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Town of Stafford  
Planning & Zoning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
February 13, 2018  
7:00 p.m. – Veterans' Meeting Room  
Warren Memorial Town Hall

Members Present: Nancy Ravetto, Chair  
Kathy Bachiochi  
Ron Houle  
Cynthia Rummel  
Leonard Clark

Also Present: Dave Perkins, Zoning Enforcement Officer  
Doug Fassett, Alternate  
Guy Hesketh, P.E., F. A. Hesketh Assoc., representing Aubuchon Realty  
Eamon Moran, Senior Vice President, Aubuchon Realty  
Public

### **Public Hearings**

Aubuchon Realty Company, Inc., 39 West Stafford Road, Map 47, Lot 18, Zone HI. Special Permit application to construct 2 retail structures totaling less than 20,000 sq. ft. in a HI zone in accordance with section 5.2, line 16 of the zoning regulations and a temporary waiver of 21 percent of parking under section 6.2D.

Nancy Ravetto, Chair, opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m. Kathy Bachiochi read the legal notice. Nancy Ravetto explained the procedure for a public hearing and established a quorum with Nancy Ravetto, Chair; Kathy Bachiochi, Ron Houle, and Cindy Rummel, seating alternate member Leonard Clark for Gene Julian.

Guy Hesketh, P.E. and Principal with F. A. Hesketh & Associates, representing Aubuchon Realty, attended the meeting with Eamon Moran, Senior Vice President and Treasurer of Aubuchon Realty. Guy Hesketh noted the property is located at the corner of West Stafford Road (Route 190) and Middle River Road. He recapped Aubuchon Realty's original proposal and the application that was approved about two years earlier, which had included renovating the former school bus building at 39 West Stafford Road and adding additional square footage for a new Aubuchon store, building a large multi-tenant building, and a small kiosk building. He explained that Aubuchon was unable to find tenants for the original plan and have come back before the Commission with a plan with a smaller footprint.

This new plan proposes two retail buildings, instead of three. The first would include the renovation of the existing 10,900 square foot bus building but with no addition. The second

building is a proposed 7,228 square foot building to house an auto parts store. The kiosk building has been eliminated from the plan. This proposal calls for less than 20,000 square feet of improvements. They are also asking for a temporary waiver of 21 percent of the required parking spaces. They proposed 76 spaces and are asking to create 15 fewer spaces. The eliminated parking spaces would be along the western side of the former bus building and nine spaces in front.

The stores would be accessed by one 24 foot driveway coming in from West Stafford Road, which would be used by patrons and possibly some smaller delivery vehicles. Larger delivery trucks would access the property from Middle River Drive to a loading area in the back of the building, where ample room would be made for trucks to make 180 degree turns.

Guy Hesketh said their plan would eliminate two curb cuts on West Stafford Road, adding a new one in a better location for sight lines.

The dumpster area in the back of the building will be on a concrete pad, screened by a white vinyl fence similar to that at Woodland Springs. The proposal includes two outside display areas for the Aubuchon building, one along the northwestern side of the building in the waived parking area and another on the eastern side of the building. In the area in front, they are proposing a propane tank filling facility, surrounded by wrought iron fencing.

The required 30 foot buffer area would include vegetation to screen some of the parking. A portion of this area falls in the waived parking area in front of the building. Guy Hesketh said there is an estimated 3,300 square foot paved area within the 30 foot buffer area, and their proposal would reduce the non-conformance by more than half to about 1,500 square feet.

Guy Hesketh reviewed the utilities. Public water service is available via Middle River Road and they will follow the direction of Connecticut Water Company. The WPCA has reviewed the application and has indicated there is adequate sanitary service capacity for the auto parts store to tie into city sewers. There will be underground electrical service.

Guy Hesketh reviewed the storm water management and grading plan. He reviewed the topography of the site. If viewing the property from Route 190, the land slopes up toward the rear of the property and so most runoff would flow toward the drains on Route 190. The plan is to connect the storm drains and roof drainage to the existing drainage system. For the rear part of the property and a portion of the roof runoff, the plan is to build a detention basin. They do not plan to clear much of the property in back except to make room for the truck turn around area. They are also proposing some trap heads for catch basins.

