



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Council Chambers, 3 Primrose Street
December 6, 2018, 7:30 P.M.

Present: Donald Mitchell, James Swift, Barbara Manville, Corinne Cox, Bob Mullholland, Benjamin Toby, Roy Meadows, David Rosen

Also Present: Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning and Land Use and Christine O'Neill, Clerk

Mr. Mitchell opened the meeting at 7:31 PM.

Public Hearing

Application 18.25 (Modification 16.10) by Matthew D'Amico/Sunrise Church Hill Road, LLC., for an Amendment to Special Exception Permit 16.10 including modification of building size from 12,170 sq. ft. to 12,227 sq. ft., additional 39 parking spaces and (2) two remote ATM kiosks; signage for coffee tenant and associated grading, drainage and utilities, site plan titled "Proposed Development, 73 & 75 Church Hill Road, Newtown, CT," dated October 5, 2016 revised October 26, 2018.

Russ Solli of Solli Engineering in Monroe, CT presented the modifications put forth in the application, explaining that the developers were approached by a bank as a tenant, prompting the need for two remote drive-through ATM kiosks. Of the proposed thirty-nine (39) additional parking spaces, twenty (20) would be adjacent to the ATMs and nineteen (19) would be between the driveway off Edmond Road and the building. Mr. Solli also submitted an engineer's report.

Mr. Swift was concerned about the traffic that would be generated from adding the ATMs and asked specifically about additional trip generation. Mr. Swift, along with Mr. Mullholland, expressed further concern about the layout of the parking lot as a whole and the potential of adding too much unnecessary parking. Mr. Mullholland, after examining the new site plan with Mr. Sibley, asked for details to be submitted for the five new signs referred to in said site plan. Mr. Meadows and Ms. Cox suggested a type of traffic study inside the parking lot to evaluate both how the addition of the ATMs would impact circulation and the effectiveness of the overall layout.

Mr. Mitchell opened the floor to public comment. Bob Kocaba of Turrell Family Holdings (diner across the street) asked if the entrance on the right would also be an exit. Mr. Solli responded that it would be entrance-only. Amy Cox of 31 Pond Brook Road, Newtown, CT asked if the restaurant planned to have outdoor seating in the future. Mr. Mitchell responded that if that were the case, it would require another public hearing. Van Heim Sherwood of 16 Ox Hill Road, Newtown, CT asked about where delivery trucks would enter, unload, and exit. Mr. Meadows pointed out that there are two lanes behind the building, one for the drive-thru and one for commercial vehicles.

Mr. Sibley reiterated that Mr. Solli would need to produce three items for the Commission: (1) an updated traffic report reflecting the changes proposed in the application, including the number of additional trips generated, (2) details of the new signs proposed in the application, and (3) and a breakdown of how the total number of parking spaces was determined.

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to **continue the public hearing for this application** on December 20, 2018. Ms. Cox seconded. All members were in favor.

Application 18.26 by Clare Robertson & Peter Harrison, for a Special Exception Use Application for a property located at 26 Mt. Nebo Road, per the Town of Newtown Zoning Regulations 3.01.300, as shown in documents submitted to the Land Use Agency dated November 14, 2018, *and related* **Application 18.27** by Clare Robertson & Peter Harrison, for a Text Amendment to the Town of Newtown Zoning Regulations, Article III Section I – Farming and Residential Zones, as shown in documents submitted to the Land Use Agency dated November 14, 2018.

Mr. Harrison and Ms. Robertson own a 33-acre piece of property at 26 Mount Nebo Road, Windover Farm. It is currently a sheep farm with other agricultural uses, such as production of maple syrup and honey. They are seeking a text amendment and subsequent special exception that would allow them to construct a textile mill inside an existing dairy barn for “small batch production” that would allow them to convert fleece into spun and plied yarn. Mr. Harrison and Ms. Robertson would supplement the wool produced by their own flock from other local shepherds, in order to (1) meet market demands of blended wool, (2) help other small agricultural operations in town, and (3) make the project financially viable. The dyes that would be used are non-toxic and organic, akin to the graywater produced from a load of laundry, the machines would be no louder than a kitchen disposal system, and the deliveries would create less than a 1% increase in traffic on Mt. Nebo Road.

