

**TOWN OF HADDAM
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING/HEARING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT 06438
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2022
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Gina Block
X	Steven Bull, Secretary
X	Michael Farina
X	Jamin Laurenza, Vice Chairman
X	Wayne LePard
X	Dan Luisi
X	Edward Wallor, Chairman
A	Alan Chadwick, Alternate
X	Larry Maggi, Alternate
A	Tim Teran, Alternate
X	Bill Warner, AICP Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wallor, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Attendance/Seating of the Alternates

Attendance was taken and all regular members were seated.

4. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

The agenda stood as submitted.

5. Public Comments

There was no one in the audience who commented.

6. Public Hearing/Public Meeting

a. Special Permit Request for an Addition to 1572 Saybrook Road for Office, Retail, and Professional Services. Applicant: DBP, LLC – Map 49, Lot 69

Lisa Wadge, Member, DBP, LLC, Roger Nemergut, P.E., Nemergut Consulting, and George Fellner, Architect, Fellner Associates Architects, were present.

Hearing: Mr. Wallor opened the hearing at 7:01 p.m.

Ms. Wadge submitted the Affidavit of Public Notice Sign Posting and photo (Exhibit A; copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and the Land Use Dept.).

Ms. Wadge opened the presentation by explaining the proposal's process – review of regulations and what would best fit the land; no tenants at this time; Mr. Nemergut and Jeff Jacobson, P.E., Nathan L. Jacobson & Associates, town's engineer, working on the stormwater drainage from the road; and Mr. Fellner who generated the design. The design is a whole property layout – traffic, parking, stormwater, drainage, etc. Ms. Wadge stated they are currently before the Commission for Phase 1 to attach a structure to the restored existing house to make it more commercial with a piazza in the middle for people to gather and to present a generalized layout for Phase 2 (proposed new curb cut off Route 154, a lot line revision, and two buildings). Ms. Wadge also stated the proposal complies with the regulations meeting the spirit of the small buildings. Ms. Wadge turned the presentation over to Mr. Nemergut.

Mr. Nemergut stated in 2013 the town approved a five-lot commercial subdivision that included an approximately 500-foot cul-de-sac road (Brookes Court); and currently Lots 1 and 5 are under development with the recently approved apartments. The application before the Commission tonight covers Lots 2 and 3. Mr. Nemergut stated one of the things being asked for is a lot line revision (to be shifted a little to the north) between Lots 2 and 3. Mr. Nemergut stated the lots would still be conforming and it would allow for a better layout as Lot 3 (Phase 2) will be more intensely developed than Phase 1.

Mr. Nemergut stated all the lots are vacant except for Lot 2, existing house facing Saybrook Road, Lots 1 and Lot 5 have foundations for the apartments, and Lot 4 has no existing or proposed activity on it at this time. Mr. Nemergut stated the focus in on Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be for Lot 3. Using a map, Mr. Nemergut pointed out the existing house and Phases 1 and 2 division line. Part of Phase 1 encroaches on Phase 2 (parking for Phase 1 as well as a proposed new curb cut off Route 154). Phase 1 to consist of the existing building, a new building to the east of it, and a roof structure between the two. Phase 2 shows two additional buildings and is being shown that it can be built in a reasonable way with reasonable density. The property is served by public water (CT Water Co.), onsite septic system (soil conditions are among the best - deep dry sands and gravels), and topographically there's enough slope to drain, but not enough to get into deep cuts or fills (will not be changing the grade in a significant way).

Parking – Mr. Nemergut stated parking for the existing house is proposed between Saybrook Road and the house with access off Brookes Court. The new building will have parking to its south (within Phase 1, but on property of Lot 3). The proposed new curb cut is also on Lot 3 but will be utilized for both lots. Proposing an access and parking easement on Lot 3 in favor of Lot 2. Mr. Nemergut stated parking lots will be paved. Mr. Nemergut also stated there will be slightly more parking than the regulations require, and they are looking at the usage as “dry retail” which is defined as office space/retail space that does not use an abnormal amount of water. Noted that the soils are good enough for a more intense use such as a restaurant, laundromat, or hair salon. Mr. Nemergut stated if it were to become a more intense use, they would have to enlarge the septic system and talk to the health district. Mr. Nemergut stated the plans are in the hands of the health district (awaiting their approval and confident it will be received) as well as the town's engineer (received his review comments, but have not had time to address his comments; however, they are not significant in terms of alternating the layout before the Commissioners).

