



Town of Cromwell Planning and Zoning Commission

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M. TUESDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2016 ROOM 224 CROMWELL TOWN HALL 41 WEST STREET Minutes and Record of Votes

Present: Chairman Alice Kelly, Michael Cannata, Ken Rozich, Ken Slade, Brian Dufresne, Rich Waters, Paul Cordone, Jeremy Floyran, David Fitzgerald

Absent: Chris Cambareri

Also Present: Town Planner Stuart Popper, Zoning Enforcement Officer Fred Curtin, Town Council Liaison Ed Widders

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kelly at 7:07pm.

2. Roll Call

The presence of the above members was noted.

3. Seating of Alternates

A **motion** was made by Michael Cannata and **seconded** by Brian Dufresne to seat David Fitzgerald as an alternate. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

4. Approval of Agenda

A **motion** was made by Michael Cannata and **seconded** by Rich Waters to approve the agenda. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

5. Public Comments - none

6. Development Compliance Officer Report:

Mr. Curtin reviewed his report dated January 26, 2016.

7. Town Planner Report:

Mr. Popper said the applicant from last meeting has withdrawn the application for the donation

clothing bin on Main Street. Mr. Popper said the public hearing tonight is a continuation from the Sunday site walk. He said they will adhere to the same guidelines as last the meeting for public speaking. He said you can speak for 3 minutes the first time around and please sign in when you come to the microphone. Mr. Popper talked about the overlay zone and said there are 4 in town. He said this application is to place a planned residential district at the former Nike site. He said this application is only for the proposed zone change. If this application is approved it will go to the next step. He said the plan tonight is a conceptual plan and the next step would be a special permit and site plan application which would have more detailed plans including drainage, lighting, landscaping, roadway improvements and more detailed information. Mr. Popper said the question tonight is if the zone change should be approved. Mr. Popper said if you come up to speak and you agree with the previous speaker, just say you want to say the same thing. He said if you don't want to come up and speak you can submit your comments in writing and I will read them into the record. He said the applicant will speak first tonight.

8. New Business: New Applications:

9. Public Hearing:

- a. Application #15-47: Request to amend the Zoning District from R-25 to PRD for the 8.75acre site Parcel Identification Number # 0033600 (also known as the Nike Site) at the end of Country Squire Drive. Belfonti Companies is the Applicant and Country Squire Site LLC is the Owner.

Attorney Diane Whitney said our plan is for Mr. Cassidy to go over the new plan which is a result of the comments we have received.

Jim Cassidy, Engineer with Hallisey, Pearson and Cassidy said we have new information tonight and appreciated the site walk. He included a copy of the aerial photo so you can see where you were walking. He shows this is on the screen. He explained where the walk took place including the roadways. He said we heard concern about height of the buildings, which are two combination 2/3 stories with 20 units in each and five 3 stories with 24 units in each. He said he has shuffled them around to break up the mass near Fox Meadows property unit. He said the buildings jog in and out and they will be clapboard type of buildings with some stone or brick enhancements. Mr. Cassidy compared the units to Fox Meadows and showed them on the map. He explained the height measurement technique and said these buildings are slightly lower than Fox Meadows. He said a majority of Fox Meadow buildings are 3 story units that face us. He said they have done a formal survey and found the property line at Fox Meadows is not correct. He said as a result they will have an additional 8 feet of buffering that no one knew was there. There was a discussion on buffering.

Joe Fazekas, Regional Manager for MCR Management a division of the Belfonti companies. He said he has 1600 units in his portfolio and is a member of the Economic Development Agency, The Redevelopment Agency and a Cromwell resident who owns two homes. Mr. Fazekas said he just picked up an appraisal opinion letter from a Realtor and will get a copy to the

Commissioners tomorrow. Mr. Fazekas said that these will not be section 8 but class A lifestyle apartments not low income housing. He said they will similar to what is in Rocky Hill, Middletown and all over the Country. Mr. Fazekas said that we are prepared to remove the contaminations and the base was still maintained until 1986. He said the heights of the building are no different than the heights at Fox Meadows and no evidence of property values declining. He said there are 19 units available for rent at Fox Meadow at a price of \$1,125 to \$1,750. He said our one bedrooms will rent for \$1,400-1,500 and two bedrooms will rent for \$1,500-1,700. Mr. Fazekas said these are lifestyle choice housing for people not interested in buying homes. The opinion of the realtor is it's a benefit. The tax assessor reported an estimated \$500,000 in property taxes. Mr. Fazekas gave Mr. Popper the report. Mr. Popper said this is will be open to the public for review in the Town Planner's office during business hours. Mr. Fazekas said he will also deliver 15 copies to Mr. Popper. Mr. Popper said he would also like 15 copies of the architectural layout for the Commissioner and the public.

Chairman Kelly asked for members of the public who wanted to speak regarding the application.

