

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

The Town of Bloomfield’s Town Plan & Zoning Commission held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, February 27, 2025, scheduled for 7:00 p.m., with Commissioners on a Zoom platform, and some Commissioners were in person in the Council Chambers.

1. Call to Order

Chair Lester called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. Roll Call

Present was Byron Lester, Dwight Bolton, Leon Peters, Stephen Millette, Jennifer Marshall-Nealy, Kevin Gough, Renae James, Ola Aina (arrived at 8:03pm) and Katie Blint (via Zoom).

A quorum was established with 9 commissioners present.

Also present were Mr. Jonathan Colman, Director of Building and Land Use; Ms. Lynda Laureano, Assistant Director of Building and Land Use; and Ms. Joyce Pickett, Recording Secretary.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. January 16, 2025

Commissioner Gough made a motion to approve the January 16, 2025 meeting minutes with corrections; seconded by Commissioner Bolton. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Colman acknowledged Ms. Pickett as it was her last meeting. The commissioners also expressed their gratitude.

4. Public Hearings

- a. **Text Amendment** proposed by AMCAP COPACO II, LLC to Section 6.12 Special Bulk Requirements, to add a new section 6.12.C Height, Area and Yard Requirements in Designed Districts

Chair Lester read the legal notice into the record. Attorney Ken Baldwin was present for discussion on behalf of the applicant. This text amendment was previously allowed in past regulations dating back to around 2009. This would allow for development of continuous areas with multiple owners or two or more parcels under a single site plan ownership to be developed under the same bulk standards. In this instance, this will provide the ability to allow for similar bulk standards to be conveyed across the entire parcel, even if those parcels are under individual ownership. This will allow for more flexibility and will unify the development vision for parcels. Staff recommended minor language changes to the amendment, which were acceptable to the applicant.

Mr. Colman shared highlights from the staff report. The staff is supportive of this amendment. The public meeting was opened for public comment. No one spoke for or against this application. Commissioner Millette asked if parking easements and/or a master plan are necessary to keep for cohesiveness between owners. Mr. Colman confirmed that there is a master plan in place for this specific site in which parking is addressed. Commissioner James asked how this may affect other developments in town. Commissioner Gough confirmed that this is not a by-right issue. He asked what the impetus was for this application. Many tenants want to own their pads, and this would allow for that flexibility.

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Commissioner Bolton made a motion to close the public hearing; seconded by Commissioner James. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner James made a motion to approve the request by AMCAP COPACO II, LLC for a text amendment to add a new section to the Zoning regulations under Section 6.12 Bulk Requirements with the following conditions: Changes as suggested by the TPZ Commission and Town of Bloomfield staff shall be incorporated and the text amendment shall become effective on March 17, 2025 as referenced in the staff report dated February 25, 2025; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. 31 Tobey Road, Unit 5: Special Permit** 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 a private dance and rehearsal studio, in the I-1 Zone. Applicant: Christina Loney Property Owner: Tobey Road LLC

Applicant Christina Loney was present for discussion. This special permit is for a proposed dance studio for children aged 3 to 18. Mr. Colman shared the history of activity at this property. The most recent zoning violations have been addressed by the property owner. Staff recommended approval with specific conditions of approval that are listed on pages 3 and 4 of the staff report. Commissioner Blint asked about the specific incidents that occurred on site that caused staff to make such strong recommendations. Commissioner Millette confirmed that there is suitable parking and lighting on the parcel. Commissioner James asked for clarification related to the site plan. There will be a waiting room for children, but it is a drop-off only studio. Mr. Colman noted that this must be clearly indicated on the building plans. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy asked about restrooms.

Ms. Laureano explained that there was a ticketed event that took place at this unit in November 2024 where 200-300 presumably underage students were in attendance. Bloomfield Police were called to the event, and fights broke out when the attendees were asked to leave. Town staff were contacted after the event to see what approvals the property had for such an event. Ms. Laureano emphasized that this space is solely for dance lessons and rehearsals. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy confirmed with Mr. Colman that the occupancy level will be set by the Fire Marshall. She also confirmed that there are no changing stalls in the bathrooms. Commissioner Gough asked Ms. Loney about bathroom access during business hours.

Ms. Loney shared more about the studio's history. The owner's intent is to provide startup spaces for startup businesses at an affordable price. He is not an on-site owner, but he is re-committed to his original intent and has made significant progress by coming into compliance and cleaning up the property. Commissioner Bolton confirmed that the applicant is comfortable with the conditions of approval, which she is. Chair Lester confirmed an occupancy limit will be set once the applicant applies for a building permit.

