

**CITY OF TORRINGTON
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
October 10, 2012**

Present: Richard Calkins, Chairman
Greg Mele, Vice Chairman
Doris Murphy, Member and IWC Liaison
Paul Summers, Member
Greg Perosino, Member
Donna Greco, Alternate
Christine Mele, Alternate
Jim Bobinski, Alternate

Also Present: Martin Connor, AICP, City Planner
Ken Slater, Attorney

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Calkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., Torrington City Hall Council Chambers, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT

2. Attendance/Announcement by Chairman:

Chairman Calkins announced present and serving on the Commission this evening will be Commissioners Greg Mele, Doris Murphy, Paul Summers, Greg Perosino, Donna Greco, Christine Mele, Jim Bobinski and Richard Calkins. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor, AICP.

Mr. Connor relayed details for the "Fit Together" program by the YMCA, featuring Mark Fenton. This is a healthy community design workshop. On October 16 Tuesday, there is a walking audit, and Commission members are invited for a breakfast with the Mayor and business leaders the next morning, October 17 here in the Council Chambers. Kim Barbieri, Wetlands Officer is involved with this project as well. More details were provided by Mr. Connor.

3. Minutes for Approval:

a. 9-12-12

MOTION by Mr. Summers to approve the 9/12/12 minutes, seconded by Ms. Murphy, unanimously carried.

4. Old Business:

a. Enforcement Update

No update by Mr. Summers.

b. Site Plan 1054

Applicant: Franklin Products
Location: 147 Water Street
Proposal: Parking lot expansion

MOTION by Mr. Mele to table this item, seconded by Mr. Summers, unanimously carried.

5. New Business:

- a. Site Plan 1055
Applicant: Torrington Parks and Recreation,
J. Brett Simmons, Superintendent
Location: Coe Memorial Park, 101 Litchfield Street
Proposal: Parking lot/landscaping improvements, electrical updates

Chris Ferraro with Fuss and O'Neil appeared before the Commission and explained the proposal and details of site improvements. Drainage issues will be resolved, parking was explained further in detail.

Mr. Connor read his memo to the Commission dated 10/4/12.

MOTION by Mr. Mele to APPROVE Site Plan 1055
Applicant: J. Brett Simmons, Torrington Park and Recreation
Location: Coe Memorial Park, 101 Litchfield Street
Proposal: Parking lot/landscaping improvements, electrical updates
with the following recommendation:

- 1. It is recommended that the applicant follow the advice of Acting Fire Chief, Gary Brunoli, contained in an e-mail and letter to the City Planner dated 9/11/12.

MOTION seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

- b. Site Plan 1057
Applicant: Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
Location: 540 Litchfield Street
Proposal: Parking Lot Expansion

MOTION by Mr. Mele to table this application, seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

- c. Site Plan 1058/Location Approval
Applicant: CTEK Motorworks / Idris Coma
Location: 835 New Harwinton Road
Proposal: Location Approval, and change of use to used car dealership
(Set public hearing date)

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to set a public hearing date of November 14, 2012, seconded by Mr. Mele, unanimously carried.

At 7:15 p.m. the Commission went into recess prior to the public hearing

6. Public hearing scheduled for Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 7:30 p.m.; City Hall Council Chambers, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT:

- a. Zone Change and Site Plan 1051
Applicant: Hartford Dispensary
Location: 241 Kennedy Drive
Proposal: Zone Change from IP, Industrial Park Zone to Alternate Incarceration, Substance Abuse/Mental Health, Medical Marijuana Dispensary Overlay Zone (ASM Zone) and Site Plan application for Torrington Health and Recovery Center
(Public hearing continued from September 12, 2012)

At 7:30 p.m. Chairman Calkins opened the public hearing and announced serving on the Commission this evening will be Donna Greco, Christine Mele, Greg Mele, Greg Perosino, Doris Murphy, Jim Bobinski, Paul Summers and Richard Calkins. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor and legal counsel Ken Slater.

Commissioner Greg Mele read the legal notice which was published in the Republican American.

Chairman Calkins outlined the procedures for the public hearing.

Attorney Diane Whitney of Pullman & Comley in Hartford, CT appeared representing the applicant. Ms. Whitney distributed further information to Commission members. The facility will be open six days a week and methadone will be the only medication given for addiction treatment. Information was distributed from a State Agency that showed the need for this facility, last year 257 Torrington people were treated. Numbers are provided showing how many Torrington residents are treated at other facilities in the State.

Ms. Whitney stated many of these facilities are located near day care centers, parks, etc. and it is not a problem. Loitering in the parking area and the site is not allowed and the parking lot is monitored. If a problem occurs, that person is no longer allowed to be treated.

