

**TOWN OF CROMWELL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**



***Regular Meeting  
7:00 P.M. Wednesday, May 15, 2019  
Room 219 Cromwell Town Hall***

**AMENDED AGENDA**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
May 10, 2019 11:09A  
JOAN AHLQUIST  
TOWN CLERK  
CROMWELL, CT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JA", is written over the printed name "JOAN AHLQUIST".

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call/Seating of Alternates**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Public Comments**
5. **Director of Planning and Development Report**
6. **New Business:**
  - a. Tax Abatement for Cromwell Village
7. **Chairman's Comments/Commissioners' Comments**
8. **Communications: see attached P & Z Minutes**
9. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - a. April 17, 2019
10. **Good & Welfare**
11. **Adjourn**

**To: Economic Development Commission**  
**From: Stuart B. Popper, Economic Development Coordinator**  
**Date: May 10, 2019**  
**Re: Economic Development Coordinator Report for May 2019**

**1. Grand Openings:**

- Dollar General Store at 539 Main Street Saturday May 11, 2019.
- Shop Rite at 51 Shunpike Road at 8:00 am Saturday May 18, 2019.

**2. Business Visitations:**

- We will be scheduling visitation for the third week of May.

**3. Projects under Construction in the Spring of 2019:**

- The NIC 11,925 +/- square foot office and manufacturing building at 40 Commerce Drive is under construction.
- The 125 room, Marriott Springhill Suites Hotel at 76 Berlin Road and
- The new access drive, 54 living units and dining, meeting and recreational facilities at 52 Missionary Road (Covenant Village).

**4. Application Approved at the April 16, 2019 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting:**

- Application #19-18: Request for Site Plan Modification to relocate the transfer station at 100 County Line Drive. The Town of Cromwell is the Applicant and the Owner.

**5. Applications Approved at the May 9, 2019 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting:**

- Application #18-21: Request to release the \$14,860.82 Erosion & Sedimentation Control Bond for the new retail building at 539 Main Street. Garrett Homes, LLC is the Applicant and P&D LLC is the Owner.
- Application #19-17: Request for a Special Permit under Section 7.5.B.4 of the Zoning Regulations to permit to permit a restaurant with the accessory sales of alcoholic beverages at 199 Shunpike Road. Albion Kallogjeri D.B.A. Giulla Pizza Restaurant is the Applicant and Cromwell Crossing LLC is the owner.
- Application #19-19: Request for Special Permit under Section 7.5.B.1 of the Zoning Regulations to permit the sale of beer in a retail grocery store exceeding 50,000 square feet at 51 Shunpike Road. Shop Rite of Cromwell is the Applicant and HBN-CSC LLC C/O HB Nitkin Group is the Owner.

**Cromwell Village Associates, L.L.C.**  
**2319 Whitney Avenue, Suite 1A**  
**Hamden, CT 06518**  
**(203) 241-8766**

May 9, 2019

Stuart Popper  
Director of Planning and Development  
Cromwell Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
5866 Main Street  
Cromwell, Connecticut 06416

RE: Tax Abatement for Cromwell Village located on Country Squire Road.

Dear Stuart:

The purpose of this letter is to serve as the Application for a Tax Abatement for the above referenced property. This letter will outline our formal request for an incentive program using tax abatements. Although you are well-informed about the description of the apartment community, this letter also includes a project summary and describes details (including extraordinary costs) that necessitate this request for an abatement.

In short, the Applicant proposes to demolish the existing buildings on the Property and to construct a luxury rental community with 160 residences in seven (7) buildings. The community includes approximately 4,500 square feet of clubhouse/leasing area, and resort quality amenities. In particular, the proposed community will be comprised of 60 one bedroom/one bath residences and 100 two bedroom/two bath residences. Further details are included in a subsequent section.

**I. Economic Incentives Needed for Construction**

I. Tax Base – Currently, the annual taxes generated from this property are less than \$10,000 per year.

As part of the rezoning of the property, a fiscal impact analysis was performed to estimate the tax revenue that would be derived from the community. According to the study, annual tax revenues of over \$500,000 per year will be derived from this community as soon as the community is stabilized, and any tax abatements burn off. According to the study the annual tax revenues are as follows:

Real Property Tax	\$402,419
Motor Vehicle Tax Revenue	103,436
Other	<u>15,209</u>
Total	\$521,064

The above figures present the revenue benefits of the apartment community, are used in the calculations below to calculate the total benefits that are being sought and are used to estimate the revenue that the Town will receive during the proposed abatement.

2. Proposed Tax Abatement Schedule

We respectfully ask the appropriate commissions to consider a real estate tax abatement schedule as follows:

<u>Years</u>	<u>Tax Abatement</u>	<u>Est. Income During Abatement</u>
1-2	100%	\$ 237,289
3-4	90%	\$ 317,774
5-6	75%	\$ 438,500
7-8	60%	\$ 559,225
<u>9-10</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>\$ 800,677</u>
Est. Totals	\$2,857,175	\$2,353,465

We propose that this schedule will go into effect upon issuance of the final CO of the Project. The above assumes no escalations. Even with the abatement, the Town will receive substantial cash flow far in excess of the current 10,000 per year.

3. Rationale

There are two (2) primary reasons the tax abatement is needed in order to make the Project viable and financeable: (i) the physical characteristics of the Property require additional redevelopment costs that are extraordinary and not typical in the construction of a luxury apartment community on a vacant parcel, and (ii) tax abatements have been used by other towns for residential apartment communities recognizing the need to redevelop abandoned properties.

