

Mr. Fisher voiced additional concerns about the seismograph. A third party should be handling the seismograph as this is a conflict of interest. In 2005, Mr. Richard Hosley provided a report about blasting damage to neighbors. This needs to be rewritten as the blasts have increased, and these blasts are occurring in an urban area. He would like to see a new blast plan, which will benefit everyone, all neighbors and businesses and AJK LLC as well.

Mr. Fisher noted in 2014 the dam was rated in fair condition, since then it has been downgraded further. Later studies show further damage, and it is now considered to be a hazard and the Elks are working with the State of CT to get it back into compliance. There is a leak on the left side where a lot of the blasting was done. Mr. Fisher will provide the report to this Commission.

Planning and Zoning Commissioners posed questions, which were answered by Mr. Fisher. Many people use their site for parties, and there is a potential for people to walk off their site to the quarry. He noted O&G has put up fencing around their critical quarry areas. Signs should be put up by AJK LLC. Mr. Fisher noted a dirt biker went into the quarry located at the O&G Prospect, CT site.

Mr. John Melroy, President and Treasurer of the Country Living Condo Assoc. appeared. He spoke at the last meeting. They seem to be developing cracks in their condos, and blasting has been getting more severe. He thinks the problem lies with the blasting company and asked for more information, insurance certificate, etc. They have not been notified properly, so that they can properly notify their condo owners. He agreed a third party should operate the seismograph and Mr. Melroy wants an assessment of the cracks that are appearing.

Mr. Perosino stated he is not happy the way this operation has proceeded over the years, and items required to be done are not being taken care of.

Mr. Mele reviewed all the concerns and details of deficiencies. Mr. Perosino requested the seismograph be put back through a third party. Mr. Mele inquired about blasting only on Fridays during camp. Mr. Clow could not provide an answer to that due to many variables with blasting demands. Mr. Mele noted the magnitude of the charges, and

questions followed about the pounds of blasting. Mr. Fisher returned to the podium and provided additional blasting details and statistics (7:55 p.m.).

Mr. Mele inquired about fencing. Mr. Clow stated signs are not a problem, but fencing will be tricky. Maybe they could come up with snow fencing. Mr. Leifert responded this would be a visual barrier.

Mr. Mele noted the requests of the neighbors are not unreasonable, and for integrity, the seismograph should be handled by a third party. Mr. Fisher reviewed his experiences with blasting notifications.

Mr. Leifert reviewed that there are regulations that must be adhered to, and one of them is a 72 hour notice, and a 24 hour notice can be requested. Mr. Leifert stated for the record that we have our requirements that must be adhered to, while working with particular neighbors to address their concerns.

Mr. Arias asked for clarification as far as distance for notifications, Mr. Leifert responded one half mile radius from this site. Mr. Arias noted he has received reports that blasting can be felt up on Commercial Blvd. clearly, so something has changed. Seismograph locations were discussed.

Mr. Leifert read previous conditions of approval from past applications at this site.

Mr. Clow agreed to silt fencing and installation of signage.

At 8:09 p.m. Chair Mele declared the public hearing continued to April 17, 2024.

**5. Public Hearing beginning at 7:00 p.m., April 17, 2024, City Hall Auditorium, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT**

- a. Proposal Zoning Regulation Amendment
  - Applicant: City of Torrington Board of Education and Torrington Volunteer Fire Department
  - Proposal: Amend Section 5.15 Sign Regulations; add digital signage on City owned property

Mr. Mele noted the public hearing will be held on April 17, 2024.

**6. Old Business:**

- a. Discussion: Shelter Regulations

MOTION by Mr. Mele to move this item to the end of the agenda, seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.

**7. New Business:**

- a. Site Plan 1491  
Applicant: George T. Ruwet  
Location: 1703 East Main Street  
Proposal: New area for equipment storage

George T. Ruwet, applicant, appeared via zoom.

Mr. Leifert read his memo to the Commission dated March 20, 2024. Mr. Leifert stated Site Plan 926 at this location expired in 2014. Extensions would have been given, and then by Statute the Site Plan would have expired in 2018. Mr. Ruwet inquired where he could find this information, and Mr. Leifert responded Connecticut State Statutes Section 8-2.

Mr. Ruwet had questions about the curbing that is being required, as it will cause run off issues and will cause problems with the grass. The site has been this way for 30 years and he would like to not have any curbing there. It will cause a problem in the winter with freezing.

Impervious surface was discussed, and Mr. Leifert noted a curb could be installed with gaps to allow stormwater runoff. The gap could be anywhere from five inches to a foot and a half; this could be accomplished with a minor modification afterwards. We do not want to totally eliminate curbing from this plan. Mr. Ruwet stated he does not agree with this, as truckers drive over his curbing and he cannot babysit the drivers. Mr. Leifert responded curbing is required on all landscaped islands.