Curb Cut – Still need to obtain approval from DOT for the curb cut on Saybrook Road. When originally designed, considered restricting the exit to a right hand turn only as a left hand turn would have vehicles crossing into the traffic path. However, the engineer who prepared the traffic study has urged them to ask for no restriction on the turn. Mr. Nemergut stated although the plan shows no left turn on the exit, they are proposing with state approval to remove that restriction.

Landscaping – Sheet 5 – Phase 1 – The proposal calls for trees/shrubs and will be supplemented at the request of the town planner to include street trees along Saybrook Road similar to the size and space that was done for the recently approved apartments. Would like to use beech trees as there is an existing beech tree on site.

Fencing - Proposing a decorative fence along the entire frontage that will mimic, but will not be the same, as the Saybrook at Haddam. Picture of fence included with the application. Fencing will be PVC three rail ranch fencing with posts.

Lighting – LED luminaires will be dark sky friendly with a mounting height of 12 feet. They may ask for an alternate for solar lighting as opposed to electric. This is currently under review by the solar company who will provide an adjusted spacing as solar is not as powerful as the LED lights.

Mr. Warner asked the applicant to match the lighting that will be used by the developer of the new apartments and DOT along Bridge Road and Saybrook Road. Ms. Wadge asked Mr. Warner if he would send over the specs.

Mr. Nemergut stated any walkways will be lit by low level post bollard lighting.

Signage – Proposing three signs 32 square feet (may be smaller but requesting the maximum allowable). Proposed sign locations: at the cul-de-sac as it has frontage to Lot 3 and will be able to access/exit this parking lot to the cul-de-sac, at the new curb cut, and at the entrance to the existing house coming off Brookes Court. Signs will all be lit by low level solar lights and will have plantings (perennials/bulbs) around them.

Dumpsters/Loading Zones - Mr. Nemergut stated dumpsters are proposed for each of the buildings and will be screened and fenced in and each building will also have its own dedicated loading zone.

Mrs. Block asked the main purpose of the road for Phase 2. Mr. Nemergut stated the curb cut is for both phases noting access to the parking lot for the existing building can be gained from the proposed curb cut and off of Brookes Court and access to the second parking lot in Phase 2 will be from the proposed curb cut. Mrs. Block asked if there was any conflict given the proximity of two existing driveways to the proposed curb cut. Mr. Nemergut stated they're awaiting a response from DOT.

Mr. LePard asked if there will be a second curb cut. Mr. Nemergut pointed out the informal curb cut off of Brookes Court and the proposed DOT curb cut.

Mr. Bull stated the new curb cut is wide at the beginning, narrows down, then goes into the top parking lot. Using the map, Mr. Nemergut pointed out how the curb cut would function. Mr. Bull asked why it narrows down. Ms. Wadge stated that was when it was thought it would be a one-way exit. Mr. Nemergut stated it's not shown as a travel lane, that there's confusion with the lot line drawn on the map. Mr. Bull stated he understood.

Mr. Bull asked about the existing building and the added wing. Mr. Nemergut stated the "square" to the back of the existing house is currently a part of the house; and there will be no changes to the look of the existing building.

Mr. Bull asked about Building #4 (Phase 2) and its placement (facing Saybrook Road). Mr. Bull asked if in Phase 1, a building could be put to the front and the parking to the back. Mr. Nemergut stated no and explained the reasoning - the parking is a part of Phase 1. Mr. Warner stated the concern is why would you want to hide a nice prominent building with a new structure, you wouldn't.