Guy Hesketh reviewed the sedimentation and erosion control plan. The plan is to install a construction exit with an anti-tracking pad. Silt fencing for erosion control will be installed down gradient during construction and a permanent two foot apron with rip-rap would be installed on the east side of the Aubuchon building. Because this site is less than five acres, they do not have to register with DEEP, but they will follow the guidelines of their general permit.

Guy Hesketh said they submitted a comprehensive traffic report. He said they originally planned to install a 20 foot half section, but the Department of Transportation requested they widen the road (Route 190) to provide a bypass lane. The DOT also reduced the design to a 19 foot half section. He said the location of the new driveway, with one drive instead of two, is a safer design with regard to sight distances, and although the plan has been approved by DOT, the contractor will be required to obtain an encroachment permit with DOT.

Eamon Moran reviewed the architectural plans for the Aubuchon building, and Guy Hesketh distributed some small scale pictures of the plans being reviewed. He said they incorporated three paint schemes to help break up the look of the building. Three cupolas were also added to break up the elevation of the existing roof line. The plan also adds some non-functional barn doors for aesthetic appeal. White panels affixed to metal help to break up the elevations. The plan also incorporates a non-structural, lit, ornamental canopy with decorative columns for the outdoor displays. This would be a ten foot covered area like at their existing store.

Eamon Moran reviewed the architectural plans for the auto parts store (O'Reilly's) building. He took into account the recommendations made at their last meeting for the auto parts store design. Recesses were added to the wall planes on the east and west side. Parapet walls break up the length of the building. The parapets also screen the HVAC and break up the perception of a flat roof. The design calls for three earth tones---portobello, latte, and a softer tan to also break up the look.

Nancy Ravetto said she liked the darker stone look from an earlier submittal she received. She said it better frames and offsets the sign color. Eamon Moran said his contacts with O'Reilly's Auto Parts did not want to go with the stone finish but he did not expect there would be an issue with using a darker color. Ron Houle said the darker brown almost makes the building look like there are three separate buildings. (It was later discovered that the portobello color in this proposal was the same as was sent in the earlier proposal and it was just the ink printout that made it appear different.)

Nancy Ravetto said Dave Palmberg, an alternate member who could not be there that evening, had recommended adding some bushes or other additional landscaping to the Middle River Drive side of the property as it was somewhat plain on that side. Guy Hesketh said they plan for some white pines in the back corner and some red maples along that side. They also want to keep as many of the front trees as possible and will add some shrubs to screen the parking.

Leonard Clark provided a picture of another O'Reilly's store which had a white sign instead of a red one and asked if they could substitute that type of sign. Eamon Moran said he believed the photo was of an existing building that was attached to a CVS store, and O'Reilly's looks at it differently when they are creating a free-standing building. He said the red and green signs are a part of their branding.

Dave Perkins noted he had received the certificates of mailings and that the appropriate signs had been posted for this public hearing.

Ron Houle asked if there were any concerns about the propane facility being located so close to the building. Eamon Moran said they will follow the requirements of the local and state authorities for the location.

Leonard Clark said he liked the design, but would greatly prefer if they did not have a red sign. Eamon Moran said he would pass along his suggestion to the tenant for consideration.

The public hearing was opened to public comment. Gail Panciera of 38 West Stafford Road asked if developer had to submit a new traffic plan to DOT. Guy Hesketh said they had previously submitted a plan and a copy of the revised site plan, but the contractor would have to make an application for the encroachment permit.

Gail Panciera asked about the septic situation for the existing former bus building. Guy Hesketh said both the existing building and the proposed building would tie into the sanitary sewer system. Gail Panciera also asked about a potential increase in runoff. Guy Hesketh said this design results in a net decrease in runoff from storm events. Gail also asked if there are any screening requirements for the frontage for residents facing it from across the street. Cindy Rummel said she believed that screening requirements are based on the particular zone a development is located in. This proposal falls in the Highway Industrial zone. Dave Perkins reviewed those requirements. In the thirty feet of landscaping area, one shade tree at least 3" in caliper is required for every fifty feet.

