

**MINUTES  
TOWN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 14, 2024  
7:00 P.M. HYBRID MEETING  
275 BROAD STREET, WINDSOR, CT**

**Present: Commissioners Mips, Levine, Jaggon, Jepsen and Kuintzle, and Alternate Commissioners Hallowell (Via Zoom) and Harvey**

**Absent: None**

**Also Present: Town Planner Barz and Secretary Andrea D. Marcavitch**

**I. NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Mips opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

- A. Public Communications and Petitions (five-minute time limit per person) – None**
- B. Communications and Petitions from the Town Planning and Zoning Commission – None**
- C. Zoning Enforcement Officer’s Report – None**
- D. C.G.S. §8-24 Referral Requests**
  - 1. 458 Windsor Avenue, Wilson Gateway Park**

Town Engineer Suzanne Choate discussed the request and stated that the site plan had been approved on July 11, 2023 and no changes had been made to the plans since approval.

Commissioner Jaggon asked about the toilet facilities and if there would be portable or fixed toilets. Ms. Choate replied that they anticipate there will be fixed toilets.

**Motion: Commissioner Levine moved that the Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Windsor, pursuant to the provisions of Section 8-24 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, recommend to the Windsor Town Council the approval of the Wilson Gateway Park as describe above.**

**Commissioner Jepsen seconded the motion and it passed 5-0-0.**

- E. Pre-Application Scrutiny**
  - 1. 1095 Day Hill Road, 4-story building with 152 apartment units, I Zone, 6.29 acres, Alford**

Engineer and Land Surveyor Wilson (Skip) Alford, Jr., Principal Mark Greenberg and Architect Matt Wittmer of Phase Zero Architects in Simsbury were present. Mr. Alford discussed lot orientation and surrounding properties and businesses. He presented two proposals to the Commission. One was to add housing for the Hartford Athletics professional soccer team at 1001 Day Hill Road, where the players can live in one centralized area and meals can be provided for them. The second proposal was

to build an apartment building at 1095 Day Hill Road. Mr. Alford thought that the apartments would be a good addition to the area with all the amenities and surrounding businesses.

Mr. Wittmer presented the concept for the apartments and stated a 4-story multi-family building with 152 apartment units are proposed with a mix of studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units with 255 parking spaces. They envisioned a modern exterior with stone at the bottom of the building with large windows and balconies and increased landscaping with green space and walking paths. The building would have about 168,000 square feet with approximately 42,000 square feet per floor. They have 35 garden apartments on the first floor with some amenity space to include a generous lobby, community room and outdoor space. There would be an interior trash space and bike storage for tenants. Mr. Wittmer said that they would provide 223 parking spaces on site and use some shared parking spaces across the street at the Windsor Federal. He also reviewed the elevations and discussed the exterior materials, which would probably be a rainscreen with attractive minimalist railings and trellis at the top to break up the building.

Mr. Alford mentioned that the current zone does not allow for apartments and that the Plan of Development does not allow apartments on the south-side of Day Hill Road. He stated that he did not know how long ago the Plan had been written but that a few major things have happened. One is the piece of property they have did not exist and then Covid happened. He said it was planned that the area would be covered with office buildings and now a large percentage of them are now empty due in part to Covid and the changing work environment. He said that the Plan of Development should address the changes that have been taking place.

Commissioner Mips asked how many units would be two-bedroom. Mr. Wittmer said there would be 42 two-bedrooms and 98 one-bedroom apartments.

Commissioner Mips said she would have concerns with two-bedroom apartments because that might mean children and then they would have to figure out school buses. Mr. Barz said that he would address that in his comments.

Commissioner Levine said she was looking at the façade drawing and that it reminded her a lot of barracks. She hoped they could come up with something a little more pleasing with brick or stone.

Commissioner Levine said that she was surprised not to see a gym or a pool with athletes being housed. Mr. Alford said there is a complete gym in the existing building at 1001 Day Hill Road.

Commissioner Levine said that she did not see any laundry facilities in the building. Mr. Wittmer said washers and dryers would be in the units.

Commissioner Levine asked if there would be air conditioning in the units and they said yes.

Commissioner Levine asked if there would be an appropriate number of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. Mr. Alford said the State requires 10% of parking spaces be EV.

Commissioner Kuintzle asked how many soccer team members there are. Mr. Alford said that he believed there were about 20.

Commissioner Levine asked why they needed all of these apartments. Mr. Alford clarified that the soccer team would be housed at the 1001 Day Hill Road property and it has nothing to do with the apartments.

The Commission was thankful for the clarification. Mr. Alford said that there is an existing building that has the Dudley Town Brewery and Mojo's and in that building is where the professional soccer team would be housed.

Commissioner Mips asked if the apartments would be ADA compliant. Mr. Wittmer said yes and that 5% is required.

Commissioner Mips asked if they were considering brick for the outer façade. Mr. Wittmer said that the plans show stone but that they could consider brick.