With respect to (i) above, the redevelopment of this Property requires the Applicant to incur certain additional—and quite substantial—costs. In particular, the redevelopment of this parcel requires (i) the demolition and environmental clean-up of abandoned buildings; (ii) significant site costs because of unsuitable soils and therefore and mass earthwork; and (iii) significant off-site construction costs given its unique location. Any one of these conditions materially increases the cost of redevelopment, but together they present a significant challenge to any redevelopment absent the tax relief requested.

**II. Additional Economic Benefits**

In addition to the above, the community also generates certain short-term and long-term benefits as described below.

1. Temporary and Permanent Jobs

***Construction Management***

<u>Position</u>	<u>Average Salary</u>
Site Project Manager	\$130,000
Site Superintendent	\$ 80,000
Laborer	\$ 30,000
Laborer	\$ 30,000

***Construction Personnel***

The construction phase of the Project is anticipated to create 200 temporary new construction jobs in 25 trades over a two (2) year period, and the full Project will have an average of 100 workers per day over the same period.

***Permanent Jobs***

After construction, when the community stabilizes, there will be between nine (9) and twelve (12) employees (or equivalent) as set forth below. Please note that the number of employees is dependent on the season (i.e. snow removal and landscaping).

<u>Position</u>	<u>Average Salary</u>
Community Manager	\$ 75,000
Leasing Associate	\$ 50,000
Leasing Assistant	\$ 40,000
Maintenance Technician	\$ 50,000
Maintenance Technician	\$ 40,000
Site Snow Removal (Seasonal)	\$ 25,000
Site Snow Removal (Seasonal)	\$ 25,000
Site Landscaper (Seasonal)	\$ 25,000
Site Painter	\$ 35,000
Site Painter	\$ 35,000
Site Cleaning	\$ 35,000

The Applicant will endeavor to hire local personal. The above estimates are based on the direct experience of the Principals of the Applicant in their capacity as owner/manager

4. Other Benefits and Explanations

- a. The Project will contain 160 permanent rental dwelling residences. Since the Project is limited to 1 BR and 2 BR apartments, and features robust amenities and an upscale design, it will attract young professionals, empty-nesters, and others who choose not to reside in a single-family home with the concomitant mortgage and maintenance requirements.
- b. The Project is in accordance with the Plan of Development with respect to Goal 7, Objective 14, and Objective 15. Generally, the community will provide the type of housing that is currently lacking in Cromwell. The proposed development will redevelop a previously developed but long vacant site that is currently environmentally contaminated. Specifically:
  - (i) The Project takes an aged, obsolete, and vacant parcel and redevelops the Property into a vibrant, modern multi-family community.
  - (ii) The lack of new office demand has caused many suburban municipalities in Connecticut and New York to expand the use of tax abatements for apartments to ensure a healthy tax base. This ensures the continued vitality of municipalities by generating sustainable ratables and an enhancement to the municipal income stream.
  - (iii) With an estimate of 282 new residents in the community, the Project will enhance business at retail and commercial properties throughout Cromwell. The Project will create new housing choices for existing and prospective Cromwell residents which has been identified as a worthy objective by the Town of Cromwell as set forth in the Plan of Development.
- c. The Project will contribute one time building permit and sewer fees of over 500,000 dollars.
- d. The Project now includes the Extension of Lower Part of Country Squire Road that currently is the Town's responsibility.

### 3. Project Details

The Applicant proposes to demolish the existing buildings on the Property and to construct a new, luxury rental community with 160 residences in seven (7) buildings. The community includes approximately 4,500 square feet of clubhouse/leasing area, and resort quality amenities. In particular, the proposed community will be comprised of 100 two bedroom/two bath residences and 60 one bedroom/one bath residences. More specifically, the community consists of the following:

Community Amenities: Cromwell Village will enjoy an attractive combination of both on-site and off-site amenities within walking distance of the property. The proposed on-site building amenities include:

- 4,500 square foot amenity/leasing center
- Long expansive views since community is located at highest point in area.
- Landscaped outdoor areas with outdoor grilling and sitting areas
- Pool and related amenities, including fire pit and outdoor TV.
- Wi-Fi throughout the common area
- Private covered garages and surface parking spaces
- Bicycle racks and Sharing
- Pet friendly community including a dog run and washing station
- Charging Station