Gail Panciera said her mother's property will be impacted with the widening of the road. She asked if anyone would be responsible for replacing the split rail fence and her mailbox. Eamon Moran said his company would be responsible for that. Guy Hesketh said the driveway area impacted would be repaved. Gail Panciera asked about protecting the two maples in her mother's front yard. Guy Hesketh said they could put a construction fence around the trees. He said the contractor would take precautions to minimize any disturbance to the property and all work would be done in the Right of Way. Gail Panciera also asked if runoff can be allowed to go onto an abutting property. Guy Hesketh said their plan would maintain the existing runoff. They do not calculate any additional runoff to the east side of the property.

Cindy Gerra of 33 West Stafford Road asked how big the detention basin would be and if it would always be filled with water. Her concern was that this could become a haven for mosquitos. Guy Hesketh estimated the basin would be 20 feet by 150 feet in size. He said he would expect it to have water immediately following a storm but it will be designed to handle overflow through a high level inlet which would then be piped to the storm drain system. The water left in the detention basin would filter into the soil. It is a sandy site and should leech well. He does not anticipate standing water for any significant time. Cindy Gerra asked if there would be any landscaping around the basin. Guy Hesketh said the plans are to have it seeded with a no-mow, New England conservation wildlife mix.

Donna Wright of 195 West Stafford Road asked if this proposal would include a sidewalk, as the last proposal two years ago had. Guy Hesketh said the last approval required a sidewalk because there was anticipation that patrons might be walking up Middle River Drive to access the stores

in the second building. This will no longer be the case. He reviewed their multiples discussions with the DOT. The end result was that it did not make sense at this time to install a sidewalk. A future comprehensive sidewalk plan might want to consider putting in a sidewalk on the south side of West Stafford Road.

Cindy Gerra inquired where snow would be piled after a storm. Eamon Moran showed the likely locations, most of which would be in the rear of the site. He said if she had any concerns about the piling of snow after a storm to contact him and he would talk with their plowing contractor.

Ron Houle made a motion, seconded by Kathy Bachiochi to close the public hearing for Aubuchon Realty Company. All were in favor.

Agenda:

1. Call to order and establish a quorum.
2. Review minutes of January 23, 2018 Regular Meeting.
3. Discussion and possible action on public hearing.
4. Review zoning regulations;
  - Agri-tainment Regs
  - Accessory Buildings
  - In-law Apartments
  - Auto repair and gas station regulation
  - New proposals
5. New and Other Business
6. Adjournment

**1. Call to order and establish a quorum.**

Nancy Ravetto, Chair, called the regular meeting to order at 8:15 p.m., establishing a quorum with Nancy Ravetto, Chair; Kathy Bachiochi, Ron Houle, and Cindy Rummel, and seating alternate member Leonard Clark for Gene Julian.

**2. Review minutes of January 23, 2018 Regular Meeting.**

Kathy Bachiochi made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2018 regular meeting, seconded by Cindy Rummel. Kathy Bachiochi, Cindy Rummel, Nancy Ravetto and Ron Houle voted in favor. Leonard Clark abstained. Motion carried.

**3. Discussion and possible action on public hearing.**

Nancy Ravetto said she liked the vertical component of the darker portobello color in the columns, and how it picture frames the O'Reilly's sign.

Kathy Bachiochi made a two-part motion, seconded by Cindy Rummel as follows:

(A) Motion to approve the temporary waiver request of 15 parking spaces as permitted by section 6.2d. , and

(B) After review of the application and information received at the Public Hearing it has been found that this application meets or exceeds the Zoning Regulations and that the standards and criteria in sections 8, 10, and 5.11 have been met. In addition, the application conforms with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, particularly sections 2.5, 2.7.7, and 5.6.2.