Ms. Whitney responded to Officer Pisarski's request that the signals at Torrington West and Kennedy Drive to be upgraded, and the client is agreeable to updating those signals. Other responses were reviewed by Ms. Whitney.

Robert Hiltbrand, R. R. Hiltbrand Engineers and Surveyors, 575 North Main Street, Bristol, CT, appeared before the Commission. Requested information regarding the plans was submitted. Mr. Hiltbrand had given a secondary review during wetlands, and a memo dated October 3, and Mr. Hiltbrand was in the process of giving finalized revisions back to Mr. Walsh, within the next day or so.

Russell Buchner, Winsted, CT appeared before the Commission and referred the parking chart with the Commission, referring to page 6 and the narrative. They have been conservative with their traffic expert, Scott Hesketh. Details were provided as far as the numbers of patients going through the Bristol, CT. They have already leased six spaces on the other side of Route 8 for staff, and they have a commitment from Charlotte Hungerford when the project goes through that we have six spaces across the street for staff if needed. They are going to purchase a van that they are going to bring staff to the facility. About ten percent are going to be public transportation. They can pick people up in town as well. Dosing schedules were discussed.

Scott Hesketh of F.A. Hesketh & Associates, appeared before the Commission with a October 10, 2012 supplemental report which was distributed to the Commission. Mr. Hesketh provided more traffic information and peak hour information observed at the Bristol facility. 15 parking spaces are planned for the proposed site, details were given and plans to proceed in the event of parking problems.

Mr. Connor noted this individual site is being looked at as to whether it is sufficient for the use and the necessary parking, not looking at off-site parking plans.

Mr. Calkins inquired if the volume of traffic and left hand turns would create a cueing problem. Mr. Hesketh referred to the traffic report and he believes there will not be a problem.

Phil Richman of Coventry, CT appeared on behalf of the Hartford Dispensary, and noted they are experts in managing traffic at their facilities and patient treatments over the past 40 years.

Ms. Whitney provided further comments regarding the fast turnover at these facilities and the parking will not be an issue as patient turnover is quick.

Brian Grossman of Winsted, CT appeared and stated he is a patient at the Bristol, CT and he has been on methadone since 2000. This is needed in the community.

Benjamin Grippo of Newington, CT appeared, he is a counselor for the Hartford Dispensary in Bristol. He stated there is not a parking issue in Bristol.

Amanda Richnavsky of Torrington, CT appeared in favor as a patient of the Bristol clinic. There is nothing for people in Torrington, and that is why people turn to drugs.

Gary Eucalitto of Torrington, CT appeared in opposition. The figures provided by state documents do not differentiate between the needs of Torrington residents born here, and those shipped in here by the halfway house system. He is fearful that this commercial area will be negatively impacted possibly permanently, as this is just another excuse for the State to ship people into Torrington, which has been done during the last ten years and everyone knows that. Where are all the people in support of this application tonight that will use the facility? There is one person tonight, and one person at the last meeting. Mr. Eucalitto would expect to see 60 or 70 people from Torrington in support of this. He's not so sure there are that many people in Torrington who need this facility. The loitering issue is familiar to him, as Mr. Eucalitto lived in Bristol for years, and there is a bus that goes past that Bristol corner every five to ten minutes, it is served by mass transit around the clock as it is an urban setting. The loitering issue has not been addressed as people being picked up by van, and dropped off elsewhere. Just because this is a non-profit facility doesn't mean there are not people financially benefitting by this facility, as people do work there and provide services and have jobs there. There is no doubt there will be needles disposed of in the area, he has seen this in Trumbull where he works, there are schools in the area, and a cancer treatment facility across the street. The applicant is changing numbers to make themselves look better.

Doreen Brenner of Deercrest Drive, Torrington appeared in opposition. She's concerned with the two minute quick stop for methadone, there's no counseling, no questions of the patient. Does this really work?

Mike Clark of Elliston Street, appeared in opposition. Just because something works in Bristol does not mean it will work here. He does not agree with the numbers the applicant provided, it has been tailored to tonight. People stay on methadone for years and years and they will have more patients as time goes on.

Faith Longobucco of 118 Rock Creek Lane, Torrington, appeared. She noted the traffic study was done in July when school buses are not running, and a study needs to be done in the Fall and in the Winter. More study needs to be done, before this neighborhood is impacted, and there has been an increase in car robberies. A cap needs to be put on the number of people who use this facility.

Beth Daley of Deercrest Drive, Torrington, appeared in opposition. The numbers don't make sense. There is a need, but this is not the right place.

Bill Battle, Red Mountain Avenue, Torrington, appeared in opposition. Torrington has stood by people, we have many half way houses. Many heroin addicts sell methadone to get money for heroin. Housing issues, particularly for seniors, have been adversely impacted. And it all started with people trying to help others, with a negative consequence. Love can destroy communities, in the attempt to help people. Numbers of social service organizations hinder and bring despair to the community. The social implications are great, methadone is a drug that can be sold. The patients coming to this facility will not be timely as we are being told. Social implications to senior citizens will be negative and great.

