

TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD, CT
TOWN PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY MAY 22, 2025 – 7:00PM
ZOOM MEETING PLATFORM AND
IN- PERSON MEETING – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APPROVED

There was a meeting for the Town of Bloomfield’s Town Plan & Zoning Commission held on May 22, 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 7:05pm.

2. Roll Call

Present were: *In-person*: Chair Byron Lester, Stephen Millette, Renae James, Kevin Gough, Jennifer Marshall-Nealy, Leon Peters, Eunice Medwinter, Roger O’Brien

Via Zoom: None

Absent was: Dwight Bolton

A quorum was established with 8 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

- a. February 27, 2025 (to be tabled to June 26, 2025)
- b. March 27, 2025 (to be tabled to June 26, 2025)
- c. April 24, 2025 (to be tabled to June 26, 2025)

4. Public Hearings

a. Public Hearings Continued from April 24, 2025:

- i. 95 Rescue Lane (A.K.A. 30 Meghans Court per Town Assessors Card) – Special Permit and Site Plan Application** per Sections 4.4.C.4.bb and 4.4.C.4.u of the Town of Bloomfield Zoning Regulations to allow a construction excavation establishment with outdoor storage of materials and equipment, in the I-2 zoning district. Applicant and Owner: Orlando Excavations, Inc.

This application was withdrawn.

- ii. Regulation Amendment Application** per Section 9.6 of the Town of Bloomfield Zoning Regulations to amend Section 4.5.D.3.g, to allow drive-in windows in the GWD zoning district. Applicant: 925 Blue Hills LLC

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

There was no applicant or representative present. Commissioner Gough asked if the commission is still waiting for CRCOG’s report on this application. Mr. Colman confirmed that the CRCOG report had been received, and no comments were made. Ms. Laureano explained that the applicant assumed that this application was not going to be approved so they did not show up.

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

Motion to deny the Regulation Amendment Application to amend Section 4.5.D.3.g, to allow drive-in windows in the GWD zoning district made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and approved unanimously.

- iii. Regulation Amendment Application per Section 9.6 of the Town of Bloomfield Zoning Regulation to add a new Section 6.14 Inclusionary Zoning and amend Section 2.2 to add Affordable Housing related terms and definitions. Applicant: Town of Bloomfield, Town Plan and Zoning Commission.

Motion to reopen this public hearing made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Gough and approved unanimously.

Chair Lester laid the ground rules for the public hearing. Mr. Colman noted that there are no new comments from staff and all recommended comments from the last hearing have been considered. Commissioner Medwinter asked how the linkage fee will be effective in creating affordable housing. Commissioner Gough noted that the fees will go into the affordable housing trust fund, which will help with more than just funding developments. Commissioner Medwinter asked how the trust fund will be managed. Councilor Kenneth McClary spoke and shared that he drafted the trust fund based off Bloomfield's housing plan. He explained that the linkage fee will be used to fund mortgage assistance, housing rehabilitation and subsidies for developers to add affordable housing units. Commissioner Medwinter opined that this is not a concrete plan. She expressed criticism over the rising housing costs in Bloomfield. Commissioner Millette asked clarifying questions related to the density bonus. It was at this time that the public hearing was opened for public comment.

Kenneth McClary, 8 Haviland Road, shared his support as this will ensure the community will grow in an equitable and inclusive way. This is focused on improving Bloomfield and does not include any statewide initiative.

Bette-Ann Libin, 440 Bloomfield Avenue, wants to know where this will be built. Chair Lester explained that this is a regulation and not an actual development.

Brian Zelman, 15 Concord Street, West Hartford, asked for clarification surrounding the density bonus and the linkage fee.

Commissioner Millette expressed concern related to the commercial linkage fee. He is also concerned about rounding up the percentage. He thanked Councilor McClary for sharing more specifics about the housing trust fund. He recommended offering down payment assistance for FHA loans. He wants to see the housing trust to create units for residents, however that may look. Commissioner Gough noted that this is a good start, and changes can be incorporated later should the need arise. He believes the percentage needs to stay above 10%. He is a strong supporter of repealing the Connecticut General Statute 8-30g requirement. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy thanked Councilor McClary for providing further clarification for both the public and the commissioners related to the housing trust fund. She supports inclusionary zoning, and this is a good starting point.