Ms. Cox asked if there would be a retail component to the farm, to which Ms. Robertson responded that she intended to make use of a farm stand to sell the products she produced and would sell the *service* of processing others’ wool, but would not open a retail shop selling others’ products. Ms. Manville asked where the water used by the mill would come from. Ms. Robertson said there were two wells on the property, one that services their residence and another that was dug several years ago which is currently being used to water the sheep and irrigate the fields. The latter would be used for the mill. Mr. Toby asked if the wastewater would be contained or released into a leach field. Ms. Robertson explained that wastewater from the mill would be processed by a normal septic system. Mr. Meadows asked how many people were needed to operate the machinery. Mr. Harrison explained that even though there are ten machines used in the process, each batch is done one-by-one, and can be operated by one or ideally two people. Mr. Mitchell asked what they consider “local farms.” Ms. Robertson shared that individuals from West Hartford, Reading, and Newtown itself have expressed interest. Mr. Rosen asked if there would be noise outside the building. Mr. Harrison answered that once the closed-cell foam insulation is added, the mill in operation would be virtually inaudible outside the building. Mr. Mullholland wondered if there was any educational value in the mill, to which Ms. Robertson replied that she would be happy to work with Housatonic school, but had yet to look into the details. Mr. Swift expressed concerns about what would be going into the groundwater, noting that the Commission (or potentially the Health Department) would have no way to monitor this. Mr. Sibley pointed out that the sanitarian who reviewed the application said the nature and volume of the wastewater from this operation would be similar to the greywater produced by a laundry operation. The Commission requested written documentation from the sanitarian stating the findings of his review. Mr. Mitchell suggested adding a stipulation to the text amendment that 10% of the raw product used in the mill should be raised on site. Mr. Toby disagreed, saying he would not want such a stipulation to inhibit their business, with Mr. Swift further pointing out that there would be no way to monitor this.

Mr. Mitchell opened the floor to public comment. Jennifer Rogers of 43 Platts Hill Road, Newtown, CT runs a weaving program and thought the mill would be a “terrific addition to our bucolic town.” She added that the 10% minimum seems arbitrary and unnecessary. Amy Cox of 31 Pond Brook Road, Newtown, CT spoke in support of the mill and identified other potential customers in Roxbury, Cheshire and local 4-H groups; she also requested that the ratio of raw material not be regulated. Phil Carol of 1 Field Stone Drive, Newtown, CT explained that he is on the Legislative Council and has been active in helping small farms stay in business. He was in support of the

mill and thought it had potential for field trips. Van Heim Sherwood of 16 Ox Hill Road, Newtown, CT was in support of the mill and thought opening it to other small farms would help them remain profitable. Tadd (inaudible) Mount Nebo was in support of the mill and did not support regulating the ratio of raw material. Pete Wlasuk of 105 Hattertown Road, Newtown, CT was not in support of the mill. He expressed several concerns about the operation, including (1) why a fan was required, (2) what substances were in the dyes and what kind of wastewater the mill would produce, (3) why they would bring in fleece from outside sources, and (4) a business being operated in a residential setting.

Mr. Swift made a motion to **continue the public hearing for the text amendment and the special exception** on December 20, 2018, with the intention of rewording the amendment to address possible future abuses of the mill. Ms. Manville seconded. All members were in favor.

Director's Report and Communications

Mr. Sibley informed the Commission that the Town of Monroe, Connecticut has increased the number of fowl allowed within a certain distance from the property line from twelve (12) to twenty-four (24). He then introduced Bob Crawford to speak on behalf of a new project taking place within NYA.

Mr. Crawford, the owner of four ice rinks in Connecticut, plans to convert part of the NYA's turf fields into an ice rink. Mr. Mullholland asked if the hockey teams from Newtown would have preference over others when scheduling rink time, and Mr. Crawford confirmed that this would be the case. As the rink will be part of an already-approved sports facility, Mr. Crawford's presentation was purely informational.

Minutes

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting dated November 1, 2018. Mr. Mullholland seconded. All members were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Adjournment

Mr. Meadows made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Cox seconded. All members were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Christine O'Neill, clerk*