Mr. Mele and Mr. Leifert suggested materials such as asphalt, concrete or mountable curbing. Mr. Leifert will send examples of spaced curbing to Mr. Ruwet.

Mr. Perosino emphasized the regulations require curbing, and spacing can be done to allow water flow.

Mr. Ruwet asked for the temporary pallet storage to be approved. Mr. Leifert responded it cannot be in the buffer area, and that is the whole point of the buffer. Mr. Ruwet can maintain access to the building, the whole 25' buffer does not need to be maintained. The grass can be cut, and the vegetative buffer needs to be maintained. The buffer area and trees were reviewed.

MOTION by Ms. Carroll to approve Site Plan 1491

Applicant: George T. Ruwet  
Location: 1703 East Main Street  
Proposal: New area for equipment storage

With the following conditions and recommendations:

1. The applicant shall install additional curbing as indicated on the plans or provide an acceptable bond amount to the City Planner within 60 days of this approval.
2. The applicant shall remove any and all equipment or other storage from within the landscaped areas and the 25-foot residential buffer areas within 60 days of this approval and notify the City Planner of any new zoning compliant exterior storage locations

3. Except as necessary to protect and maintain buildings or safety, the buffer areas shall remain in a natural state. This includes cessation of any mowing, vehicle access or vegetation removal except as necessary for routine building maintenance access.
4. The two handicapped accessible parking spaces near building “A” and building “B” shall be marked and signs installed as indicated on the plans
5. The applicant shall follow comments of Nate Nardi-Cyrus, Assistant Planner outlined in his February 22, 2024 email to the City Planner and correct all outstanding identified violations within 60 days of this approval.
6. In accordance with section 8.4.3 and 8.4.6 of the zoning regulations, the following shall be submitted to the City Planner:
  - a. Two paper copies of the full approved final site plan sheet including the surveyor’s stamp and chairman’s signature box
  - b. One mylar copy of the full approved final site plan sheet for filing with the City Clerk in accordance with section 8.4.3.P of the zoning regulations. The mylar sheet shall bear a chairman’s signature box, a copy of the approval letter from the commission, a surveyor’s seal and live ink stamp.
  - c. Mylar sheets shall be filed by the applicant with the City Clerk after the signature of the Chairman
7. The Cease and Desist order issued by Assistant Planner Nate Nardi-Cyrus on August 14, 2023 shall remain in effect until the property is brought into full compliance with the conditions of this approval.
8. Modifications for curbing to be worked out with City Planner.

MOTION seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.

- b. Special Exception 24-01 and Site Plan 1494
  - Applicant: AJ Resources LLC
  - Location: 2285 Winsted Road (Assessor Map 244 Map 001 Lot 007)
  - Proposal: Earth Excavation, Section 6.4 (set public hearing date)

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to set a public hearing date of April 17, 2024, seconded by Mr. Telman, unanimously carried.

- c. Resubdivision
  - Applicant: Fluturim Rizvani, HPVM Motel LLC
  - Location: 367 & 391 – 395 Winsted Road
  - Proposal: Two Lot Resubdivision (set public hearing date)

MOTION by Ms. Carroll to set a public hearing date of April 17, 2024, seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

- d. Site Plan 1493
  - Applicant: Torrington Historical Society
  - Location: John Brown Road (Assessor Map 213 Block 003 Lot 010)
  - Proposal: Parking lot for six cars for public access to John Brown Birthplace Trails

Mr. Mark Linehan, 2335 Newfield Road, Torrington, CT appeared before the Commission representing the applicant. Mr. Leifert provided background details, this plan was reviewed by Paul Kundzins, City Engineer. Mr. Linehan noted Mr. Kundzins is requiring a 15” culvert, which the Torrington Historical Society will do.

Mr. Leifert read his memo to the Commission dated March 20, 2024.

MOTION by Ms. Carroll to APPROVE Site Plan 1493

Applicant: Torrington Historical Society

Location: John Brown Road (Assessor Map 213 Block 003 Lot 010)

Proposal: Parking lot for six cars for public access to John Brown Birthplace Trails

with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall address comments of Paul Kundzins, City Engineer in his February 27, 2024 email to the City Planner regarding new culvert size and location for the driveway installation
2. A zoning permit is required prior to alteration of the site
3. The commission waived the requirement for submission and filing of an engineered site plan due to the nature and location of the project In accordance with section 8.4.4 of the zoning regulations

Motion seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously approved.

Mr. Linehan thanked Jeremy Leifert, Nate Nardi-Cyrus and the Planning and Zoning Commission for their assistance on this project.

e. Resubdivision

Applicant: Robert Bombardieri

Location: 505 University Drive

Proposal: Two Lot Resubdivision (set public hearing date)

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to set a public hearing date of April 17, 2024, seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.

f. Special Exception 24-02 and Site Plan 1495

Applicant: Lelah Campo

Location: 232 Klug Hill Road

Proposal: Two Day Special Event – 6.13b. public or private event intended primarily for gatherings, entertainment or amusement  
(set public hearing date)

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to set a public hearing date of April 17, 2024, seconded by Ms. Carroll, unanimously carried.