Helen Barnaby, 21 Sun Ridge Lane read the regulations and handed a petition that was signed by 100 residents surrounding the property.

Sebastian Kaczmarczyk, 29 Sun Ridge Lane went over the heights of the new building which would face #7 and he said it is 33 feet high and we are only 19 feet height. He asked about the parking allowance of 1.5 cars per unit and said any 2 bedrooms will have 2 cars plus visitors so it is not enough. He said they will be parking in our complex. He said this is too big of a project for this site and is overwhelming.

Chairman Kelly asked for respect from the audience and that there be no more outbursts including clapping.

Barbara Slowikowska, 11 Sun Ridge Lane said she agreed with Mr. Kaczmarczyk. She said I understand a business wants to grow and develop to make money but we don't need apartments in Cromwell. She said there are 9 complexes in Middletown with 173 vacancies and Rocky Hill has 9 complexes with 243 vacancies. She said Hartford is closer to Rocky Hill and Newington but people want to move here for Cromwell schools. She said that 30 new kids will take away the \$500,000 in taxes.

Marco Iacoviello, 37 Club House Drive said I am at the bottom of the hill so the views don't affect me. He asked if anyone has consulted with the Board of Education.

Mike Neuring, 19 Sun Ridge Lane said I am convinced this is too dense. He asked if there was a weapons storage site on the property since he thought someone referred to that at the site walk. He also asked about the access road for emergency use. He understands it will be gated but wanted to know who would maintain the road. He asked about kids on dirt bikes. He asked the Commissioners to carefully review the impact and density. He also said he agreed with everyone else.

Sharon Cooper, 3 Wood Bridge Lane (Fox Meadows) said she owns this and lives in Middletown. She said it is a very congested corner and a new office is being built along with the possibility of 160 new units. She asked who is going to fill these apartments except for transient people. She said most people at this price will just get a mortgage for a tax deduction. She said it is terrific to remediate this property but it is at a very big cost. She said I concur with everyone else. She said this looks good on paper but the quality of life pales in comparison. She said I am not convinced.

Maureen Sullivan, 13 Cedar Drive said the Rocky Hill apartments are in the middle of an industrial area with highways around it. She said you can't compare this to this very residential area. She said the project has 3 times the density of the surrounding complexes. She said the regulations were written to benefit Cromwell resident and please uphold them.

Lenny Levin, 1 Harwood Garden said he is in the Evergreen Community and asked about the access road and asked if it would be for emergency purposes only.

Mr. Cassidy said as part of the Evergreen development there was a stipulation they create a stub for Evergreen Road for a future access road. It was dictated on the plans for Evergreen. He said we will have a gate there and there should be one for the Evergreen side as well. He said we could maintain to the property line including the town owned part. He said they could also maintain the whole road including the Evergreen part. Mr. Levin asked who will be able to access the gate and Mr. Cassidy said it will be a tubular gate with lock and the Fire Department, Police Department, and Maintenance will have the key.

Deborah Doll, 20 Glen View Drive said my front yard is facing the building and I concur with Mr. Kaczmarczyk. She said the elevation will be higher not lower.

Stephen Post, 26 Valley Run Drive said he is a dual income and no kids household. He said traffic is a big concern and I haven't heard how this will benefit the town besides \$500,000 in taxes.

Adam Kukielka, 11 Sun Ridge Lane said we need to come up with a new process to notify neighbors with better signs. He also said he agrees with the other speakers.

Tom Sullivan, 45 Woodsboro Circle said he is part of the Evergreen community and I am pleading with you. He said the common feeling is that this Board doesn't care what happens on the West side of the Shunpike. He said this will change our way of life. He said this is a beautiful area and where does it end.

Jerry Iacoviello, 7 Harwood Gardens (Evergreen) said he agrees with everyone including Tom Sullivan.

Halina Traszka, 32 Glen View Drive said she noticed at the last meeting you were concerned

with a donation bin and the mess it would leave on Main Street. She said you should be concerned with this mess. She said no one talks about how much we pay in taxes.

A break was called at 8:18pm and the meeting was called back to order by Chairman Kelly at 8:28pm.

Beth Drake, 23 Sun Ridge Lane said this Commission represents their best interest.

Barbara Slowikowska, 11 Sun Ridge Lane said don't do to yourself what you don't want to do to others.

Mr. Popper reads letters from the public.

Thomas Madden 19 Wynwood Drive is opposed to the application.

Janet Argenta, 11 Cedar Street asked about blasting since she is about 100 feet from the site and wants to know if it could cause damage to her property.

Mr. Popper reads an email from Lisa Anderson, 25 Sun Ridge Lane dated February 2, 2016. She is opposed to the application and asked about the effect it would have on the already low water pressure.

Mr. Fazekas said their impact study indicated between 13-17 kids would occupy the site. He said all ADA units are on the first floor. He said we will develop and maintain the access road. He said these would be approved by the Fire Department in the site plan approval process if we receive approval on the zone change.

