

TOWN OF FARMINGTON  
PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 21, 2024

Present for the hybrid meeting were Chair Halstead, Commissioners Afshar, Bandle, Canto, St. Germain, Sanford and Alternate Commissioner Polsky. Town Planner Rutherford and Clerk Michaud were also present. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present in the Council Chambers were all Commission members, Town Planner Rutherford and Clerk Michaud. Commissioner Bandle was present online. Alternate Commissioners Tucci and Zimmermann were absent.

Secretary Sanford read the legal notice into the record.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Sign Pro – 838 Farmington Avenue**

Sign application tabled from the October 7, 2024 meeting and continued from September 23, 2024 meeting. Kristine Braccidiferro, Sign Pro, presented clarification that the property line is 26 feet from the Route 4 curb and that the sign will be placed at the property line. The sign has been revised to reduce the overall height from 82” to 78” and the overall width from 96” to 92” and the sign face square footage changed from 33 sq. ft. to 29.86 sq. ft. The existing sign approved in 1993 is larger with an overall height of 72”, overall width of 152”, structure area of 76 sq. ft. and sign area. of 23 sq. ft. Ms. Braccidiferro stated the existing sign is below street level on the west side of the driveway and the new sign is close to street grade. All tenants are included on the proposed sign but were not all included in the 2019 approved replacement sign. Photos of the proposed monument sign showing how it will be placed on the property was provided for clarification. The sign will be externally illuminated in the future. Commissioners asked for additional information regarding sign illumination. Ms. Braccidiferro responded the external illumination has not been determined at this time. Richard Hayes, one of the owners of the plaza, stated the sign will have downlit illumination similar to what is existing on the building. Commissioners expressed concern with the size of the proposed sign. When asked to clarify hardship to exceed the 25 sq. ft. maximum area and 6 foot height requiring a 5/6 vote of the Commission, Mr. Hayes responded the 26 foot wide State Right of Way, the speed and amount of traffic on Route 4 in this area and the location of the bus shelter.

Upon a motion made and seconded (St. Germain/Canto) it was

VOTED: 4 in favor (Afshar, Bandle, Canto, Halstead) to 2 opposed (Sanford, St. Germain) to approve the Sign Pro sign application for 838 Farmington Avenue. The motion failed as it did not receive a 5/6 vote.

**Farmington CTA, LLC – 11 Executive Drive**

Site plan application for battery storage system with associated utility connections located at 11 Executive Drive, C1 zone. Greg Carey, RWE, stated they are a large national renewable energy business and would like to install a Battery Energy Storage System (“BESS”) at 11 Executive Drive behind the Farmington Sports Arena. The system includes a battery unit and ancillary electrical equipment. Mr. Carey stated the system will provide power to the grid as needed and

will be connected to the property owner's electric meter. This project is being developed in conjunction with the Connecticut Green Bank's Energy Storage Program and will contribute to Connecticut's goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2040. The system is monitored 24-hours, 7 days a week and can be remotely shut down if there is an issue. The Town will be provided with the Emergency Management and Fire Safety Plan. David Raines, RWE, Fire Safety, presented detailed information on the battery system and security. He stated the system is designed to the latest version of NFPA 855 and IFC Chapter 12. The system has exterior battery access and the gate for the fence enclosure will have a Knox-Box document box for first responders. Training for the Fire Department will be provided prior to the system going on-line. Gareth Wilson, BL Companies, described the proposed location of the system north of the Sports Arena building with the auxiliary rack electrical equipment in a concrete pad within a 7 foot high chain link fence. An access gravel drive is shown directly to Executive Drive from the fenced area. The project also includes a concrete pad on the west side of the building for electrical equipment with a chain link enclosure. At the southwest corner of the building is a proposed transformer. Additional planted screening is proposed for the equipment proposed on the western side of the building. Mr. Wilson also presented the erosion control plan. Commissioners asked for clarification regarding alarm systems and the potential for cooling system leaks. Mr. Raines responded Tesla system is a closed loop containment system and there is no potential of leaks. Commissioners asked what the anticipated battery life is and what happens to the battery when no longer useful. Mr. Carey responded that the guaranteed battery life is 10 years and the peak battery life is approximately 20 years. The battery then is sent back to Tesla as part of their free recycling program. When asked how long the construction process will take, Mr. Carey responded for three to four months.

Upon a motion made and seconded (St. Germain/Canto) it was unanimously

VOTED: To table the Farmington CTA, LLC site plan application for battery storage system with associated utility connections located at 11 Executive Drive, C1 zone to the November 13, 2024 meeting.

#### Town of Farmington Plan & Zoning Commission

Accept application for text amendment to the Zoning Regulations, revising Article II, Section 8. RDM Zone and Article IV, Section 8.B.3. Schedule of Off-Street Parking in the RDM Zone and schedule public hearing (recommend hearing date of November 13, 2024).

