

TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD, CT
TOWN PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY MARCH 27, 2025 – 7:00PM
ZOOM MEETING PLATFORM AND
IN- PERSON MEETING – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DRAFT

There was a meeting for the Town of Bloomfield’s Town Plan & Zoning Commission held on March 27, 2025 at 7:00pm in a hybrid meeting style. The in-person location was Bloomfield Town Hall – Council Chambers, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT and the virtual location was via Zoom.

1. Call to Order

Chair Lester called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

2. Roll Call

Present were: *in-person*: Chair Byron Lester, Stephen Millette, Renae James, Kevin Gough, Jennifer Marshall Nealy (arrived at 7:02 pm), Dwight Bolton (arrived at 7:05pm) and Ola Aina (via Zoom).

Absent were: Leon Peters and Kathleen Blint

A quorum was established with 7 members present.

Also present was Mr. Jonathan Colman, Director of Building and Land Use; and Ms. Lynda Laureano, Assistant Director of Building and Land Use.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to table the February 27, 2025 meeting minutes made by Commissioner Gough; seconded by Commissioner Millette and approved unanimously.

4. Public Hearings

- a. 31 Tobey Road, Unit 17-19: Special Permit Use Request per Section 4.3.C.4.d – Any nonresidential use, not otherwise prohibited, which takes place within the confines of an enclosed building where no goods, equipment, or materials are stored outside, to allow an Axe Throwing and Smash Room Establishment, in the I-1 zone. Applicant: Marcus Furze
Property Owner: Tobey Road LLC

The legal notice was read into the record. Applicant Marcus Furze was present via Zoom for discussion. The plan is to use these units as a social and entertainment venue for public use. Mr. Furze confirmed that site plans were submitted for review. This is allowed in the zone through a special permit. Staff’s primary concern is waste disposal. A specific waste disposal system needs to be put in place to distinguish between hazardous waste and non-hazardous waste. The public hearing was opened for public comment. No one spoke in person or on Zoom regarding this application. Commissioner Millette requested clarification surrounding electronic recycling. Commissioner James confirmed the hours of operation and asked clarification surrounding paint parties. Mr. Furze does not plan on serving hot food and a separate special permit would be required should Mr. Furze want to offer alcohol. The ultimate capacity will be confirmed by the Fire Marshall. Commissioner Gough asked for further clarification surrounding electronic waste. He also asked about staffing requirements. There will be approximately 4 to 6 employees at any given time. He asked Mr. Colman if staff found any general guidelines or regulations for control, which they did review West Hartford’s regulations. Commissioner Marshall Nealy asked about age requirements for activities such as axe throwing. He also asked about soundproofing and

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confirmed that the new use will not make any more noise than the previous use. Commissioner Aina asked about safety protocols and protective gear. Chair Lester asked if Mr. Furze reviewed the conditions drafted by staff, which he hadn't. He confirmed sessions will be approximately 20 minutes long, then the space will be cleaned and then prepared for the next participant. Materials to be smashed will be received from a production center, Goodwill and other similar secondhand stores. Employees would be trained to look for signs of inebriation should any participant be intoxicated.

The public hearing was opened for public comment. Kelly Mann, 1 Adams Road, asked how the rooms would be cleaned. The rooms will be cleaned with a vacuum and broom. There will be no water waste.

Commissioner Marshall Nealy expressed concern about potential future alcohol consumption in such a facility that is hosting to all ages. Commissioner Gough recommended adding a site-specific condition prohibiting alcohol and other intoxicants. He also recommended a condition related to safety training requirements for staff. He would also like to see some type of age restriction in place. Commissioner James expressed excitement about such a business coming to Bloomfield. She noted that this industrial park has had several new uses and asked staff if parking has been addressed.

Motion to close the public hearing made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Gough and approved unanimously.

Commissioner James confirmed that Commissioner Gough's recommendations will be added as special conditions.

Motion to approve 31 Tobey Road, Unit 17-19: Special Permit Use to allow an axe throwing and smash room establishment under Section 4.3.C.4.d – Any nonresidential use, not otherwise prohibited, which takes place within the confines of an enclosed building where no goods, equipment, or materials are stored outside at 31 Tobey Road, Unit 17-19 with the following conditions as listed in memo and addendum dated March 21, 2025 with additions made by members of the commission on March 27, 2025 and subject to the hours presented by the applicant this evening; seconded by Commissioner Bolton and approved unanimously.