Commissioner Jaggon asked if the coaches, managers and others who work for the team would be housed there as well. Mr. Alford said that he did not think they would be as the players are more transient and are coming from all over the world.

Commissioner Jaggon said that he was familiar with the team and believed that it was a great idea to have them housed in one building.

Commissioner Jepsen appreciated that the Plan of Development was mentioned and the general nature of Day Hill Road. He said this area was supposed to be the town's industrial/commercial complex and this seems transitional to something else and he had concerns. He understood that we are losing class A office space and is aware of the economics of it, but this seems like a big change to what Day Hill Road was intended to be from the early 1960's.

Mr. Alford said that the space is there but the offices are not going to be there anymore.

Commissioner Jepsen said that they might not be there. He said right now is bad but it does not mean it will not come back. He said that he is not against what they proposed but that it raised the question of what Day Hill Road would become if they were to allow this use.

Mr. Barz stated that Mr. Greenberg proposed apartments here a long time ago and the staff was concerned that they did not want the apartments to be an island unto themselves where everyone would have to get in a car to do anything. He said the Preserve at Great Pond was a place that allowed people to live, work, play and reverse commute. He said it has been 20 years and they find developers and then dig into the regulation and then they go away. From that standpoint, the presenters tonight can make an argument and say that they have more amenities than Great Pond but it is not necessarily made for apartments. He said softball and soccer parents are not going to live in the apartments but there is a beautiful selection of restaurants, a gym and a brewery there, which make it inviting. Mr. Barz stated that it was mentioned that the POCD (Plan of Conservation and Development) prohibited

residential development on the south-side of Day Hill Road. He said there was an application when they created Great Pond for apartments on the corner of Great Pond and Day Hill Road and it was appealed and then later heard again with new information and then it was denied. He said it is odd to approve a proposal for apartments after another was denied, especially for the person whose application was denied.

Mr. Barz acknowledged that updating a POCD takes at least 18 months from start to finish and the town is ready to seek out consultants to begin updating the plan. He said the best he can offer is to get a consultant on board and tackle Day Hill Road right at the start and investigate what we are going to do with all the empty office buildings. He stated that we need to comprehensively look at this corridor. He said what we do not want is someone from one of these residential apartment complexes speaking out against industrial development in the future.

Commissioner Mips said that she has seen it happen in other locations and would probably happen again if they are not careful.

Commissioner Levine asked why housing was not allowed on the south-side of Day Hill Road. Mr. Barz said that we broke the mold with Great Pond and it was going to have all of those amenities, so why start spreading apartments down Day Hill Road when originally there were 4,010 units approved at Great Pond.

Commissioner Levine said that Great Pond did not materialize into what we had hoped from the original concept. Mr. Barz said that it still has the potential for 1,500 apartment units.

Mr. Barz proposed to get started on the Day Hill Road portion of the POCD and adopt that chapter rather than wait to adopt the whole POCD.

Commissioner Levine asked about the time frame. Mr. Barz said that it would take at least a few months to hire a consultant.

Commissioner Jaggon asked if this commission could override putting apartments on the south-side. Mr. Barz said they could but it is something someone might point to. The Commission would have to adopt regulations to allow it and that would not be in conformance with the plan and they would have to explain why it was allowed.

Commissioner Mips said that she would like some professional people to give them some thoughts before they make any kind of decision on it.

Mr. Greenberg said that they have done more on his parcel in two or three years than Great Pond has done in 20 years. He said they are creating something really special there. He added that time tends to kill deals. He needs to make a decision on the housing for the athletes. He said the delay the Commission is talking about will possibly kill that.

Mr. Barz and Commissioner Mips stated that is a different thing. Commissioner Mips said he is proposing putting apartments/rooms at 1001 Day Hill Road and asked if they would have to come back to the Commission. Mr. Barz said yes.

Mr. Barz said they are asking to provide player housing for a soccer facility on-site. If the Commission is amenable to that idea, then he did not think they needed to wait on the plan for that. He said the housing for the players is different as we are talking about a single team, small number of apartments and there is a reason for them to be there and it is related to a use on-site.

Commissioner Mips said that makes sense.

Mr. Barz said the question before the Commission is do they prepare to let any and all offers come or do they plan this out and determine what locations are appropriate for apartments. He stated there are other properties that could use similar reasoning.

Mr. Greenberg said that he understood the argument about not having residential on the south-side, however they have 175 acres on the south-side and they have done something very special.

Commissioner Mips said when they started with the softball fields and such, the site made use of the off hours and cut down on traffic, which made sense. She was concerned about the impact of additional traffic and residents not wanting development built around them. She thought that the Commission needed to take a step back and hire a consultant.

Commissioner Kuintzle said that if the office building is converted to apartments, it may open up other big complexes to want to do the same.

Mr. Barz said that he did not see the team housing opening any doors and that it could be rationalized as an accessory use to their soccer training facility.