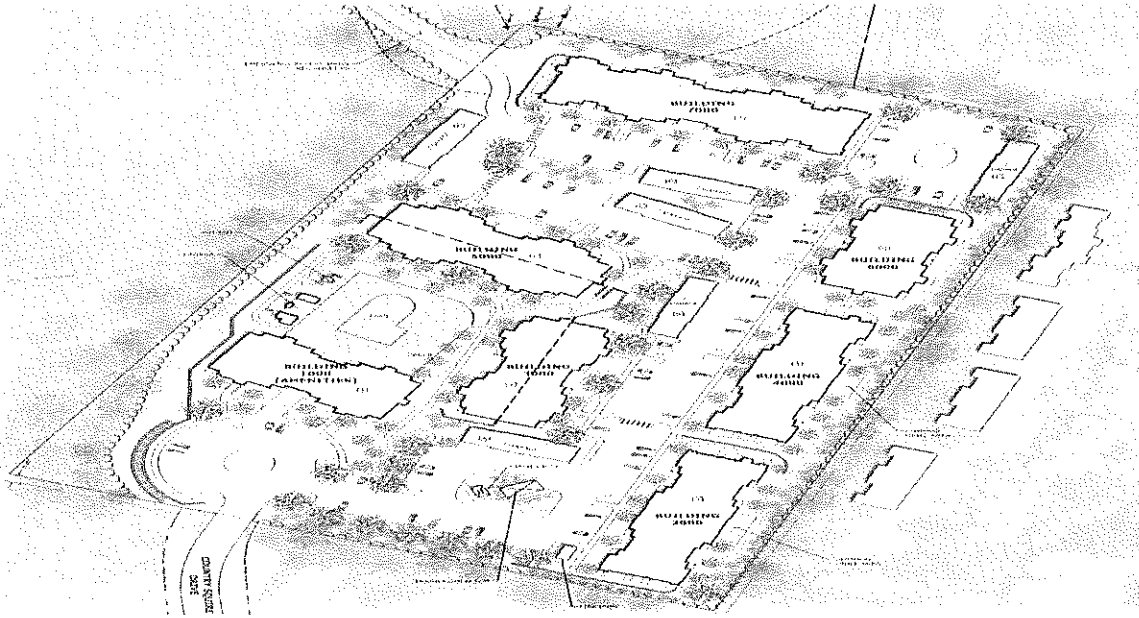
Apartment Features: Cromwell Village will offer a mix of one-bedroom and two-bedroom luxury apartments with distinctive features designed to cater to a broad market segment, including:

- Thoughtfully designed floor plans
- Nine-foot ceilings with dramatic two-story loft space on most top-floor units
- In-unit washers and dryers
- Modern gourmet kitchens with granite/quartz countertops and tile backsplashes
- High efficiency GE appliances
- Walk-in closets
- Private patios or balconies
- Mix of plank and carpet flooring in living areas
- Tile/porcelain flooring in bathrooms and large bathtubs
- Modern bath and kitchen fixtures
- Wired for internet, cable TV, and telephone

#### Location Map



## Cromwell Village Site Plan



### **4. Status of Construction**

The development team has been working on Cromwell Village for over four years. Currently, the project has received the appropriate zone change, site plan approval, wetland approval, sewer approval, and state permits including traffic. Over the past six months, the construction documents for the project have been completed, and a general contractor has been selected. Construction is projected to start in the late Summer.

### **5. Overview and Sponsor Details**

The Principals of Cromwell Village Associates, LLC consist of real estate professionals who have many decades of experience in the multi-family sector working with large regional and national apartment builders, and who have been responsible for the development, construction, and management of thousands of apartment homes and mixed-use communities for over 35 years. Michael Belfonti is the Founder and CEO of the Belfonti Companies, the parent company of Cromwell Village Associates, LLC. Belfonti Companies include a real estate development and investment company, a property management company, and several real estate holding companies that own properties throughout the United States and abroad. Belfonti Companies has owned and managed over two billion dollars of real estate assets. The current portfolio includes 3,000 residential apartment units and over 1 million square feet of other asset classes, including commercial and industrial properties. Neither the Applicant nor the Principals own any real property, personal property or motor vehicles in the Town of Cromwell.

Please let me know if you have any further questions. I may be reached at (203) 241-8766. We would be pleased to appear at any meeting the Town Council requires to present the application and to answer any questions.

Very truly yours,

Cromwell Village Associates, LLC

Mark Forlenza

**TOWN OF CROMWELL  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
7:00 PM TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2019  
ROOM 224 CROMWELL TOWN HALL, 41 WEST STREET  
MINUTES AND RECORD OF VOTES**

**Present:** Chairman Alice Kelly, Vice Chairman Michael Cannata, Jeremy Floryan, Nicholas Demetriades, Chris Cambareri, Ken Slade

**Absent:** Ken Rozich, Brian Dufresne, Paul Cordone, Mo Islam (alternate), John Keithan (alternate)

**Also Present:** Director of Planning and Development Stuart Popper, Development Compliance Officer Bruce Driska

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kelly at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call:** The presence of the above members was noted.
3. **Seating of Alternates:** None
4. **Approval of Agenda:**

Mr. Popper added the following under New Business Accept and Schedule New Applications:

- a. Application #19-17: Request for Special Permit to serve beer and wine at Giulia's Pizza Restaurant at 199 Shunpike Road. Albion Kallogjeri is the Applicant and the Owner.
- b. Application #19-18: Request for Site Plan Modification to relocate existing transfer station at 100 County Line Drive. Town of Cromwell is the Applicant.

Mr. Popper moved Agenda item *a. Application #19-14* under *9. New Business* to the #6 slot on the agenda in order to accommodate the presenter's schedule.

Michael Cannata made a motion to approve the amended agenda; Seconded by Jeremy Floryan. *All in favor; motion passed.*

5. **Public Comments:** None



**6. New Business:**

- a. Application #19-14: Request for Site Plan Modification to modify the approved Site Plan for the Starbucks at 136 Berlin Road. TNO Cromwell LLC is the Applicant and the Owner.

James Cassidy, P.E. with the firm of Hallisey, Pearson & Cassidy Engineering Associates, Inc., stated that the Applicant is proposing to modify the site plan by moving the building eighteen (18) feet to the west. He noted the restaurant layout and 1,900 square foot footprint remain the same. Mr. Cassidy explained that these changes were requested during Starbucks' corporate review of the previously approved plans.

