



Town of Cromwell Planning and Zoning Commission

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M. TUESDAY APRIL 16, 2024 TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS CROMWELL TOWN HALL 41 WEST STREET

Minutes and Record of Votes

Present: Vice Chairman Michael Cannata, Ann Grasso, Douglas Kalinowski, Andrew Holt, Jonathan Comtois, Brian Dufresne

Absent: Chairman Alice Kelly, Paul Cordone, Ken Rozich, Nick Demetriades, Vincenzo Marfella, Robert Donohue

Also present: Director of Planning and Development Stuart Popper, Zoning Enforcement Officer Bruce Driska, Town Engineer Jon Harriman

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Vice Chair Cannata.

2. Roll Call

The presence of the above members was noted.

3. Seating of Alternates

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Doug Kalinowski to seat Andrew Holt and Jonathan Comtois as alternates. All were in favor; the motion passed.

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Ann Grasso to amend the agenda by adding application #24-04, 327 Main Street; applicant Jessica Dudley, add an EV charging station to item #8. All were in favor; the motion passed.

5. Public Comments: none

6. Development Compliance Officer Report:

Mr. Driska said the report was in the package and not much has changed since the last meeting.

7. Director of Planning and Development Report:

Mr. Popper said that Hartford Healthcare Urgent Care at 28 Shunpike is open and it is quite impressive. He said that Chen Bakery, AutoZone and Fuego Restaurant are all under construction. He said there has been no movement at the medical building at 80 Shunpike. Mr. Popper said that Fuego Restaurant is proposing to add a patio similar to what 99 had and this will be approved by town staff. He said they haven't heard from Popeye's since they filed their mylars.

8. New Business: Accept and Schedule New Applications:

- a. Application #24-07: Request to modify the Site Plan to add a new drainage facility at Fox Meadow Condominiums. Fox Meadow Condominium Association is the Applicant and the Owner.

Mr. Popper said there will not be a meeting on May 7, 2024 and the next meeting will be May 21, 2024.

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Doug Kalinowski to accept and schedule application #24-07 for May 21, 2024. All were in favor; the motion passed.

- b. Application #24-08: Request to modify the Site Plan to add a donation bin at 199 Shunpike Road in the Highway Business Zone District. Texima LLC is the Applicant and Cromwell Crossing LLC is the Owner.

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Doug Kalinowski to accept and schedule application #24-08 for May 21, 2024. All were in favor; the motion passed.

- c. Application #24-04; Request to install an EV charging station at Jessica's Color Room, 327 Main Street. Jessica Dudley is the applicant.

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Doug Kalinowski to accept and schedule application #24-04 for May 21, 2024. All were in favor; the motion passed.

9. New Business:

- a. Application #24-05: Request to modify the Site Plan at Torza's Golf at 150 Sebethe Drive in the Industrial Zone District. Plan calls for removing the existing mini-golf and batting cages and replacing with more driving range area, pickleball courts and new parking. Torza's Golf is the Applicant and RANDA LLC is the Owner.

Mr. Popper said all staff comments have been addressed.

Nancy Jackson, Civil Engineer said that Ms. Torza is not here yet but I can present the application.

Ms. Jackson said the site is in the Industrial Zone and is 52.6 acres. She said they would like to remove the mini golf area and replace it with 4 pickleball courts. They would also like to replace the

batting cage area with a lawn area and the existing shed will become accessible restrooms. Ms. Jackson said they will also put a new parking area near the pickleball court which will add an additional 20 parking spots. She said there will also be an additional new driving range.

Mr. Comtois asked if there would be new lighting installed and Ms. Jackson said there is currently lighting there for the mini golf but she assumes it will need to be reconfigured.

Mr. Driska said the netting for the existing driving range is in disrepair and they have had several complaints of errant golf balls. He said that Torza's needs to explain what they plan to do with that. There was a discussion on how the new driving ranges will be positioned and what kind of netting there will be. The Commissioners expressed concerns that the balls from the new range would be hit towards populated parts of the facility. Vice Chair Cannata asked Ms. Jackson to let Torza's know that they need to show up here with netting information. He said they should also provide the distances of the driving range as well. Ms. Jackson asked if they could repair the netting and Vice Chair Cannata said there is nothing left to repair.

A motion was made by Ann Grasso and seconded by Andrew Holt to table application #24-05 until May 21, 2024. All were in favor; the motion passed.

b. Application #22-26: Request to Rescind the Approval for the Special Permit under Section 6.1.b of the Zoning Regulations for the placement of fill on property to remedy steep grade leading into the back yard. Request to release the bond for said approval.

Mr. Popper asked the Commissioners to rescind the approval and release the bond for 12 Summer Brook Lane.

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Andrew Holt to release the bond for application #22-26. All were in favor; the motion passed.

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Andrew Holt to rescind the approval for application #22-26. All were in favor; the motion passed.