- b. 2 Barnard Lane, Suite 101: Special Permit Use and Revised Site Plan per Sections 4.1.D.4.v and 9.4.B to allow a private school in the BCD district Applicant: Sasha Zatyryka Property Owner: Specialty Acquisitions No. 1, LLC

Applicant Sasha Zatyryka was present for discussion. Ahsas School would be a non-traditional independent school for Grades 6 through 8 beginning in Fall 2025. It is the goal to add an additional grade each year and ultimately serve up to 12th grade by 2029. Their mission statement was shared. Hours of operation were reviewed, with staff working from 8:00am to 4:30pm and students on campus from 9:00 to 4:00pm. Ms. Zatyryka confirmed that this is an allowed use per the zoning regulations. She believes Bloomfield is the perfect fit for a nontraditional school. The walkability will broaden student's learning opportunities and would provide potential for partnerships that will enhance student's learning. The existing use for the property is office space. The fire marshal has determined a maximum occupancy of 80 for this use. No significant interior or exterior changes are anticipated. The property owner is adding an ADA ramp at the main entrance. Ms. Zatyryka has hired Crosskey Architects to complete a code

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analysis to determine the code requirements for a second egress as well as any other required changes. The proposed site plan was reviewed. Traffic management plan was reviewed.

Commissioner Marshall Nealy asked about sports. Ms. Zatyryka explained that she will be working with other independent schools to collaborate on sports options. She also asked about security and other safety measures. Ms. Zatyryka has consulted with the Department of Emergency Management to develop a safety plan. The school year will be September through early June. Commissioner Gough asked about interaction with the other tenants and shared spaces. There are five employees presently downstairs. He also asked what the expected enrollment of Bloomfield students was. Further clarification was provided about what non-traditional schools are. Ms. Zatyryka will be seeking accreditation through the New England Association for Schools and Colleges. Recess will be provided at Filley Park, and the outdoor grassy area will be utilized for structured activities. Commissioner James asked about controlled access and other security measures. Commissioner Aina asked about STEM educational concepts being taught at this type of school. There may be a need for an additional ADA-compliant restroom, but Ms. Zatyryka is waiting on the code analysis before moving forward. Chair Lester asked about the enrollment process and requirements surrounding certified teachers. Commissioner Gough asked about graduation requirements. A mastery transcript will be provided once students complete 12th grade, which can be used during the college admissions process. Students will be responsible for bringing their own lunches.

The public hearing was opened for public comment. Mark Cassler, 8 Fox Chase Road, spoke in support of this proposal. He is the owner of the property. He thinks that creativity needs to be employed to address the amount of empty office space in Bloomfield and across the state. He thinks that this is a good way to reinvigorate downtown Bloomfield.

Crystal Jones, 8 White Birch Circle, spoke in support of this proposal. She has been seeking an independent school in Bloomfield. Her daughter has gone to school with Ms. Zatyryka's children and trusts in her vision. She has friends with children that live in Bloomfield who are seeking alternatives to parochial and public schools, and this will be a great addition to town.

Commissioners shared their comments related to this application. Commissioner Marshall Nealy spoke about dual enrollment for junior and senior students. The commissioners thanked Ms. Zatyryka for bringing her business to Bloomfield. Ms. Zatyryka shared closing remarks and thanked the commissioners for their consideration.

Motion to close the public hearing made by Commissioner Bolton; seconded by Commissioner James and approved unanimously.

Motion to approve a special permit use and revised site plan for a private school per 4.1.D.4.v of the zoning regulations at 2 Barnard Lane, Suite 101 with the following conditions:

1. The Occupancy Load and number of students shall be determined by the Fire Marshal based on the use and floor plan provided; and
2. No overnight parking or outdoor storage of vehicles or materials shall be permitted; and
3. The required number of spaces based on the current and proposed uses on site is 65 spaces, where 68 is provided; and

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4. The applicant shall submit a Building Permit for a Change of Use as required for a Certificate of Occupancy; and
5. The Applicant shall ensure that all other appropriate permits are applied for and approved by all required agencies for a School Use; and
6. The applicant must obtain a Sign Permit for any outdoor sign prior to installation; and
7. By acceptance of this permit and conditions, the applicant and owner acknowledge the right of Town staff to periodically enter upon the subject property for the purpose of determining compliance with the terms of this approval.

made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Marshall Nealy and approved unanimously.