He summarized the changes as follows:

Shifting the building 18 feet to the west will move it closer to the access drive. The ten (10) parking spaces along the west of the building have been relocated to the east side, and the eight (8) parking spaces to the south have been eliminated. The modified plan calls for Starbucks and Burger King to share twenty (20) parking spaces rather than the ten (10) spaces originally proposed. This shared parking arrangement will work as the two businesses are off-peak from one another. A handicapped space has been added. Nine (9) parking spaces are eliminated in the reconfiguration from the plaza overall. Total available spaces number 659, which exceeds the 468 spaces required.

The elimination of the parking areas to the west and south will result in increased safety as no one must cross the drive thru lane in order to enter the store. Sidewalks and crosswalks have been added at the north and south, improving pedestrian access.

Traffic will enter and exit the site from the shared accessway with Burger King, with a one-way entrance to the north and a one-way exit to the south. The drive thru circulation pattern has been reduced to the westerly half of the site.

A small fenced patio area with three (3) tables and chairs has been added to the south side, with access from the restaurant's interior.

The dumpster enclosure is being relocated and will be accessed by an interior drive aisle of the Cromwell Commons plaza. While the enclosure originally faced Berlin Road and the drive thru, it is now north facing, moved away from the parking area and from customers.

The building elevations being submitted are updated prototypes, and final plans will be provided once they are approved by Starbucks.

Chairman Kelly asked about the flow of traffic from Route 372. Mr. Cassidy answered that the majority of traffic will enter and exit from Sebeth Drive, which is the main access.

Mr Popper read aloud Town Engineer Jon Harriman's memo dated March 26, 2019 restating that the applicant had previously agreed to the condition of inspecting and

confirming the integrity of an existing metal pipe as well as complying with the requirements of the DEEP MS-4 permit. Mr. Popper encouraged the commission to include these conditions if approved.

Chairman Kelly asked Mr. Cassidy about the tree near the sewer, which is no longer on the plans.

Michael Cannata made a motion to approve the application subject to the conditions of Town Engineer Jon Harriman's memo of March 26, 2019; Seconded by Ken Slade. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

- 7. Town Planner Report:** Mr. Popper reviewed the TPC project under construction, and said that it is expected to be completed one month ahead of schedule.

Mr. Popper reported that work on the Arco site continues, and that the building permit plans for the Covenant Village project are being reviewed.

Mr. Popper is hopeful that available spaces for lease will fill up in Cromwell Commons with the addition of Starbucks.

Mr. Popper reported that the new Marriott Hotel on Berlin Road is expected to break ground soon.

**8. New Business Accept and Schedule New Applications:**

- a. Application #19-17: Request for Special Permit to serve beer and wine at Giulia's Pizza Restaurant at 199 Shunpike Road. Albion Kallogjeri is the Applicant and the Owner.

Michael Cannata made a motion to accept the application and to schedule it for public hearing on May 7, 2019; Seconded by Jeremy Floryan. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

- b. Application #19-18: Request for Site Plan Modification to Town of Cromwell Transfer Station at 100 County Line Drive. Town of Cromwell is the Applicant.

Mr. Popper explained that this is a minor modification requesting the relocation of the transfer station to accommodate the new town garage.

Michael Cannata made a motion to accept the application and to schedule it as a business item to be considered on April 16, 2019; Seconded by Ken Slade. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

- 9. Development Compliance Officer Report:** Bruce Driska referenced his report. There was a discussion on the progress at Shop Rite and its noticeable facade.

Jeremy Floryan asked what the opening date will be. Mr. Popper answered that Shop Rite is expected to open in the first week of May, depending on the interior finish, with Marshalls following one week later. Mr. Popper commented that there is still retail space available in the plaza, and that the opening of Shop Rite should attract other businesses.

Mr. Cannata asked about the difference between Shop Rite and Price Rite. Mr. Popper answered that they are sister companies. Price Rite is corporately owned, while Shop Rite stores are individually owned. The Garafalo family from Fairfield owns the Cromwell Shop Rite and six others.

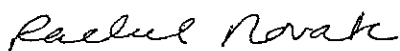
**10. Commissioner's Comments:** Nicholas Demetrius thanked the commission for sponsoring him and Chairman Kelly at a recent Land Use seminar hosted by the Connecticut Bar Association. Mr. Demetrius said that the meeting reminded him that Planning and Zoning rules and regulations are different, and said that it was a great use-of time.

**11. Approval of Minutes:**

- a. March 19, 2019: Michael Cannata made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Seconded by Nick Demetriades. Chairman Alice Kelly, Vice Chairman Michael Cannata, Jeremy Floryan, Nicholas Demetriades, Chris Cambareri were in favor. *Motion passed.* Ken Slade abstained.