Commissioner James is excited to have inclusionary zoning regulations. Bloomfield must employ a mechanism to ensure that developers understand that affordable housing is needed in town. This is a tool to hold developers accountable. Bloomfield residents deserve to be able to afford where they live. Commissioner Medwinter does not believe that this is a true housing plan but rather language requiring a linkage fee for developers. Commissioner Peters is glad that this has been defined and thanked Councilor McClary for providing clarification related to outstanding questions. This will provide a protective cap and will allow Bloomfield residents to afford to remain in town. He also believes that the deed restriction is vital in keeping the town affordable.

Cindi Lloyd stated that she is encouraged by what this measure will bring. She noted that it is important to be able to differentiate between inclusionary and affordable housing. She thanked all who have been involved in this initiative.

Elizabeth Saria, 14 Westbrook Road, asked if any survey had been done to see what residents consider to be an affordable amount. The rents at the new large developments are not affordable. She asked how this will be handled in dollars and cents. She also asked about rent increases for the new developments.

Chair Lester commended Councilor McClary and Commissioner James for their dedication and work on this plan. He is in full support of this measure.

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

Motion adopt Section 6.14 Inclusionary Zoning as presented and/or amended in the final draft dated May 22, 2025 made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Gough and approved by a 5-2-0 vote. Commissioners Medwinter and Millette voted against the motion.

b. New Public Hearings

- i. **310 West Newberry Road** – Special Permit and Site Plan Application per Zoning Regulations Sections 4.4.C.4.U “Outdoor storage as an accessory use” and 4.4.C.3.b “Day care centers/nurseries” to allow a proposed adult day care with related outdoor storage of vehicle fleet, in the I-2 zone. Applicant – Brandon Walker (c/o Cattleya LLC), Property Owner – 310-340 Newberry LLC

Applicant Charmaine Thompson was present for discussion. Ms. Thompson runs a day program for adults with disabilities which is currently located at 222 Wintonbury Avenue. She has outgrown the space and would like to relocate to 310 West Newberry Road. In her new location, she hopes to use the additional space to teach her clients tasks of daily living, such as cooking, interviewing skills and writing checks. Mr. Colman stated that this application meets the criteria of the special permit section. He shared proposed special conditions related to vehicle storage and occupancy requirements. Commissioner O’Brien recommended modifying the language stating that only significant changes would require staff approval. Ms. Thompson has been doing this work for 37 years. She has another site in New Britain and employs 54 people between both sites. She would like to move as soon as possible. Commissioner Gough asked if the activities would be impacted moving away from the center of town. Many of the activities require bussing. The commissioners commended Ms. Thompson for her dedication and thanked her for keeping her business in Bloomfield.

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

Motion to approve 301 West Newberry Road – Special Permit and Site Plan Application with conditions made by Commissioner James. Commissioner Peters made a friendly amendment to add ‘substantial modifications’. The friendly amendment was seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy. Commissioner O’Brien made a friendly amendment to change ‘commission’ to ‘staff’. The friendly amendment was seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy. **The amended motion was seconded by Commissioner Peters and was approved unanimously.**

- i. **529 Cottage Grove Road** – Special Permit and Site Plan Application per Zoning Regulations Sections 4.3.C.3.g “Retail stores”, 4.3.C.4.i “Drive-in windows in accordance Page 2 of 2 with 7.11” and 4.3.C.4. r “Restaurants and ice cream bars” to allow construction of a new one-story 15, 349 sq.ft. commercial building on a 4.4414-acre vacant lot in the I-1 zone. Applicant – Estero Holding Company LLC, Property Owner – University of Hartford

Applicant representative Jim Cassidy was present on behalf of the applicant. This parcel is currently zoned I-1 and is wooded with wetlands located in the rear portion of the lot. Inlands Wetlands Watercourses Commission granted this project unanimous approval. There is a small portion of land on the left side of the lot that extends out to Northwestern Drive. As part of the purchase of the property, the applicant negotiated a 50-foot access and utility easement in this area. This will provide a fully signalized intersection. The applicant is proposing a one-story 15,379 sq. ft retail or commercial building. There are no confirmed tenants yet, but they are planning a drive-through lane on the far-right side of the building. Mr. Cassidy shared a cueing plan, confirming compliance with DOT standards. All loading is proposed to the rear of the building. Dumpsters will be out of view of Cottage Grove Road. Stormwater management plan was detailed. There will be stormwater basins in multiple locations throughout the site. Site utilities were detailed. The building will have five tenants. Mr. Cassidy shared a 3D rendering of the building. The exterior detail was described. The landscaping plan was reviewed. Canopy trees will be planted in the islands, and a hedge row will go in the area near the drive-through. There are no sidewalks on the plan right now, as they need DOT permission because the sidewalks will go through the right-of-way. The applicant would also like to connect to the Town of Bloomfield’s Greenway project but needs to meet with the Town Engineer to coordinate this further. Sidewalks will be shown on the final as-built plan per Mr. Cassidy. Photometric plan was shared and there will be no light trespass onto any adjoining properties.

