

TOWN OF FARMINGTON
PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
November 13, 2024

Present for the hybrid meeting were Chair Halstead, Commissioners Afshar, Canto, St. Germain, Sanford and Alternate Commissioners Polsky, Tucci and Zimmermann. Town Planner Rutherford, Assistant Town Planner Daigle 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 absent. Alternate Commissioners Tucci and Zimmermann (7:06pm) was present online.

Secretary Sanford read the legal notice into the record.

Alternate Commissioner Polsky was appointed to participate in place of absent Commissioner Bandle.

NEW BUSINESS

Sign Pro – 220 Farmington Avenue

Kristine Braccidiferro, Sign Pro, presented proposed signs for The Hand Center. An externally illuminated building sign 52” high by 106” wide with a LoPro light bar above the sign panel. In addition, a 24” high by 70” wide sign panel will be added to the existing monument sign. There is no proposed change to ground lighting as part of this application. Commissioners asked about the lighting levels of the new light bar above the wall sign. After a brief discussion the Town Planner said the lighting will be addressed as part of the building permit process.

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

VOTED: To approve the Sign Pro sign application for The Hand Center at 220 Farmington Avenue as presented and on file in the Planning Office; lighting for the signs shall not exceed 4,000K CCT.

Sign Pro – 2 Bridgewater Road, Suite 2

Kristine Braccidiferro, Sign Pro, presented proposed signs for Charter. They would like to install a non-illuminated building sign approximately 20.4 sq. ft. in area. The wall sign is pin mounted lettering on the northeast elevation facing the intersection of Farmington Avenue and Bridgewater Road. There were no concerns expressed by the Commission.

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

VOTED: To approve the Sign Pro sign application for Charter at 2 Bridgewater Road, Suite 2 as presented and on file in the Planning Office.

Jon DiPietro – 66 Berkshire Drive

Mr. DiPietro stated his home is located at the corner of Robin Road and Berkshire Drive. He would like to install a six-foot-tall privacy fence from the left side of his home facing Berkshire Drive to the side property line. A 24' section of fence would come off the side of the house with a 30' section that includes a 20' gate running south and then a 56' section running west, parallel with Berkshire Drive connecting to the existing fence. The fence exception is requested for the proposed fence along Berkshire Drive because it will be installed within the setback and exceeds the four-foot height limit within a setback area along a street. Mr. DiPietro stated they are looking to fence in their yard because they have dogs and a young child. The fence will provide safety and privacy for the use of their yard, in addition to containing their dogs. The Commissioners asked general clarifying questions about the fence type, location and the proposed gate.

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

VOTED: To approve the Jon DiPietro request for fence exception to install a six-foot-tall fence in the required yard along Berkshire Drive as presented and on file in the Planning Office.

Farmington CTA, LLC – 11 Executive Drive

Site plan application for battery storage system with associated utility connections located at 11 Executive Drive, C1 zone. Gareth Wilson, BL Companies, responded to comments from the October 21, 2024 meeting. CT Water has submitted their review of the project. A review response from CT DEEP has been received. Mr. Wilson stated the storage unit has been moved away from the north property line for a 20' buffer between the fence and the property line. Two trees will be removed in this area and two evergreen shrubs will be planted in their place. The retaining wall will no longer be needed. Regarding the fence, they have been asked to consider slats in the chain link. Mr. Wilson said they do not believe they are necessary, but they will do whatever the Commission prefers. He also talked about the grouping of plantings will be redistributed to provide some visual interest. The Commissioners did not express concern with responses to comments.

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

VOTED: To approve the Farmington CTA, LLC site plan application for battery storage system with associated utility connections located at 11 Executive Drive, C1 zone as presented and on file in the Planning Office.

Marcus & Robin McPhee – 4 Hilltop Road

Site plan application for addition of 4-season sunroom and hatchway at 4 Hilltop Road. Mr. McPhee stated they are looking to add a 4-season sunroom to the back of their house. Photos of the rear yard and rear of the house were provided for clarification regarding location. In addition, the sunroom will include a fireplace with a full chimney. This will require one window on the second floor dormer to be removed. A basement door shown on the building plans will now be a hatchway. There was some discussion about the ridgeline and general scope of the project. Mr. McPhee and his contractor David Rock responded. Mr. McPhee also confirmed that no more trees will be removed.

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

VOTED: To approve the Marcus & Robin McPhee site plan application for addition of 4-season sunroom and hatchway at 4 Hilltop Road as presented and on file in the Planning Office.

Matthew Yard – 100 Red Oak Hill Road

Accept application for special permit for expanded home greater than 2,400 sq. ft finished living area and 3,200 sq. ft. total area at 100 Red Oak Hill Road, R30 zone and schedule public hearing (recommended hearing date of December 9, 2024).