**12. Adjourn:** Michael Cannata made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Jeremy Floryan. Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rachel Novak  
Recording Clerk

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
Apr 22, 2019 10:11A  
JOAN AHLQUIST  
TOWN CLERK  
CROMWELL, CT *JA*

**TOWN OF CROMWELL  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
7:00 PM TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2019  
ROOM 224 CROMWELL TOWN HALL, 41 WEST STREET  
MINUTES AND RECORD OF VOTES**

**Present:** Chairman Alice Kelly, Vice Chairman Michael Cannata, Nicholas Demetriades, Chris Cambareri, Paul Cordone, Ken Slade, Mo Islam (alternate), John Keithan (alternate)

**Absent:** Jeremy Floryan, Brian Dufresne, Ken Rozich

**Also Present:** Director of Planning and Development Stuart Popper, Development Compliance Officer Bruce Driska, Town Council Liaison James Demetriades

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kelly at 7:07 p.m.
2. **Roll Call:** The presence of the above members was noted.
3. **Seating of Alternates:** Michael Cannata made a motion to seat Mo Islam and John Keithan; Seconded by Ken Slade. *All were in favor; motion passed.*
4. **Approval of Agenda:** Mr. Popper added Application #18-21: Request to Modify Site Plan in regards to Required Height of Arborvitaes at the Dollar General at 539 Main Street under New Business as Item 9b.

Michael Cannata made a motion to approve the amended agenda; Seconded by Paul Cordone. *All in favor; motion passed.*

5. **Public Comments:** NONE
6. **Development Compliance Officer Report:** Mr. Driska asked if there were any questions or comments on his report. He reported on the following projects: that the building at 120 County Line Drive was almost ready for its Certificate of Occupancy and was finishing landscaping, that the TPC Clubhouse project was also in the process of finishing its landscaping, that Dollar General was undergoing its final course of paving and the trees and fence were installed, that the infrastructure and sewer line at Arbor Meadows was in, that he had toured the inside of Marshalls and ShopRite

recently with Mr. Popper, and that the Commerce Drive building was ready for its footings and foundation.

**7. Town Planner Report:** Mr. Popper said that ShopRite anticipated opening on May 12, with Marshalls following one week later.

**8. New Business Accept and Schedule New Applications:**

- a. Application #19-19: Request for Special Permit under Section 7.5.B.1 of the Zoning Regulations to permit the sale of beer in a retail grocery store exceeding 50,000 square feet at 51 Shunpike Road. Shop Rite of Cromwell is the Applicant and HBN-CSC LLC c/o HB Nitkin Group is the Owner.

Michael Cannata made a motion to accept Application #19-19 and to schedule it for a public hearing on May 9, 2019, seconded by John Keithan. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

- b. Application #17-56: Request to modify the Site Plan at 23 Shunpike Road to remove the existing self-serve bays and replace with more vacuums (modify approved vacuum type). Splash Car Wash is the Applicant and Vincent Vento is the Owner.

Michael Cannata made a motion to accept Application #17-56 and schedule it as a business item to be considered tonight; Seconded by Ken Slade. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

- c. Application #18-21: Request to Modify Site Plan in regards to Required Height of Arborvitaes at the Dollar General at 539 Main Street. All Green Hydroseed LLC is the Applicant.

Michael Cannata made a motion to accept Application #18-36 and to consider it tonight as a business item; Seconded by Chris Cambareri. *All were in favor; motion passed*

**9. New Business:**

- a. Application #19-18: Request for Site Plan Modification to relocate the transfer station at 100 County Line Drive. The Town of Cromwell is the Applicant and the Owner.

Jon Harriman, Town Engineer, spoke on behalf of the Town of Cromwell, regarding the site at 100 County Line Drive. He said that this was Phase One of a multiphase project, starting with the relocation of the transfer station. He began by showing the conceptual plan layout and reviewing the site orientation. He said

that the current transfer station, which is entirely portable and has minimal utility connections, will be moved about 350 feet southeast to make way for the combined town highway/CWPCA garage. Mr. Harriman said that he had already received approval from the Inland Wetlands Agency. He said that the new transfer station layout would be more consolidated, but would still flow in a counterclockwise manner. He said that the impervious coverage would be reduced by 12,000 square feet. He reviewed the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and said that an updated propriety oil-water separator would be implemented. Mr. Harriman said that the transfer station would remain open during construction and that the work would be done by town staff. Mr. Harriman said that all of the cans would be covered to be in compliance with current regulations.

Michael Cannata made a motion to approve Application #19-18, Request for Site Plan Modification to relocate the transfer station at 100 County Line Drive; Seconded by Chris Cambareri. *All in favor; motion passed.*

- b. Application #17-56: Request to modify the Site Plan at 23 Shunpike Road to remove the existing self-serve bays and replace with more vacuums (modify approved vacuum type). Splash Car Wash is the Applicant and Vincent Vento is the Owner.

Jason Frank, Splash CarWash, Greenwich, Connecticut, presented the application, saying that they had previously applied to remove the self-service bays and convert that space into additional vacuum space, but in preparation to do so, had learned that they cannot get the previously approved type of vacuums. They had found a similar model that was two feet shorter but had a more streamlined design and the same height clearance for vehicles. They planned to paint them black. He reviewed the cut sheets, saying that they also planned on providing a sunshade in spring and summer as well as a LED strip light. Mr. Frank said that the footings may change but that the overall location of the vacuums would be the same as previously proposed.

Michael Cannata made a motion to approve Application #17-56: Request to modify the Site Plan at 23 Shunpike Road to remove the existing self-serve bays and replace with more vacuums (modify approved vacuum type), with said vacuums to be painted black in color; Seconded by John Keithan. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

- c. Application #18-21: Request to Modify Site Plan in regards to Required Height of Arborvitaes at the Dollar General at 539 Main Street. All Green Hydroseed LLC is the Applicant.

Mr. Popper said that the site plan required 6 foot tall arborvitae to be planted, but 5 foot shrubs were planted instead and the applicant was asking permission to leave the plantings as is.