10. Public Hearings:

a. Application #24-03: Request for Site Plan Approval to construct athletic facilities improvements at Cromwell High School at 1 Donald Harris Road in the R-25 Residential Zone District. The Town of Cromwell is the Applicant and the Owner.

Vice Chair Cannata read the legal notice for application #24-03 dated March 28, 2024.

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Andrew Holt open the public hearing for application #24-03. All were in favor; the motion passed.

Jon Harriman, Town Engineer said that in 2023 a group of residents approached the town council about replacing the tennis courts and track at the high school. The project started to grow and the Town Council approved a feasibility study and they have charged us to move forward with a shovel ready project so we can be ready for any grants that might be available. Mr. Harriman said we have received a permit from the Inland Wetland Commission for the new tennis courts. He said we did come to this Commission with a site plan modification and we received an automatic approval due to

time running out on the application. Mr. Harriman said the Town Council asked you to rescind that approval so we can have a public hearing.

Mr. Michael Noonan, CHA Consulting showed the current site and said the footprint of the fields is in the same location as it is now. He said the track field will be moved slightly to the West and the tennis courts will be relocated to the west side of the school and the current tennis courts will become a 150-space parking lot. He said there will be 6 new tennis courts with portable bleachers. Mr. Noonan said they will install a new turf field with a 500-seat bleacher with press box and new support building. He said the spectator side will have a 200-seat bleacher and there will be room for portable bleachers on each side of both the visitor side and the home side bleachers. There will be a new scoreboard on the west side of the field and there will be landscaping screening installed on the east side. He said they will install the screening in the new parking lot and will supplement what is existing on the south side. Mr. Noonan said there will be a continuous driveway between the high school and ECS that will not be open to the public and will be gated off on each end. He said it will be used for emergency egress and service vehicles.

Mr. Karl Leabo, CHA Consulting said the surface building is 1,850 gross feet and will include restrooms, concessions, officials changing areas, ticket area and a training area. He said the building will match the architecture of the high school. He showed renderings of the storage facility, bleachers and press box. He said there will be a PA system which will have directional sound not just speakers. He said there will be LED lighting which will project down and dark sky lighting. He said the scoreboard will be the same board as Pierson Park.

Vice Chair Cannata asked if the new parking lot has drainage and Carl said they will be adding swales and storage to offset the increased drainage.

Mr. Peter Parent, CHA Consulting said the plan is to store stormwater under the turf field to allow it to slowly drain.

Vice Chair Cannata asked if they considered relocating the field further away from the neighbors and Mr. Noonan said that would require relocating all of the other fields and would increase the project cost by 50%. Mr. Noonan said the town also just made improvements to the baseball and softball fields. He said the cost of the project as shown is around \$10 million and if fields were relocated it would increase to \$13-\$15 million.

Mr. Harriman said everything would not easily fit if we moved the field. He said game fields don't run East to West, it just isn't a standard model.

Vice Chair Cannata said that these plans are right on top of an existing neighborhood and it was a bad design the first time. He said The Planning and Zoning Commission is not supposed to be concerned with the cost of the project. He said this is 100 feet away from houses.

Mr. Noonan showed the modern lighting system which is very directional and he said the current lighting is old style and glares into the neighborhood. He said the parking lot lights are only projected into the parking lot and there will not be any lights in the tennis courts since the gates are locked at night. Mr. Dufresne asked if there would be standing water in the swales and Mr. Noonan said no, they will drain within 48 hours. Mr. Kalinowski asked if we hold that many events that warrant this type of expansion and Mr. Harriman said we have hosted a few larger events.

Vice Chair Cannata asked why we are doing the project at Community Field if this is planned and Mr. Harriman said we applied for the grant at Community Field three years ago and then a group of people asked for this more recently. He said Cromwell doesn't have enough fields now. Vice Chair Cannata asked if we needed two fields of this caliber and Mr. Harriman said there isn't enough parking at Community Field and we couldn't support this level of activity there without negatively impacting that area. He said there are no locker room facilities planned for community fields, just team rooms per state mandate. Mr. Harriman said the condition of our existing fields depends on who you ask.

Ms. Grasso said that parking will be clogged at the high school with the addition of a parking lot and only one way to exit. Mr. Harriman said it is not a safety issue but agreed it would take some time for people to exit the parking area during some events.

Mr. Harriman addressed that the tennis courts were moved to wetlands area since wetlands practices are for the most prudent use so tennis courts are better than a parking lot. He also said some of the facilities are planned for future accreditation. Mr. Harriman told the Commissioners that he would have to ask them to vote on this proposal because they do not have funding to get another design plan.

A break was called by Vice Chair Cannata at 8:14pm to change the recording tape.

The meeting was called back to order by Vice Chair Cannata at 8:18pm.

Vice Chair Cannata told the members of the public that the ground rules for speaking about application #24-03 were that there would be a time limit of 2 minutes and you can always say you agree with the previous speaker if they also raised the same topic as you. He told the audience that this project has not been funded yet and it still has to go to the Town Council and Board of Finance so there are still several more layers.