Mr. Colman explained that there is no staff report because they were waiting for the IWWC approval and Town Engineer comments. He recommended continuing this public hearing so the commissioners can review the staff report. It was at this time that the public hearing was opened for public comment

Paula Jones, 5 Bear Ridge Drive, serves on the Bloomfield Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee and light pollution has been a focus lately especially regarding bird migration. She asked Mr. Cassidy if this had been taken into consideration.

Mr. Cassidy explained that they have been sensitive in planning this development. Most construction activities are out of the upland review area. The LED fixtures being used will spray the light back onto the site and not onto adjoining properties. Mr. Cassidy spoke about the 100-year flood plain and confirmed that all activities are out of the flood elevation. He will provide a certified statement related to such per Town requirements. Commissioner O'Brien would like more information related to pedestrian circulation. Commissioner Peters asked if the building spaces will be modified depending on the confirmed tenants. Commissioner O'Brien recommended revising the exterior of the building. Commissioner Gough asked if the Cottage Grove Road entrance can accommodate truck traffic should drivers make a mistake and enter at the wrong location. Most trucks will be coming from the highway, making the Northwestern Drive entrance more appealing. Commissioner Gough also asked if Mr. Cassidy was familiar with the Town's revitalization plan and recommended that he review it so that this project can better suit the future of Bloomfield. He also reminded Mr. Cassidy about the tree ordinance and noted that this will need to be discussed further. Commissioner James asked about proposed outdoor seating. Projected traffic patterns cannot be accurately predicted until the tenants are confirmed but Mr. Cassidy does not anticipate any high traffic generators. Commissioner Peters expressed concern regarding the lack of a traffic study as Cottage Grove Road is already a high traffic area. He opined that the lot is not pedestrian friendly. Mr. Cassidy explained that when the State of Connecticut widened Cottage Grove Road, they restricted the frontage, typically referred to as a limited access area. This limited the applicant to only one curb cut. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy asked if Mr. Cassidy is aware of how many banks are already in the Cottage Grove Road area. She also asked about truck traffic and questioned the ability for tractor trailers to safely navigate the site. Mr. Cassidy explained that the site can accommodate 67-foot tractor trailers. Fire trucks will also be able to easily maneuver the site. It was at this time that the public hearing was opened for public comment.

Cindi Lloyd shared comments related to parking. She noted that this is similar to the Trinity Health development.

Commissioner Millette asked where the trucks will be directed to exit. Mr. Cassidy confirmed that the trucks will be using the Northwestern Drive location and shared information related to the proposed curb cut.

Motion to continue this public hearing to the June 26, 2025 meeting made Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Peters and approved unanimously.

- ii. **620 Cottage Grove Road** (Route 218 - Zone Map Amendment in accordance with Section 9.7 of the Zoning Regulations to allow a zone change from Professional Office District (POD) to Commercial District (C). Applicant - LaSalle Road Companies LLC, Property Owner – Darlene K. Musial

This application was moved and heard before items i through iii. Attorney John Knuff was present on behalf of the applicant. Chair Lester directed Attorney Knuff to separate the zone map amendment presentation from the text amendment presentation as they are two separate applications. Attorney Knuff attempted to show a proposed site plan, which is not appropriate for this type of application. Chair Lester encouraged Attorney Knuff to hold a community conversation at 330 Park Avenue to discuss the proposal with residents before presenting this to the commission.

Motion to continue this application to the June 26, 2025 meeting made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and approved unanimously.

- iii. Text Amendment Application to remove existing Sections 4.7.C.4.c and 4.7.D.4.b and amend existing language in Section 4.7.B(Notes: 1) of the Zoning Regulations. Applicant – LaSalle Road Companies LLC having a legal interest in land in Bloomfield.

Motion to continue this application to the June 26, 2025 meeting made by Commissioner Gough; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and approved unanimously.

5. New Business

- a. Appointment of Town Plan and Zoning Commissioner to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Motion to appoint Commissioner Stephen Millette to serve on Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission as the TPZ representative made by Chair Lester; seconded by Commissioner Gough and approved unanimously.

- b. Recording Secretary hired

Rebecca Jones has been hired as the new Recording Secretary and will be present at the June meeting.

6. Old Business

None.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:29pm.