Randy Olmstead, All Green Hydroseed LLC, Plymouth, Connecticut, said he was having a difficult time sourcing taller shrubs as this time of year is when they are at their most vulnerable stage. The best they could do was 5 feet. He had tried five different sources. He said that he thought it was best to plant 5 foot shrubs and to let them grow, and offered an aggressive fertilization program to get them to 6 feet as quickly as possible, which he said would be within the season. He did not want to berm them to make them higher as he was concerned about them shedding water. He said that he only had two to two and a half weeks notice to source the plants. He said that one other tree was reduced in size from a 4-inch caliber to a 3-inch, but he had upgraded other trees to make up for it. He said that there were a total of 60 trees and 40 arborvitae.

Mr. Driska asked about his capacity to provide a soaker hose if necessary and Mr. Olmstead said it could be added, but that he would schedule the fertilizer program accordingly to avoid any burning.

Michael Cannata made a motion to approve Application #18-36: Request to Modify Site Plan in regards to Required Height of Arborvitae at the Dollar General at 539 Main Street, with the condition that a soaker hose be used, if necessary, along with an aggressive fertilizer program, to be monitored by the Town Zoning Enforcement Officer; Seconded by John Keithan. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

## **10. Public Hearing:**

- a. Application #19-13: Request for Special Permit under Section 2.2.C.4. of the Zoning Regulations to allow for a place of worship at 573 Main Street. Omar Islamic Center is the Applicant and the Knights of Columbus Building Association is the Owner.

Mr. Popper read the legal notice.

Michael Cannata made a motion to open the public hearing; Seconded by Paul Cordone. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

Refai Arefin, Esq., said that this was an application for a Special Permit to allow for the establishment of a place of worship in a residential zone (R-15). This is not site plan approval, but they are submitting a site plan because one is not on file. Attorney Arefin said that the

applicant was a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that wished to relocate from its temporary space in Middletown to Cromwell because most of its congregation was from Cromwell.

He said that the current use of the building is as a Knights of Columbus assembly hall and reviewed its location on Route 99 and Oakwood Manor. He said that the current setup was ideal for their needs for a prayer space and assembly hall, and that the two areas within the building would not be used simultaneously. He said that the space is currently used for meetings and rented out for church services, Sunday School, and to outside groups for parties. He said that the applicant's use would not be a real change from its current use, except that there would be no weekend parties or outside groups using the space.

Attorney Arefin showed an aerial photograph of its location and the surrounding residences and businesses. He said that the use as a place of worship fits in with the area as it is close to the Local Business Zone and because of the current mix of residential and business uses. He said that the current use of the building causes issues in the neighborhood due to noise, alcohol use, and parking, especially along Oakwood Manor. He said that the applicant had obtained a 99-year lease from the adjacent property owner for parking and that because they would have between 24 and 25 spaces, there shouldn't be a need to park along Oakwood Manor. He said that there would not be alcohol consumption.

Attorney Arefin said that the congregation consisted of about 20-25 families and there was limited expansion potential as they were close to the Islamic Association of Greater Hartford (the Berlin Mosque). This mosque would only draw people who already live in the Cromwell-Middletown area. He described their planned schedule of activities and expected attendance. He said that the main service was midday on Friday.

Attorney Arefin reviewed how the application meets each of the Special Permit criteria, saying that a place of worship fits in the surrounding mixed uses and that it is the best use of the existing building. He said that they planned some landscaping and exterior improvements, that there would not be an adverse impact on traffic, that public utilities were available, that there would be no environmental impact, and that this use had long term viability. He submitted information regarding how proximity to a mosque helps improve resale values of nearby homes. He said that there were no changes to the site plan and that the application complies with all



regulations. He said that the proposed use as a place of worship is more in harmony with the neighborhood than a rental hall for parties.

He said that this would be a traditional mosque, with Friday afternoon's service drawing about 60 people and taking place about 1 p.m., 5 daily prayers drawing small crowds of 5 to 10 people throughout the day, and then classes and social gatherings, such as monthly Saturday family get togethers, which might draw 40 to 60 people. Per Section 5.2.D.1, the parking allotment was one space for every 5 people as families tend to arrive in groups. He read the schedule of activities and their anticipated timing into the record. He said that all activities were linked to the prayer service so there was no need for anything to go late into the evening.

The application was opened to Commission comments.

Chris Cambareri asked about the impact of the parking lease should it expire or be rescinded. Attorney Arefin said that it was a contract that was meant to be enforced, that the mosque wouldn't default as there was too much at stake and that it did not contain a viable rescission clause for the property owner. Mr. Popper said that he had reviewed the lease and said that the language is adequate.

Mr. Popper said that the building had been on the market for a long time and that there had been many prospective tenants and uses, such as a liquor store, dance studio, and a medical and dental office, and that this applicant had gotten the furthest in its lease and sale negotiations. He said that parking was always the issue. Mr. Popper said that the use as a meeting hall is non-conforming and any use other than as a meeting hall needed a change of use permit. He said that places of worship are allowed in all residential zones via a Special Permit.