Commissioner Mips agreed.

Commissioner Jepsen said that it is important to look at what was the vision for Day Hill Road and what it may be morphing into.

Commission Mips said that they needed more expertise to address the issue.

Mr. Greenberg said they have their own recreational zone on the property and there is good reason to amend the recreational zone without amending the rest of the town on Day Hill Road. He added that he is a landlord and he receives a lot of calls about vacating and downsizing. He stated that he agreed with Mr. Jepsen that some will come back to the office but if 50% come back from the vacated space, they will be lucky. He said that it still leaves a lot of vacant space.

Commissioner Jepsen said that it is still an unknown and we do not know.

Mr. Greenberg said from what he sees, it is not coming back.

Commissioner Jepsen said he could agree that it might not come back to what it was but that does not mean that something else does not come back.

Mr. Barz said that it could be light manufacturing that comes back.

Commissioner Levine said that we will need to take into consideration the age of some of those vacant buildings on Day Hill Road.

Mr. Barz said that the buildings were not that old.

Commissioner Levine said no they were not that old but the argument was that it was more expensive to replace the HVAC than to build a new building.

Commissioner Jepsen said it is cheaper to tear down and rebuild than to convert office space to apartments.

Mr. Greenberg said the footprint of an office building is rarely suitable for an apartment.

Mr. Wittmere spoke about another project he worked on where they took an abandoned quarry and turned it into a true live, play zone. He said what is now being sought after are zones where all of these activities happen in a very tightly confined space. He said Mr. Greenberg has created that but is missing the housing component. He said what is vibrant and successful right now is very different than what was originally planned for Day Hill Road.

Commissioner Jepsen said that he appreciated Mr. Wittmere's remarks and kind of agreed with what he said but he thought the Commission needs to have a grasp on what the vision is for the entire Day Hill Road corridor. He said he is not against what they are proposing but wants to be a part of the fabric of what the area is becoming. He stated that whatever they propose may be duplicated up and down the area and the Commission wants to be sure they know what they are doing.

Mr. Barz reflected that the town approved 16.5 million square feet of commercial/industrial floor area in the last 18 years and people still think our taxes are too high. He said if we turn it all into residential then we have no room for economic growth going forward. He said that is a factor that we have to look at.

Commissioner Levine said that is why hiring a professional to guide us is the way to go.

Mr. Barz said that we have to have long-term vision. He stated that we made Windsor what it is by biding our time and saying this is what we want and we will wait until we get it. He said that it takes vision and patience.

Commissioner Mips agreed and said she was not sure what they would have to do for the team housing.

Mr. Barz said he believed they would have to amend the recreational zone.

**F. Re-Approvals/Revisions/Extensions**

1. **3.9 Site Plan – 220 Tradeport Drive**, Modification of lighting, I Zone, Howie
2. **3.9 Site Plan – 500 Groton Road**, Site modifications, I Zone, Ryan Companies

Town Planner Eric Barz reviewed the approved applications.

**G. Site Plans – None**

**H. Minutes**

1. **January 9, 2024**

**Motion: Commissioner Levine moved to approve the draft minutes of January 9, 2024 as presented. Commissioner Jepsen seconded the motion and it passed 5-0-0.**

**II. MISCELLANEOUS**

**A. March TPZ Meeting Date Change – Wednesday, March 13 or Tuesday, March 19**

The March meeting date had to be rescheduled due to a scheduling conflict with a town referendum for the Wilson Gateway Park.

**Motion: Commissioner Jepsen moved to reschedule the next regular meeting date to Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**Commissioner Levine seconded the motion and it passed 5-0-0.**

**B. CRCOG (Capitol Region Council of Governments) Commission Appointments – appoint a representative and alternate to serve on the Regional Planning Commission from the date of appointment through December 31, 2025.**

The Commission came to a consensus to continue alternate Commissioner Harvey’s appointment to serve as a representative on the CRCOG Commission and appoint Commissioner Jepsen to serve as an alternate.

**C. Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies (CFPZA) – Winter 2024**

**D. CFPZA 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference – Thursday, March 28, 2024 at Aqua Turf Country Club in Plantsville**

**III. PLANNER’S REPORT**

**A. Update on recent development – None**

**IV. BUSINESS MEETING**

**A. Application Acceptance**

1. **Text Amendment** – Amend sections 2.2, 8.6J, 10.5.12 & 15.2.3, Landscaping contractor’s yard, TOW

2. **Text Amendment** – Amend section 5.2.6R, Event facility, TOW

**B. Old Business – None**

**V. PUBLIC HEARINGS** – None

**VI. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS** – None

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: Commissioner Levine moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.**

**Commissioner Jaggon seconded the motion and it passed 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted, \_\_\_\_\_, Andrea D. Marcavitch, Recording Secretary on  
February 14, 2024.

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Jill Levine, Secretary