- g. Site Plan 1430 Modification  
Applicant: Greenstone Investments, LLC; Lelah Campo  
Location: 232 Klug Hill Road  
Proposal: Modifications to previously approved recreational vehicle park

Mr. Ryan McEvoy of SLR Consulting, 99 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT appeared via zoom representing the applicant. Mr. McEvoy screen shared site maps. Future Phase V new office has been relocated within the curbed driveway and the change was made to accommodate the enlargement of the recreational pond.

Mr. Leifert asked for calculations of the size/acreage of the pond. Mr. McEvoy explained the landscaping and beach area to be constructed, referring to site plans, and the pond will be topped off. Mr. Leifert is looking for surface acreage of the pond for the record.

Mr. McEvoy responded the pond will be approximately 160 feet by 200 feet, approximately 16,000 square feet which is approximately one-third of an acre.

The parking for the new office building will be for employees and RV's will continue past this location to the temporary office. Mr. McEvoy said there is no intention of having RV's stack up in this area, in response to questions from Mr. Mele and Mr. Perosino.

Going back to Phase I, Mr. McEvoy explained the golf cart storage area, a new wrap around porch, the dumpster relocation area, and playground area. There is no change in the number of campground sites, but they have been reorganized a bit for traffic flow, Mr. McEvoy referred to site maps.

There is no change to stormwater or septic systems or fundamental access around the property. Site grading around the pond was clarified on the map by Mr. McEvoy.

Mr. McEvoy stated that is a summary of major changes. This is presently two parcels, and a condition is that lots are combined or lot line changes made so that all improvements are located on one lot. A lot line revision is included with the package (noted on map by Mr. McEvoy).

Mr. Mele inquired if this recreational vehicle park will still be designated as KOA. Mr. McEvoy was unsure of the status of that KOA designation.

Mr. Leifert read his memo to the Commission dated March 20, 2024.

MOTION by Ms. Carroll to APPROVE Site Plan 1430 Modification  
Applicant: Greenstone Investments, LLC; Lelah Campo  
Location: 232 Klug Hill Road  
Proposal: Modifications to previously approved recreational vehicle park

With the following conditions and recommendations:

All conditions stated in the initial approval of February 15, 2023 and modifications approved April 19, 2023 and August 16, 2023 remain in effect except as noted below.

1. Per comments by the Assistant Planner Nate Nardi-Cyrus, the final plan set for filing shall
  - (1) eliminate the beach area near the pond on the plans pending future wetlands approval,
  - (2) include the location and grades of construction access/maintenance driveway including a provision for access gating and signage and
  - (3) update the tree line on the plans to reflect conditions on site
2. The applicant shall add a note on the area of the pond to the final plan set
3. Each phase shall be completed in its' entirety prior to opening for operation
4. Revisions to existing zoning and grading permits are required prior to alteration or use of the site for the modified areas, with the exception of those activities previously authorized under existing zoning and grading permits outside of the modified areas
5. In accordance with section 8.4.3 and 8.4.6 of the zoning regulations, the following shall be submitted to the City Planner:
  - a. Two paper copies of the full approved final plan set including the engineer's stamp and chairman's signature box on the title page.
  - b. One mylar copy of each site plan sheet IN, GR-1 and GR-2 and GR-3 for filing with the City Clerk in accordance with section 8.4.3.P of the zoning regulations. The mylar sheets shall bear a chairman's signature box, a copy of the approval letter from the commission, an engineers' seal and live ink stamp.
  - c. Mylar sheets shall be filed by the applicant with the City Clerk after the signature of the Chairman and prior to the approval of modified zoning or grading permits to begin construction or site work.

Motion seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

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## 6. Old Business:

- a. Discussion: Shelter Regulations

Mr. Leifert has put together a rough draft, for the first look at proposed regulations. He has reviewed what other towns and other states are doing. Mr. Leifert reviewed his rough draft, and would like one more meeting to go over the draft prior to setting a public hearing, with a June public hearing as a possibility. Mr. Leifert is also available to speak with Commission members individually regarding the draft wording.

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## 8. Correspondence:

- a. Zoning and Blight Violation update

The violation updates had been distributed to Commission members.

b. Mr. Leifert noted there is a training session on April 22, 2024 at the regularly scheduled Zoning Board of Appeals meeting; the agenda will be sent to Planning and Zoning Commission members. There will be a presenter from the Connecticut Bar Association.

**9. Adjournment:**

MOTION by Ms. Carroll to adjourn at 9:31 p.m., seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.