

**TOWN PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
July 24, 2014**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Barry Berson called the regular meeting of the Town Plan & Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 P. M. in the Main Meeting Room at Bloomfield Town Hall. The following members were also present: Abraham Ford, Fannie Gabriel, Mark Jacobs, Alfred LeFebvre, Byron Lester, Elene Needelman, Nicholas Panke, and Barbara Reid. Daniel Mara was absent. Also present were Thomas Hooper, Director of Planning; Lisa Gray, Recording Secretary; and other interested parties.

II. APPROVAL OF JUNE 26, 2014 MINUTES

Commissioner Panke moved to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2014 meeting, as presented. Commissioner Gabriel seconded the motion, and it unanimously carried.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Application of Magda Ramos for a Special Permit to allow soil disturbance on more than 10,000 square feet (level ground, hydroseed, vegetable garden, and removal of trees/stumps) at 292 Tunxis Avenue, R-20 Zone.**

Chairman Berson stated that notices were not sent by the applicant to this property's abutting owners, so the hearing cannot be held.

Commissioner Panke moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Lester seconded the motion, and it unanimously carried.

- B. Application of TO Design, LLC, for a Special Permit to allow video production and storage trailers at 26 Tobey Road, I-1 Zone.**

Mr. James LeBlanc explained that he is seeking two Special Permits, one to allow video production and one to allow storage of trailers.

Mr. Dana Wright, Owner, explained that he is seeking to start a business which will house one of the largest "green screens" east of the Mississippi for the purpose of producing films and commercials. He further explained that he intends to use the original footprint of the existing building, but demolish half the building and reconstruct an addition that will be 50 feet high by 200 feet wide.

Mr. LeBlanc reviewed each staff comment from the memo to the commission dated July 15, 2014. His only issue was with item #1 and he asked that the owner be allowed to wait before planting any buffer until the owner “has some experience with the site” and exactly where the trailers will be located.

Mr. Hooper noted that this has been an under-utilized and deteriorating site for many years, and recommended moving forward with this project.

Ms. Sandra Berenstain, real estate agent representing the tenant at 30 Tobey Road, asked if there will be any noise problem with the project. Mr. Wright replied that the facility will be completely sound-proofed.

Commissioner LeFebvre asked how many staff the business will employ. Mr. Wright responded that there will initially be seven employees, but the staff number will vary with each project.

Commissioner Ford asked what type of trailers will be used. Mr. Wright said the trailers will be similar to RVs and that there will be no permanent trailer storage.

Commissioner Ford also asked what type of security will be on the property. Mr. Wright replied that a security guard will be employed.

Commissioner Panke asked what type of security lighting will be used. Mr. Wright responded that timer lighting is proposed, but he is willing to work with town staff if they feel other lighting would be appropriate.

Commissioner Jacobs moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Needelman seconded the motion, and it unanimously carried.

Commissioner LeFebvre moved to approve the application of TO Design, LLC, for a Special Permit to allow video production and storage trailers at 26 Tobey Road, I-1 Zone, to include all staff comments from the memorandum dated July 15, 2014, and parking as proposed. Commissioner Ford seconded the motion, and it unanimously carried.

C. Application of Paul Butler for a Zone Change from BCD to SDD at 692, 694, 696, 698, 700, and 713 Bloomfield Avenue, and 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, and 31 Jerome Avenue.

Mr. Paul Butler explained that he is seeking approval of a Master Plan for a new SDD Zone encompassing three sites at these addresses.

Attorney Dwight Merriam explained that the applicant is seeking to establish and map an SDD Zone to include each of these properties.

Mr. Tony Amenta, architect, displayed architectural plans and artist renderings depicting three developments housing 232, 129, and 46 dwelling units, respectively, and 3,650 square feet of commercial space.

Mr. John Milone, engineer, detailed the stormwater and drainage systems.

Mr. David Sullivan, traffic engineer, presented the results of the traffic study and his review of the parking requirements.

Attorney Merriam noted that this development meets all six standards required in the SDD regulation.

Mr. Hooper stated that he has received input from the Chief of Police and he has given his approval as he sees no negative traffic impact. He also stated that the Town Engineer is satisfied with the project thus far and the Fire Marshal has submitted his comments. Furthermore, Metropolitan Water District has said there is adequate water and sewer service for the sites, and the Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce Past President has given his support. Keith Grimaldi, owner at 18 Jerome Avenue, and the owner of Republic have submitted letters of approval of the

project. Mr. Hooper encouraged the commission's approval of this proposal.

Mrs. Althea Vanderpool, 1 Muster Trail, asked who will live in the new rental units and why it is proposed to be five stories high. Chairman Berson replied that renting the units is the concern of the developer, not this commission, and that the proposed height meets the limits outlined in the regulation.

Mr. Chris Annella, 28 Gabb Road, asked what the renter demographic will be. Chairman Berson responded that the demographic is not for this commission to determine. Mr. Hooper stated that it is his understanding that the proposed units will be market-rate 1- and 2-bedrooms.

Mr. Jordan Pike, 12 Jerome Avenue, asked if consideration has been given to the impact of these additional 407 living units on future education resources in the town. Mr. Butler replied that there will be a limited number of two-bedroom units, so he doesn't expect a great number of families. He also stated that the expected declining school enrollment in coming years should allow for these families to be easily supported.

Mr. Tom Farnham, 717 Bloomfield Avenue, stated that his home will be the only remaining single family residence in town center if this project is approved, and expressed his opinion that the artist renderings preserve the architectural character of the town and that the project will encourage pedestrian traffic and create a village atmosphere. He further stated that this project deserves to go forward.

Mr. Chris Annella, 28 Gabb Road, disagreed with Mr. Farnham's comments and expressed his opinion that this project will irrevocably change the character of the town.

Ms. Rose Hill Barrios, 17 Jerome Avenue, stated that traffic has gotten worse on Jerome Avenue since the installation of the cul de sac and near-accidents happen frequently.

Mr. Richard Ott, 74 Tunxis Avenue, and Mr. Richard Vanderpool, 1 Musket Trail, spoke in opposition to the project.

Mr. Hector Clone, 6 Jerome Avenue, agreed that there are traffic concerns, but spoke in favor of the project as a "stepping stone" to a better community.

Mr. Jordan Pike, 12 Jerome Avenue, requested that the size be scaled back to two stories.

Mr. David Metzger, 22 Jerome Avenue, stated that the town center needs to be revitalized and this is the first step.

Mr. Joshua Pike, 12 Jerome Avenue, spoke in favor of the project.

Commissioner Needelman commented that the smaller rental units are a trend in real estate that appeal to young professionals, small families, active seniors, and others.

Commissioner Lester noted that this project meets the regulation requirements so it would be difficult to deny the application, and stated that this is a "jumpstart" to town center improvements.

Commissioner Panke moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Gabriel seconded the motion, and it unanimously carried.

Commissioner Panke moved to approve the application of Paul Butler for a Zone Change from BCD to SDD at 692, 694, 696, 698, 700, and 713 Bloomfield Avenue, and 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, and 31 Jerome Avenue, to include all staff comments from the memorandum dated July 18, 2014. Commissioner Gabriel seconded the motion, and it unanimously carried.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lester moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 P. M. Commissioner Panke seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Byron Lester, Secretary