Commissioner Marshall-Nealy made a motion to close the public hearing; seconded by Commissioner Gough. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner James made a motion to approve the request by Christina Loney for a special permit use to allow a dance studio and rehearsal establishment per Section 4.3.C.4.d – Any

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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 5 with the conditions listed in the staff report dated February 25, 2025 with an added condition of no ticketed events; seconded by Commissioner Millette. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Lester sought feedback from the commission related to hearing New Business before Old Business. With no comments or objections, New Business was heard first.

5. Old Business

a. POCD – Continued Review of the Final Draft

The most recent draft received by the commissioners included changes by Goman + York to the Regional Plan of Development and Mr. Colman requested that they focus on the future land use map. Commissioner Gough asked about the status of the outstanding requests he made at the last meeting. Mr. Colman suggested Commissioner Gough meet with Town staff to review his requests in further detail. The IT Department is responsible for the map revisions and can make them once the final edits are completed.

Commissioner Ola Aina arrived at 8:03pm.

The commissioners shared their feedback on the future land use map. Commissioner Millette would like to keep the west side of town as rural due to its proximity to the state forest. He would like to see these areas connect to open space. He would like to see commercial properties remain open to the possibility of a greenway through the east side of town. He reviewed recommendations from the last POCD, which highlighted potential areas for mixed-use development. He recommended tot lots be marked on the map, as they are currently listed as open space. Commissioner James noted that the commercial zone is overlapped with industrial and asked how that could impact future development. Commissioner Peters also agreed that this needs to be more clearly defined. Commissioner Gough recommended carving out a section of the industrial zone as commercial for the potential of mixed-use development. He recommended adding PA-490 and other farm land onto the future land use map. Mr. Colman thanked the commissioners for their input and will begin working on overlays. The farm property on Cottage Grove Road was discussed as there are plans for future development. It is currently zoned as professional office and Chair Lester opined that it should not be reflected as farmland; other commissioners disagreed.

b. Inclusionary Zoning preliminary text review and discussion

Mr. Colman requested that the commissioners review and discuss a one-page document he prepared that provides discussion issues and policies. This will help Town staff and legal counsel establish policies and procedures and prepare the specific language required. Any fee decisions that TPZ recommends will require an ordinance by the Town Council. The commissioners must decide the minimum dwelling unit threshold that would trigger developers to require affordable housing units. Many communities start at 10 minimum units as suggested by Goman + York.

A sliding scale can be offered instead of requiring a minimum amount of affordable dwelling units. Mr. Colman explained that there is a balance that must be achieved between attracting developers while

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simultaneously meeting the affordable housing requirements. Inclusionary percentage requirements were reviewed.

Linkage fees for commercial buildings were discussed. Mr. Colman recommended that it could apply in any non-residential use. Building fees currently go into the General Fund. Commissioner Bolton asked about the 3% per year increase to the \$10 per sq ft fee. He noted that this would be a prohibitory increase. Commissioner James noted that modifying parking as a developer incentive will attract developers. Commissioner Gough recommended that the minimum threshold for affordable housing units be set at twelve percent. With this input, Town staff will proceed to put a set of draft regulations in place.

6. New Business

- a.** 6-month moratorium extension related to recreational and medical cannabis cultivation and sales uses

Mr. Colman explained that the moratorium put in place by the Commission expires on Saturday, March 1, 2025. The zoning regulations surrounding recreational and medical cultivation and sales use have not been finalized therefore, staff recommended another 6-month extension.

Commissioner Marshall-Nealy made a motion to extend the moratorium for recreational and medical cannabis cultivation and sales use for an extension of 6 months; seconded by Commissioner Bolton. Commissioner Blint asked about a cannabis-related application heard by IWWC for 101 Granby Street. Ms. Laureano confirmed that it was a transfer of wetlands permit only. Commissioner Gough asked why this cannot be completed in 3 months as all other extensions have been the same length of time. Because the staff is not aware of any potential application, this does not slow down any applicant. **The motion passed unanimously.**

- b.** Appointment of a new Commission Secretary

Commissioner Gough made a motion to table this appointment to the next regular meeting; seconded by Commissioner Bolton. The motion passed unanimously.

- c.** Appointment of Two (2) Commissioners to serve on the Town's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWC)

Mr. Colman shared the rules of nomination. Mr. Colman will confirm with the Town Clerk when the next nomination will be made as Commissioner Blint has not yet officially resigned. Only one commissioner needs to be appointed at this time.

Commissioner James made a motion to nominate Byron Lester to the Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Commission; seconded by Commissioner Bolton. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Marshall-Nealy made a motion; seconded by Commissioner James to adjourn. The meeting passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:51pm.