Jason LeBlanc, 3 Cedar Drive said he is on the Athletic Committee and is a former soccer coach. He said this is not the best field in town. He said we did an extensive review and this is the best option to keep costs down and it meets the north to south orientation. Mr. LeBlanc said we do have numerous cancellations each season due to field conditions. He said we need a turf field and busing students to Pierson Park is an additional cost.

Diane Uccello, 21 Reiman Drive said my home is adjacent to Chestnut Brook and I am concerned about the effect of this project on that pond. She said you used to be able to walk around the pond but now you can't. She said water has been routed and draining into that pond but the town has not been maintaining it. Ms. Uccello invited the Commissioners to come look at it. She said she was also concerned about the traffic that will be diverted down Reiman Drive.

Patricia Hallden, 25 Reiman Drive said my property also abuts the pond and it is flooding my property. She said no one from the town is helping me. Ms. Hallden said it is totally overgrown on the south side and it is a fire hazard. She said it has not been dredged since the 1980's.

Vice Chair Cannata said this is a Town Council and Town Engineer issue and Ms. Hallden said this project will impact the pond and drainage. Vice Chair Cannata said their plan shows they will increase drainage so there should be zero issues. Ms. Hallden said she is also concerned about traffic.

Kevin Griffin, 8 Forest Road said a natural buffer doesn't exist and he said the area around the tennis courts are always wet. He said that parents drop students off in our cul de sac and students also park there. Mr. Griffin said there is already noise from that field and trash is in my yard so it is only going to get worse.

Robert Carlson, 5 George Street said I work the night shift and picked this area so I could sleep during the day. He said this will be a change in the living conditions from when I moved ten years ago. He asked if there would be light and noise tests.

Helen Sullivan, 6 Rosewood Lane told the Commissioners they do not realize what 700 seats and all of that lighting will do to our neighborhood. She said the noise is already horrible. Ms. Sullivan said we are all concerned with drainage. She said you will lose control of the field if you receive federal and state funding for this project.

Diane Varese, 20 Reiman Drive said I agree with Diane Uccello and drainage is a problem. She said my sump pump goes off constantly after not turning on for 20 years. She said I would also like to have the path behind the high school still available for walking.

Matt Randazzo, 2 Southwood Drive said all of the concerns presented are valid and reasonable. He said he also wanted to clarify that the access road connects to Orchard Road not ECS. Mr. Randazzo said you need to have the path continued on the west side of the school.

Richard Randazzo, 7 Rosewood Road asked if synthetic turf accidents were more dangerous than old style fields and asked if we were getting something worse or better for our money. He said kids constantly access the high school from Rosewood Road through the gate but said I don't see a path for that in the new plan.

Michelle Randazzo, 4 Orchard Road said there are water problems in the whole area and there are too many cars and buses on our street.

Debbie Breau, 10 Douglas Drive said there are traffic and debris issues now. She said I agree with a lot of what has been said this site plan will affect the water problem in this area. Ms. Breau said there needs to be a plan to address these problems.

Jim Fecteau, 1 Forest Road said his neighbors have done a good job addressing the issues and he does have a concern with the egress of the site. He said he is also concerned about changes that may happen after the project moves forward.

Mr. Popper read letters from the Patel's on 8 Shady Lane and Anthony Varricchio at 6 Coles Road. Both letters expressed opposition to the application.

Mr. Harriman said there is no intention of adding any different egresses to any surrounding roads.

Mr. Moonan said he respects all of the feelings expressed and he was tasked with increasing water storage and reducing drainage from the site and that was the intent of the plan. He said we can add more vegetation as a buffer. Mr. Moonan said the extra parking is intended to relieve the strain of parking on neighboring properties. He said the path behind the school will remain and will go behind the new tennis courts. He said they can add a path from Rosewood but our thought was that removing

it would reduce parking on the streets. Mr. Noonan said studies on artificial turf are inconclusive. He said it does seem that well maintained fields reduce concussions.

Vice Chair Cannata break called at 9:01pm to change the recording tape.

Vice Chair Cannata called the meeting back to order at 9:03pm.

Mr. Dufresne asked about a maintenance program on the turf field. Mr. Noonan said yes, the owners are required to keep a log of maintenance and upkeep. Mr. Comtois asked what the existing spectator capacity is now and Mr. Noonan said there is no real number now since it is portable. He said this site plan calls for 700 permanent seats.

A motion was made by Briand Dufresne and seconded by Andrew Holt to close the public hearing for application #24-03. All were in favor; the motion passed.

A motion to was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Andrew Holt to deny application #24-03 as presented. All were in favor; the motion passed

11. Approval of Minutes:
a. March 19, 2024

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Doug Kalinowski to approve the minutes of March 19, 2024. All were in favor; the motion passed.

12. Commissioner's Comments:
13. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Brian Dufresne and seconded by Andrew Holt to adjourn at 9:08pm. All were in favor; the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Imme
Recording Clerk