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

VOTED: To accept the Matthew Yard application for special permit for expanded home greater than 2,400 sq. ft finished living area and 3,200 sq. ft. total area at 100 Red Oak Hill Road, R30 zone and schedule public hearing for December 9, 2024.

Town of Farmington Plan & Zoning Commission

Accept application for text amendment to the Zoning Regulations to add Article II, Section 11.A.3. Conversion of an existing Nursing or Convalescent Home into Multifamily Housing in the BR zone and schedule public hearing (recommend hearing date of December 9, 2024).

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

VOTED: To accept the Town of Farmington Plan & Zoning Commission application for text amendment to the Zoning Regulations to add Article II, Section 11.A.3. Conversion of an existing Nursing or Convalescent Home into Multifamily Housing in the BR zone and schedule public hearing for December 9, 2024.

Adopt 2025 TPZ/APA Meeting Schedule

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

VOTED: To adopt the 2025 TPZ/APA meeting schedule as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING

Town of Farmington Plan & Zoning Commission

Application for text amendment to the Zoning Regulations Article II, Section 8. RDM zone and Article IV, Section 8.B.3. Off Street Parking in the RDM zone. Assistant Town Planner Daigle presented the proposed text amendment to the zoning regulations in response to Public Act 24-143 Section 3. which requires that “Any zoning regulations adopted by a municipality pursuant to section 8-2 of the general statutes shall allow for the conversion of any nursing home into multifamily housing subject only to summary review”. Summary review equates to site plan review, the municipality cannot require a public hearing, variance, special permit or special exception. The Commission may review to determine that the site plan is in conformance with

applicable zoning regulations and that public health and safety will not be substantially impacted. After discussion with the Town Attorney this amendment has been developed to specifically address the dimensional requirements and allowable density for the conversion of nursing homes into multi-family housing. This also required an edit to the parking regulation to make an appropriate allocation for studio apartments. Discussion with the Town Attorney has resulted in a subsequent change to the BR zone to allow the conversion of a nursing home to multi-family residential as a permitted use. That text amendment will be heard at the December 9, 2024 meeting.

There was no public comment in favor or in opposition to the application.

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

VOTED: To continue this public hearing to December 9, 2024.

PLANNER'S REPORT

1112 Farmington Avenue

The Hometown Foundation would like to conduct Holiday Tree Sales at the former Comers Nursery November 29 to December 1 and December 6 to 8, 2024. Tree sales may also be incorporated at the Polo Grounds on December 1, 2024 for the Holidays and Horses event in support of the Foundation. During discussion the Commissioners suggested no overnight lighting and did not express concern with a sandwich board type signage. The Commission agreed this request aligns with the prior historic use at the property by Comers Nursery.

838 Farmington Avenue

Quest Diagnostics is ready to attach a building sign above their tenant space. The proposed sign with an overhead light bar, aligns with the approved architectural plans. The Commission did not express concern with the building sign proceeding to Building Permit.

80 & 90 South Road

The owners of the buildings are requesting permission to install a four-foot fence around the patios facing South Road. Building A has three and Building B has five patios along the building frontages. Fence installation will not impact landscaping but will provide privacy and some noise attenuation for the front facing patios until the landscaping matures. Fencing must also be reviewed and approved by the Building Official and Fire Marshal. The Commission agreed a formal site plan modification was not required for this fencing.

362 Scott Swamp Road

Russell Speeders Car Wash would like to install a six- or seven-foot black vinyl fence along a portion of their rear property line. Possibly along the majority of the rear property line. After they cleaned up the vegetation to the rear of the property, they found the site was more open and they feel this will be an appropriate buffer between the residences behind them and their car wash operation. Also, canopies were installed at each pay kiosk at the rear of the property. The applicant had inquired with staff prior to installation – these will be installed at 362 Scott Swamp

and 4 Wannowmassa. The Commission did not express concern with the proposed fence or the addition of the canopies.

319 New Britain Avenue

The Police Station is requesting permission to install a shed to store their mountain bikes. The shed will be located on the left side of the station, behind the security gate. A site plan and shed drawing were provided for clarification. The Commissioners agreed that a formal site plan modification was not required for this request.

500 South Road – Westfarms Mall

Sally's Apizza is proposing to install a halo lit building sign. The halo lit channel letters will be mounted to an aluminum panel at the exterior entrance, near Jordan's Furniture store. The sign area and location were discussed when the Jordan's Furniture signs came before the Commission for review/approval. The Commission concurred further TPZ was not required.

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. The 2023 Residential Housing review and due diligence link were shared with the Commission.

MINUTES

October 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

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

VOTED: To approve the October 21, 2024 Town Plan & Zoning Commission meeting minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

SJM