Mr. Cassidy said the number of units and the square footage would generate a need for a Major Traffic Generator permit/study from the office of the State Traffic Commission. They will want us to make improvements at the intersection but I am not sure yet what those will be.

Mr. Cassidy said Alterra apartments in Rocky Hill have 144 units with 13 kids, Montage will have 144 units and they have lots of commitments and the intended target is empty nesters or young professionals. He said the parking requirement of 1.5 spaces per unit is your requirement. He said that is working in Rocky Hill. He said we will also need to seek other permits such as Wetlands permit. He said the access drive will not be open to the public and is about 1000 feet long not one mile. He said ATV's and motorcycles are driving around this site now and the site is not as pristine as everyone is saying. Vandalism and fire are ongoing there. Mr. Cassidy also confirmed that there are contaminants that will need to be cleaned up. He said Phase 1 indicated there will be about \$500,000 in cleanup and the 1650 feet of road we need to build will cost about \$1.2 million. He said the cost to just get this to development standards will be about 1.7 million and 8-10 residential lots would be unrealistic. He said it is unrealistic to think this site could remain an R-25 zone, it is just unsustainable.

Mr. Cassidy said the water pressure is low in Fox Meadows and we anticipate having to install a water pressure booster system so we won't take away from existing developments. He said we will be improving the road system but I don't think we will need to blast. He said if we have to then we will comply with the towns blasting policy. He said these would be constructed slab on grade so just a foundation wall will be needed which is the least shallow way.

Attorney Whitney said the project doesn't necessarily provide a benefit to the town but it is consistent with your Plan of Conservation and Development since it provides more housing opportunities. She said we are saying 13-21 kids as an estimate. She also wanted to remind everyone that this site is vacate but it is not open space and privately owned property.

Mr. Dufresne asked how much distance was between the new buildings and old. Mr. Cassidy showed the distances on the map.

Mr. Waters asked about wetlands. Mr. Cassidy said there are no wetlands on our site. Mr. Popper said they would have to go to the Wetlands since it is in the upland review area. If this application is approved they would go to Wetlands first than back here.

Mr. Cannata asked about the density of County Squire 1, 2 and 3 and also of Fox Meadows. Mr. Cassidy said that Country Squire 3 is 19.1 units per acre, Fox Meadows is 9 per acre and 1 and 2 are 10-12 units per acre. Mr. Cassidy said he is relying on memory and doesn't have the numbers in front of him. Mr. Cannata asked at what point it would be appropriate to ask about off-site improvements. Mr. Popper said that they would be able to at the site plan approval stage.

Mr. Popper said this meeting will be continued until February 16th and the Commission needs detailed renderings which show the actual breaks in the building and good architectural descriptions. He also asked for the back of the buildings renderings. He also asked if they could show the site on an aerial map overlay. Mr. Popper asked the Commissioners to put any questions they had on the floor now so the applicant could address them. He said he would prefer to send any materials in the package. Mr. Popper told the public they can see all of the information in his office Monday through Friday. He suggested they call first to make sure he has what they are requesting. He also told the public they could resubmit the petition by next Tuesday with additional signatures since they are continuing the public hearing.

Mr. Popper clarified that the conceptual plan should be similar to what the site plan is. He said if we approve this it should be consistent to what is submitted with the site plan approval application.

Mr. Cordone asked about lowering the elevation looking west from Fox Meadow. Mr. Cassidy said we can try. Mr. Cannata asked what the wiggle room was for the number of units. Attorney Whitney said we already wiggled it down. Mr. Fazekas said we can look at it but the margin is slim.

Mr. Waters asked about the \$92,000 lien on the property. Chairman Kelly said this was a fine

under the blight ordinance and Wesley Bell. She said if they don't take care of the property the lien will come back. Mr. Cannata asked why the U.S. Government would contaminate a site and walk away. Attorney Whitney said you can sue the government and she doesn't know if it's been tried here, but in her opinion it would be too much time and money.

Mr. Slade asked about having 4 stories on the further buildings and 2 on the ones near the other properties. Mr. Fazekas said that 4 stories without an elevator are tricky. Mr. Waters said that he wants to see 2 stories at most. Mr. Floryan asked about elevators and Mr. Fazekas said that is not an option due to the cost.

A **motion** was made by Michael Cannata and **seconded** by Jeremy Floryan to continue the public hearing until February 16, 2016. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

10 Approval of Minutes:

a. January 5, 2016


A **motion** was made by Michael Cannata and **seconded** by Rich Waters to approve the minutes of January 5, 2016. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

11. Commissioner's Comments:

12. Adjourn

A **motion** was made by Michael Cannata and **seconded** by Ken Slade to adjourn at 9:35pm. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

Respectfully Submitted,


Linda Imme
Recording Clerk