Chris Cambareri asked about widening the driveway or making it one way in and one way out. Mr. Popper said that there wasn't room and it had always been used as is. He said that the Police Chief had no comments after reviewing the plans and did not suggest additional traffic controls. Attorney Arefin said that the applicant intended to change the landscaping to address line of sight issues. Paul Cordone asked if the hall would be rented out to others and Attorney Arefin said no. He said it would be used for religious ceremonies such as weddings and births. John Keithan asked if the lease was for the house as well and was told that it was just for the parking area. Chairman Kelly asked what would happen if the adjacent house was sold and was told that the sale would be subject to the lease. The attorney clarified that there may be a small reception following a

religious ceremony, where refreshments are served, but they would not be receptions in which invitations were sent out.

Michael Cannata asked about conditioning the application on there being no street parking and Mr. Popper said that the only way to do so would be to prohibit street parking for everyone, including those living in the neighborhood. Mr. Popper said that they could limit the capacity in general to the number of parking spaces, with the understanding that occasional overflow to the street might occur. He said that the proposed intensity would still be lessened than exists today. He said that the applicant's proposed seating arrangement met the capacity limits. He said that any street parking that occurred would be on Oakwood Manor, not on Route 99.

Attorney Arefin said that the parking problems could be solved by accepting this application as the property is currently over utilized by people with no real relationship to the community. He said that the applicant would emphasize community relations and focus on ensuring safe, on-site parking by its congregation. Michael Cannata asked if the applicant was willing to self-impose the ban on street parking. Attorney Arefin said that they would do their best, but there was no guarantee that someone would not park on the street at some point in the future.

Nick Demetriades arrived at 8:23 p.m.

Michael Cannata asked the applicant to be diligent in seeing that all 24 spaces were used first and to self-police to prevent street parking. The applicant offered to provide a parking attendant during Friday services. Michael Cannata also suggested that they reach out to other commercial properties in the area to see if they could use their parking lots as overflow. Attorney Arefin said that those were reasonable options that they could undertake.

Michael Cannata asked how the request for a Waiver of the A-2 Site Plan would be handled and Mr. Popper said that it was a separate item for approval, to be voted on before the Special Permit was approved. If granted, the Special Permit, Mylar, and Lease would all be recorded on the land records.

The hearing was opened to public comment.

Frank Czech, 25 Oakwood Manor, noted the parking issues over time and said that he doesn't believe that the members will stick to just using the 24 spaces. He said he was concerned about what would

happen in the next 5 to 10 years when the mosque grows, as well as being concerned about parking issues during larger celebrations.

Eileen Pendl, 18 Oakwood Manor, said that the congregation members will park where they want and there would be nothing that could be done once that happens. She noted the three exits/entrances onto Main Street. She was concerned about attracting people from Rocky Hill and other towns and said that there was no guarantee that the congregation wouldn't grow. She said that there will be more traffic in and out with the proposed use than currently exists.

Bill Moriarty, 9 Oakwood Manor, noted ongoing issues with parking and asked how the nearby residence had become a commercial parking lot without Planning and Zoning approval. He noted the narrow street and said he was concerned about there being enough access for emergency vehicles.

Geri Gasior, 15 Oakwood Manor, also noted the parking issues, saying that often cars are parked down both sides of Oakwood Manor and Whitney Court. She was worried about limiting emergency access and the possible growth of the congregation.

Cheryl Chadsey, 26 Oakwood Manor, said that there were bus stops on Main Street. She was concerned about increased parking and traffic impacting the safety of the school buses and children.

Tom McNeff, 8 Woodlawn Drive, echoed the concerns over parking and the safety of motorists trying to pull out onto Main Street. He asked about the proposed signage.

Mertie Terry, 589 Main Street, commended the applicant for wanting to join the community. She asked how many handicap spaces there would be and how that would impact the amount of parking overall. The applicant said that there would be 2 handicap spaces and he did not anticipate an impact, as handicapped people have families as well.

Alan Schumann, 505 Main Street, noted that the building was owned by the 573 Building Associates, Inc. Mr. Popper said that the ownership information was as listed with the Cromwell Tax Assessor's Office.

Jeff Cavaliere, 6 Whitney Court, agreed with the previous comments. He said that there was currently overflow parking on both sides of the streets. He asked what the applicant would do if their congregation grew beyond the building's capacity.

Nancy Berryman, 20 Oakwood Manor, echoed the previous comments, noting concerns over parking, access to Main Street, impact on house values, and potential growth of the congregation.

Nancy McCorkle, 5 Whitney Court, said that this location is just south of the new Dollar General and was concerned about the amount of traffic and past accidents between this area and the Post Office/Citgo area.

Richard Loza, 12 Oakwood Manor, asked who had conducted the survey of the back parking lot as he had never seen it utilized as such until just a few weeks ago. Mr. Popper said that James Cassidy, P.E., had prepared the survey.

Mary Ellen Marino, 11 Chatham Place, said she was concerned about parking, noting vehicles having blocked the sidewalks in the past and impacting pedestrian safety.

James Demetriades, 272 Skyview Drive, read a letter of support from Holly Jacobs of 1214 Cromwell Hills Drive. She welcomed the applicant to Cromwell and asked that the Commission make a decision rooted in reason and not Islamaphobia.

Timothy Griffin, 95 Willowbrook Road, said he did not think that they would find alternate parking at the nearby business, such as the liquor store, citing conflicting hours, and safety concerns about crossing Main Street.

Eileen Rice, 1 Whitney Court, asked how the building could be expanded in the future if the congregation was to grow.

Joanne Sweeney, 18 High Ridge Road, said she had difficulty exiting onto Main Street when people parked on both sides of the road and cautioned the Commission to think about the impact of their decision.