- c. (To Be Tabled to April 24, 2025) 1301 Blue Hills Avenue: Special Permit Use and Revised Site Plan** per Sections 4.4.C.4.bb and 6.2.H for a Commercial Kitchen within a convenience store, and a 30% parking reduction in the I-2 district. Applicant: Ameen B. Lee, Property Owner Khalid, LLC

Motion to continue the public hearing for 1301 Blue Hills Avenue to April 24, 2025 made by Commissioner Marshall Nealy; seconded by Commissioner Bolton and approved unanimously.

5. Old Business

- a.** POCD continued review of the Final Draft

Mr. Colman reviewed the recommendations made by the commissioners at the last meeting with consultants at Goman and York, with an emphasis on the future land use map. The maps will be done by Town IT staff. They estimate it will take about 10 days to draft such a map. Goman and York will work on the text amendments. The commissioners agreed that this will be reviewed at the April meeting.

- b.** Inclusionary Zoning continued discussion

Town staff met with Goman and York and prepared a draft of proposed regulations for inclusionary zoning. Many of the commissioners' comments were addressed within the draft. The sliding scale for qualifications was excluded per Goman and York's suggestions. It is their opinion that the financial feasibility for both developments for sale and rental developments is challenged once you get below 80% AMI. 10% has been included, along with a provision that allows the commission to modify bulk and parking regulations if additional affordable units are provided. Guidelines have not been provided as they can vary site to site. Commissioner Millette asked to add language regarding rounding up or down when calculating the AMI. Mr. Colman confirmed that the policies and procedures for the Housing Trust Fund are being developed. The intent is to assist with affordability and workforce housing. Commissioner Millette also asked about the pricing included on the deed restrictions. Commissioner James asked about commercial permit fees. Commissioner Gough asked for clarification surrounding a definition for the housing affordability plan. This is to be prepared by the applicant, not the Town of Bloomfield. He confirmed the formal adoption procedure with Mr. Colman. Commissioner Bolton expressed concern surrounding commercial linkage fees. Mr. Colman confirmed that these fees do not apply to residential homeowners. The percentage of affordable units went up last year to 11.3%. The base is the 2020 census

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and that will not change until 2030. Further discussion ensued amongst the commissioners surrounding commercial linkage fees. Commissioner Gough shared editing recommendations.

6. New Business

- a. 95 Granby Street – Request for an Extension to the July 23, 2025 Revised Site Plan Approval for a Retail and Manufacturing Establishment**

Ms. Laureano explained that the applicant requested a 5-year extension on March 9, 2025. This site has been the subject of zoning enforcement undertaking. It was found that their site plan approved in 2020 stated that all site improvements must be completed by July 23, 2025. The applicant has not begun any of the site improvements, citing financial issues. There were other zoning enforcements surrounding outdoor storage. The applicant is working with staff to come into compliance. Staff recommended a one-year extension to give the applicant more time to seek the proper permits required and make necessary site improvements. Commissioner Gough asked if the applicant is allowed to request additional extensions should this be granted. Mr. Colman noted that it is within the Commission's discretion. The applicant will need to file a new site plan application should this extension lapse.

Motion to grant the applicant for 95 Granby Street – Revised Site Plan Approval for a Retail and Manufacturing Establishment a one-year extension until July 23, 2026 made by Commissioner Bolton; seconded by Commissioner James and approved unanimously.

- b. Appointment of a new Commission Secretary**

Motion to nominate Renae James for the position of TPZ Commission Secretary made by Chair Lester; seconded by Commissioner Bolton and approved unanimously.

- c. Town Center Plan Referral from TCEDC**

In accordance with state statutes, the Town Center Economic Development Commission has prepared the Town Center Master Plan. The commissioners can make comments at the public hearing to be held in April. Further statutory requirements were reviewed by Mr. Colman. The commissioners decided against having Goman and York prepare a presentation at the next meeting, but it will be on the agenda for action.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner James, seconded by Commissioner Marshall Nealy and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.