Paul Fitzgerald of 1177 Torrington West Street appeared in opposition. His family owns property that fronts Kennedy Drive since 1929. This will damage property values and damage the reputation of Torrington, and it will put criminally predictable people on the street here. Realistically what business would put their most valuable asset next to a methadone clinic. Access to this site is limited, the road is steep and dangerous in the winter, drivers won't be looking for walkers on the street. It is too far away from the half way houses in Torrington. We need to send a message that Torrington is not a dumping ground for other city's problems. It is very disappoint

that they can come and disrupt an area that is valuable to this town. These people are not interested in the best interests of Torrington.

Mario Santorio of Deer Path, Torrington, CT appeared in opposition. He spoke of medicinal marijuana which can open the door to changes in this business. He has seen groups of people waiting outside on the sidewalk in Hartford in a methadone clinic area. It doesn't take two minutes. Kennedy Drive is not the right area.

John Silano of Crestwood Road, Torrington, appeared in opposition. He disagreed with some comments from the last meeting, Methadone does have a street value despite what was said. The U.S. Military says they are losing the battle with drug addiction. He does not believe that this clinic will not take advantage of the medical marijuana when it becomes available.

Anthony Basso of Chamberlain Street, Torrington, appeared in opposition. This is a tranquil neighborhood and they do not need the problems that have been associated with another halfway house in town.

Mr. Connor read his memo dated October 4, 2012 to the Commission.

Mr. Calkins announced this item will be held on the agenda for a vote/decision no earlier than November 14, 2012.

Mr. Connor noted for the record all the outside correspondence that has been received.

Ms. Whitney stated the only additional information they will be providing are responses to City Engineer Matt Walsh's comments.

Ms. Whitney provided responses to comments made, she was previously for four years Assistant Attorney General in Torrington, in the Juvenile Court, and she had to take people's babies away from them, often permanently because they had addiction problems that were not being treated properly. When she had to take a baby away, it was never a victory, it was a terrible defeat. If those parents had been on methadone treatments, they would not have lost their children. There was a problem, and there was no solution. They will accept a cap of 125 patients if the Commission sees fit. Regarding loitering, people are free to wait in the building for rides, etc.

Ms. Whitney stated they did not make figures up, those numbers were obtained from their Bristol facility. As far as criminals, the danger is people who are not on methadone, not the people who are being treated. As far as property values, properties are anonymous. There is no evidence of increased criminal acts near methadone clinics. The Hartford Dispensary is a medical facility, which fits in here very well. Opiate addiction is a disability and there is a need for it.

Attorney Slater noted if changes are made to any engineering plans, the public hearing can be left open if there are any comments from the public on any new engineering plans, information to be received on this only.

Mr. Hiltbrand, Hiltbrand Engineers, stated new information will be sent in the format of revisions to a drainage report, and minor changes to the plans itself to address number changes from the drainage information.

Mr. Connor noted the applicant has wetlands approval only if they can address City Engineer Matt Walsh's comments. Technically a wetlands permit has not been issued. Mr. Connor read Matt Walsh's memo dated October 3.

Ms. Whitney will submit a letter granting a 30 day extension, and a copy of the lease.

The public hearing will be continued for the purpose of the applicant's engineer addressing the comments of Assistant City Engineer Matthew Walsh's comments in his October 3, 2012 memo.

At 9:49 p.m. Chairman Calkins declared this public hearing continued to 7:30 p.m., October 24, 2012 so the applicant's engineer can address the comments from City Engineer Matthew Walsh dated October 3, 2012. If Assistant City Engineer Matthew Walsh submits a memo stating all comments have been addressed, the Commission will read that into the record and close the public hearing without testimony at that time. The public's opportunity to comment will be limited to comments only on new information submitted by the applicant's engineer Mr. Hiltbrand.

7. **Public hearings scheduled for Wednesday, October 24, 2012, 7:30 p.m.; City Hall Council Chambers, Room 218, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT:**

- a. Special Exception 12-274
Applicant: Haynes Aggregates-Torrington, LLC
Location: 3217 Winsted Road
Proposal: Bi-Annual renewal of earth excavation and accessory retail sales

Passed until 10/24/12.

- b. Zoning Regulation Amendment Proposal
Applicant: Torrington Planning and Zoning Commission
Proposal: Proposed Amendment to the Zoning Regulations, new Section 3.1, Subsection 3.16, service and sales of boats, boat accessories and engines

Passed until 10/24/12.

8. **Adjournment:**

At 9:50 p.m., motion by Mr. Mele to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.