Mr. Farina stated although he thinks the design is great, he doesn't believe parking in front of the existing building is appropriate. Mr. Nemergut stated if a building is placed in front of the existing house, it would block the view further and be more disturbing and disruptive than parking. Mr. Farina stated he would rather see the house than a bunch of cars parked in front of it; and asked if there was a way to relocate the parking. Mr. Bull suggested the parking be moved to the edges on the north and south side. Mr. Nemergut explained why it wouldn't work. Ms. Wadge stated one of the pivotal points of this design is there is no parking in the center in order to create the piazza where people can gather and be safe.

Mr. Nemergut stated due to the proposed structure being oriented to the existing house and because Brookes Court curves to the south, it constricted the development bringing them down to a five-foot setback at one corner. The regulations call for a 10-foot setback and the Commission can do a 50 percent reduction without the need of a ZBA variance.

Mr. Warner reported the Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) has approved Phase 1 of the project.

In terms of the site plan, Mr. Fellner stated from the beginning they looked at the site as an opportunity for something similar to a campus setting and how pedestrians and cars move throughout the site safely.

Mr. Fellner stated the existing house is a two-story structure (3,266 square feet) with the first floor for retail use and the second floor for business use. The existing building provided cues for the proposed buildings – staggered layout, strategically placed porches, multiple points of access (no backs to the buildings). The first floor, 4,201 square feet, is designed for retail use – two or three tenants as there are pass through areas and sufficient bathrooms to go around and wanted to make the structure as flexible as possible in order to attract tenants. The second floor, 2,626 square feet, is designed for office use – two elements (not connected), therefore, two tenants. Total square footage: 6,827 square feet. Mr. Fellner stated with the roof connector there's the ability for pedestrians to walk through.

Mr. Fellner reviewed the elevations noting the intent was to be sensitive to the Tylerville character. Blend of New England contemporary farmhouse with an Italianate style. Mr. Fellner pointed out the layering with the side elevations, staggering of the facades, the gable roof. Mr. Fellner stated the porches, clapboard siding, trim, columns and windows will all be white with a gray standing seam metal roof. The designing of the windows are taken from the Italianate. Lighting under the porches will be recessed.

Mr. Fellner reviewed a three-dimension view of the proposal. Mr. Fellner noted that the staggering helps to minimize the mass and the architecture is optimized to human scale and to allow for a pleasant pedestrian experience. It is also compatible with the Tylerville mercantile trade.

Mr. Bull asked for an elevation of the existing building. Mr. Fellner stated there isn't one. Mr. Bull asked if the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) had reviewed this proposal. Mr. Fellner and Ms. Wadge stated yes. Mr. Warner stated the ARC minutes had been sent to the Commission and that the members of ARC could not attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Fellner stated an extensive presentation had been made to ARC over two meetings.

Mrs. Block asked if ARC had reviewed the parking. Mr. Warner stated they did architectural, site plan, and landscaping review. Mr. Bull stated this is why it's critical for ARC to be present in order for the Commission to speak to them. Mr. Warner stated the elevation to the house in relation to the parking will allow for at least 90 percent of the house to be visible. Commission reviewed photo submitted with Affidavit of Public Notice Sign Posting.

Discussion followed at length in regard to the following: 1) Proposed parking in front of the existing house (distance from house to parking area; could parking area be graded deeper) with Commissioners asking for relocation (if a restaurant comes in additional parking will be needed), the placement of the fire tank (can't be moved) and beech tree (attempting to save), visual softening (low shrubs/bushes), and elevation difference between the house and Saybrook Road (11 feet). 2) Diagonal parking on Brookes Court (unable to due to the curve of road, backing into the road, and blocking of building). 3) Proposed curb cut off Route 154, if approved, will eliminate traffic on Brookes Court. Ms. Wadge noted that the tenants will drive the number of cars on site at any given time and people from the apartments walking across the street (safety issue). Ms. Wadge stated if the parking area is graded down further, a disabled individual will have to travel 24 feet further up a ramp.

Mr. Laurenza stated unless an SUV is parked in front everyone will be able to see the porch and perhaps a landscaping plan similar to the Saybrook at Haddam may settle the matter. Mrs. Block stated the Saybrook at Haddam was put in before the village regulations were established, therefore, this application should be held at a different standard. Mr. Bull stated there are no plantings in front of the parking lot. Mr. Nemergut stated some shrubs could be added.