Upon a motion made and seconded (St. Germain/Canto) it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the Town of Farmington Plan & Zoning Commission application for text amendment to the Zoning Regulations, revising Article II, Section 8. RDM Subsection C. Development Standards and Article IV, Section 8.B.3. Schedule of Off-Street Parking in the RDM Zone and schedule public hearing for November 13, 2024.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

##### Michael J. Tacinelli – 32 Junior Road

Application for special permit for home business (Internet Sales) located at 32 Junior Road, R12 zone. Mr. Tacinelli stated he has a full-time job but would like to start a part-time internet sales

home business and firearm transfers. There will be no employees, no deliveries to his home associated with the business and the hours of operation are expected to be 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and some flexible weekends. He may have one to two customers per week come to his house for firearm transfers only. If he receives an approval from the Commission he will be able to complete the Federal Firearms License application. Commissioners asked general confirmation questions regarding hours of operation and firearm transfers.

Jacqueline Denney, 38 Junior Road, expressed concern with the application.

The applicant clarified the proposed operation, including the availability of parking in his driveway.

The public hearing closed at 8:05 p.m.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Sanford/Canto) it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Michael J. Tacinelli application for special permit for home business (Internet Sales) located at 32 Junior Road, R12 zone as presented and on file in the Planning Office.

#### Alexander Farrah & Holly Benson – 111 Woodpond Road

Application for special permit for expanded home in excess of 3,200 sq. ft. total at 111 Woodpond Road, R20 zone. Mr. Farrah presented the plan to convert the existing attached garage to living space and add a full second story to replace a walk-up attic space. There is no expansion of the footprint of the existing house. The existing detached garage will remain. Mr. Farrah reviewed the floor plans and house elevations for clarification of the scope of the project. There was some discussion about the overall size proposed and the size of homes in the immediate area.

#### In-Person Public Comment

Bill Nygren, 107 Woodpond Road, spoke in support of the application.

Jan Larkin, 112 Woodpond Road, asked for clarification on what cantilever meant. Mr. Farrah stated a small roof line will protrude over the front entry and along the front right side of the house.

Teresa Nygren, 107 Woodpond, expressed some concern with the proposed size. Mr. Farrah responded the house would be approximately 8 feet higher than the existing roofline.

The public hearing closed at 8:24 p.m.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Sanford/Canto) it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Alexander Farrah & Holly Benson application for special permit for expanded home in excess of 3,200 sq. ft. total at 111 Woodpond Road, R20 zone as presented and on file in the Planning Office.

The Farmington Historical Society, Inc. – 729 Farmington Avenue

Application for special permit for Charitable and Philanthropic uses to house its headquarters and one accessory apartment at 729 Farmington Avenue, R80 zone. Attorney Robert Reeve, Scully, Nicksa & Reeve, presented the request for the Farmington Historical Society. They would like to purchase the property and use it for their headquarters to house their collections and archives of Farmington's history. In addition, they hope to offer programming and exhibitions in the future. The request includes the ability to have one apartment. There are no exterior or site changes proposed. Jay Bombara, President of the Farmington Historical Society, explained they are currently located at 138 Main Street and there is very little space with all the records and collections they have. The new location will provide a much larger area for them to store and archive their collections and make them accessible to the public. They will have space for exhibits and lectures, programming (for up to 30 people) and for an apartment space for a future full-time director, employee, or general rental. The Commissioners asked for the general hours of operation. Mr. Bombara responded they are all volunteers so he anticipates they will try to be open weekends from 10-4 and any programming during the week would likely run from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., including Board meetings. There was some discussion about parking for programming with more than 30 people. Attorney Reeve responded if they get to a point in the future where they routinely have large crowds, they will be back with a site plan application.

In-Person Public Comment

Betty Coykendall, 15 Whispering Rod Road, former President of the Farmington Historical Society spoke in support of the application.

Joanne Lawson, 9 Prattling Pond Road, spoke in support of the application.

Written Correspondence

Farmington Land Trust letter in support of the application dated October 18, 2024.

On-Line Public Correspondence

Portia Corbett, 11 Mountain Spring Road, spoke in support of the application.

The public hearing closed at 8:49 p.m.

Upon a motion made and seconded (St. Germain/Canto) it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve The Farmington Historical Society, Inc. application for special permit for Charitable and Philanthropic uses to house its headquarters and one accessory apartment at 729 Farmington Avenue, R80 zone as presented and on file in the Planning Office.

**PLANNER'S REPORT**

2023 Residential Zoning Review

Affordable Housing in CT – 5-part series by Timothy Hollister, document published by The Connecticut Mirror, was shared with the Commission.

34 West District Road

An update was provided regarding the Appeal process with the latest activity reported.

**MINUTES**

October 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made and seconded (Sanford/Canto) it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the October 7, 2024 Town Plan & Zoning Commission meeting minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

*SJM*