After all public comments were received, the hearing was again opened to Commissioner comments. Ken Slade asked about the Fire Chief's review. Mr. Popper said that the Fire Chief had no comment except in regards to the calculation of capacity. Per the Fire Marshall, based on area, the capacity was 144. The applicant had agreed to 120 people per the amount of parking. Mr. Popper said that any work done inside the building would be subject to inspection by both the Building Department and the Fire Marshal. He noted that the Police Chief had no comment on the application.

Mr. Driska said that the current signage is non-conforming but grandfathered in. Absent a variance, the applicant is allowed a "like for like" sign in terms of area and location. He said signs aren't allowed in a residential zone.

Chris Cambareri asked for clarification regarding the property survey. Mr. Popper said that the Knights of Columbus had used that parking area in the past and that shared parking for churches was permitted in residential zones.

Alan Schumann, 505 Main Street, said that members of the Knights of Columbus had parked there in the past, but the area was not really well known to the public. Other KOC members in the audience indicated that they had parked in that lot in the past.

Ken Slade left the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Michael Cannata asked about capacity. Mr. Popper said that the capacity of the entire building was 171 and 115 in the main assembly area, per the Fire Marshall. Per the applicant, they had agreed to limit capacity to be based on the amount of parking spaces. Michael Cannata asked the applicant what they would do once they grow out of the building.

Attorney Arefin said that the provided numbers were those projected on growth. He said that their current attendance levels for Friday prayers was about 40 to 45 people. He said that there are 49 mosques in Connecticut and because of that tremendous growth, the net effect was declined attendance at any one mosque. He said that people go where it is convenient. He did not foresee capacity issues or huge growth potential. The intent is for it to be a small mosque for people who live in the area.

Michael Cannata asked the applicant to provide documentation as to whether the 24 parking stalls meet the specific geometry requirements as set forth on Page 102 of the Zoning Regulations. Mr. Popper said that he would ask both James Cassidy and Jon Harriman, the Town Engineer, to review the parking stall requirements.

Nick Demetriades asked if anyone will be staying overnight at the mosque and Mr. Popper said no.

Chris Cambareri asked if the building was up to code. Attorney Arefin said that there was a handicapped ramp and bathroom, but he did not know the details. He said that if anything needed to be made accessible, it would be done.

Ahmed Bedir President of the Omar Islamic Center, said that he had spoken with the Building Department regarding possible updates and that they are willing to comply with any requirements.

Michael Cannata made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next regular meeting on Thursday, May 9, 2019; Seconded by Paul Cordone.

*All in favor, motion passed.*

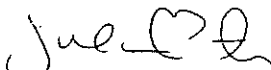
**11. Commissioner's Comments:** Nick Demetriades apologized to the Commission for being late to tonight's meeting.

**12. Approval of Minutes:**

a. April 2, 2019: No action taken

**13. Adjourn:** Michael Cannata made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Paul Cordone. Meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie C. Petrella  
Recording Clerk

**TOWN OF CROMWELL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**7:00 PM WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2019  
ROOM 222 CROMWELL TOWN HALL 41 WEST STREET  
MINUTES AND RECORD OF VOTES**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
APR 29 2019 08:43A  
JOAN AHLQUIST  
TOWN CLERK  
CROMWELL, CT



**Present:** Chairman Richard Nobile, Joseph Fazekas, Jay Polke, Marilyn Teitelbaum

**Absent:** Robert Jahn, Mo Islam (alternate)

**Also Present:** Director of Planning and Development Stuart Popper, Town Council Liaison Al Waters

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nobile at 7:20 p.m.

**2. Roll Call/ Seating of Alternates**

The presence of the above members was noted.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Joseph Fazekas made a motion to approve the agenda as written; Seconded by Jay Polke. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

**4. Public Comments: None**

**5. Director of Planning and Development and Compliance Officer Reports:**

Mr. Popper presented and explained a map of the Cromwell Landing. He discussed reusing existing brownstone to rebuild the seawall, and noted that everything will be built from the land side, rather than the water. Expanding the parking area is in the current plan. After the STEEP grant is spent, the remainder of the work will go out for bid.

Mr. Popper read his EDC Report for April 2019. Richard Nobile asked about Country Squire Drive; Mr. Popper responded that the project is awaiting the developer's engineer. There was a discussion between Mr. Nobile and Mr. Popper wherein Mr. Popper clarified his report.

Mr. Nobile asked about the following: the use of the vacant property in the downtown area left by the town garage, a map of what land will be available for development once the town garage is gone, how many acres would be incorporated, and whether other properties be included. Mr. Popper advised that the the downtown property is separated

by the steel building property. Mr. Popper will inquire as to the status of the town garage and plans for the occupation of future buildings.

There was a discussion on the new bar on Wall Street, and that the building is now owned by town residents.

**6. New Business: None**

There was a discussion on the TPC renovations. Mr. Polke commented on the grand renovations and the building's great views of the golf course.

**7. Chairman's Comments/Commissioner's Comments: None**

**8. Communications: See attached P&Z Minutes.**

**9. Approval of Minutes:**

- a. March 20, 2019: Joseph Fazekas made a motion to approve the minutes;  
Seconded by Jay Polke. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

**10. Good & Welfare: None**

**11. Adjourn:** Marilyn Teitelbaum made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Jay Polke. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rachel Novak  
Recording Clerk