Elizabeth Malloy, Haddam Neck, stated she is thrilled the house will be remaining and she was impressed with the proposal. Ms. Malloy also stated the design is appropriate for the property. Ms. Malloy asked if Lots 2 and 3 will be reconfigured and if so, could the location of the buildings and parking also be reconfigured. Ms. Malloy stated she hopes whoever is responsible for Phase 2 will coordinate with what is being proposed tonight. Ms. Wadge thanked Ms. Malloy for her support and comments, and that she would like to continue with Mr. Fellner and Mr. Nemergut for Phase 2. Mr. Fellner stated the buildings will be in the same design vocabulary as is currently being presented.

In regard to the parking, Kate Anderson, Higganum, asked the Commission to think about who the end user will be and to also think about pedestrian safety. Ms. Anderson stated when she's an outsider in another town and she sees a full parking area, she thinks that business is worth stopping in to. Ms. Anderson also stated she thought the design looked good.

Prior to the vote on the motion, Mr. Laurenza asked if the 7 April 2021 time frame was sufficient for the applicants to make their amendments. Mr. Nemergut stated he felt it would be. Mr. Wallor asked if there were any more comments/suggestions for the applicants/public/Commissioners.

Mr. Farina stated he felt the design was very good; however, losing the visual of the front of the house is disconcerting.

Ms. Wadge clarified what was being asked for: a cross section showing the view from the road to the front of the house with the parking lot and a buffer of bushes in front of the parking lot edge. Mr. Bull stated an elevation. Mr. Fellner stated it will be three-dimensional rendering for the Commission. Mrs. Block asked that the fencing and the existing beech tree be included as well. Mr. Nemergut stated he'll provide the information.

MOTION: Jamin Laurenza motioned to continue the public hearing for a Special Permit Request for an Addition to 1572 Saybrook Road for Office, Retail, and Professional Services. Applicant: DBP, LLC – Map 49, Lot 69 until Thursday, 7 April 2022, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 21 Field Park Drive, Haddam, CT 06438. Ed Wallor second. Motion carried unanimously.

Public hearing continued until Thursday, 7 April 2022.

7. New Business

a. Amendment to Special permit for The Truck Bar to Allow Change in Business Hours to Monday -Thursday 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m., Friday-Saturday 8:00 a.m.-Midnight, and Sunday 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Applicant: Merle McKenzie, 66 Killingworth Road, Map 14, Lot 29-1

Mr. Warner reported due to the regulations defining major and minor amendments and includes change of hours as a major amendment for a special permit a public hearing needs to be conducted. This will be advertised for Thursday, 7 April 2022, public hearing.

Public hearing scheduled for Thursday, 7 April 2022.

8. Chairman's Report

Mr. Wallor had nothing new to report at this time.

9. Scheduling of Hearings

Special Permit Request for an Addition to 1572 Saybrook Road for Office, Retail, and Professional Services. Applicant: DBP, LLC – Map 49, Lot 69 – Public Hearing Continued, Thursday, 7 April 2022.

Amendment to Special permit for The Truck Bar to Allow Change in Business Hours to Monday Thursday 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m., Friday-Saturday 8:00 a.m.-Midnight, and Sunday 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Applicant: Merle McKenzie, 66 Killingworth Road, Map 14, Lot 29-1 – Public Hearing, Thursday, 7 April 2022.

10. Town Planner's Report

Mr. Warner stated the projects he had previously reported on are moving along smoothly and the new ZEO has sent out his initial report.

Mr. Laurenza asked about the illegal land fill noted on the ZEO's report, dated 10 March 2022. Mr. Warner stated it's the pile of dirt that's getting close to the wetland in front of the Pytlik property on Turkey Hill. Mr. Warner also stated a driveway is being built and a wetlands permit is required.

11. Adjournment

MOTION: Jamin Laurenza motioned to adjourn. Ed Wallor second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 7 April 2022.