Motion to approve the Special Use Permit/Site Plan application of Aubuchon Realty Company, Inc. , 39 West Stafford Road, Map 47, Lot 18, Zone: HI, subject to the following conditions:

1. Final approval for specific Sanitary Sewer requirements to be obtained from the WPCA prior to the issuance of any building permits for the new building.
2. A pre-construction meeting be held prior to any construction with the ZEO, Director of Public Works and the Town Engineer/Building Official.
3. An as-built of survey of the foundation be required prior to framing and a complete as-built survey showing all improvements and grading be required upon completion of site work and prior to the issuance of a C.O.
4. Following approval, five paper sets and one mylar set of plans shall be submitted to the ZEO for approval signatures. Plan set shall include the approval letter with conditions as well as a signature block for the Planning & Zoning Commission members. Following the signing of plans the mylar set shall be recorded in the Town Clerk's office. One paper set of signed plans will be returned to the applicant.
5. Sign permits shall be required for all signage.
6. A performance bond in the amount of \$30,000 or an amount determined by the Commission shall be posted to the Town of Stafford. The performance bond shall not be released until all bonded work is completed to the satisfaction of the appropriate agencies.

A vote was taken on the motion and all were in favor.

**4. Review zoning regulations;**

**Agritainment** – The Commission reviewed the changes made to the proposed zoning regulations. These will be sent back to the Agriculture Advisory Commission tomorrow. Dr. David Mordasky, Chair of the AAC, was in attendance and said their Commission approved of the changes. A public hearing for these proposed changes was scheduled for the March 27, 2018 PZC meeting.

**Accessory Buildings** – The updated changes to the verbiage for Accessory Buildings was reviewed. These also will be included in the March 27, 2018 public hearing.

**In-Law Apartments** – The updated changes for the verbiage for In-Law Apartments was reviewed. There was a discussion whether the Commission wanted to *require* that property owners must change the home back to its original single family home condition if the family member in the in-law apartment leaves. There was consensus to remove Item J, and re-alphabetize the remaining requirements. With this change, the proposed regulations for In-Law Apartments will also be included in the March 27, 2018 public hearing.

Kim Milikowski of Stafford Street noted that there are some errors in the proposed zoning regulations that refer the reader back to an incorrect location in the regulations. Dave Perkins asked that she bring those to him in his office and he will correct that language.

**Auto Repair and Gas Station Regulation** – Dave Perkins noted that Section 7.6.B.2 is written in such a way that there could not be any gas stations in Stafford. There was consensus to re-word Item 7.6.C.7 from 200 feet to 100 feet and to reference residential “structures” rather than “dwellings.” Doug Fassett asked if they would want to also include a limit on the number of vehicles allowed at a repair station so as not to create the establishment of junkyards. Ron Houle said the number of vehicles allowed should be based on the size of the individual lots and sometimes repair stations have to hold onto a vehicle for some time while waiting to hear from insurance companies. Nancy Ravetto noted that the lots would be required to be screened. There was a general consensus that this is not a large issue in town. This item will also go forward at the March 27, 2018 public hearing.

**New Proposals** – None.

## **5. New and Other Business**

Nancy Ravetto reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission has been served a notice of a lawsuit by Andrea Eldridge of 127 Stafford Street regarding the approval of the farm market for the Milikowskis. The notice does not indicate a date (just “Tuesday”) in February of 2018. Dave Perkins has retained Attorney Mark Branse to represent the Commission, and has sent a tape of the public hearing out for transcription. It is hoped that the Milikowskis will file for intervener status. It was noted that Andrea Eldridge was on the list of certified mailings.

Dave Perkins said the Commission should see an application in the near future for a new Big Y gas station. He provided a picture of what the proposed building would look like.

Dave Perkins reported he has been working with the owner of the property next door to Basil’s Restaurant. The property owner had an addition added and wants to rent it out. He had some trees cut down and a retention basin added. Flooding resulted in the back of the property. The property was re-surveyed with findings that the line was incorrect and Basil’s would lose about 40 feet of their parking. The neighboring property owner to Basil’s will provide an easement to park cars on his property. There was no site plan, but Dave Perkins has been working with both property owners to resolve various issues.

Nancy Ravetto said she has been asked to submit a budget proposal that separates out Zoning from the Building Department. She said First Selectman Mary Mitta felt it would be good if each department had its own line items for better tracking. The Commission discussed various items, including uniforms, GIS mapping, and supplies. It was noted they have budgeted \$5,000 for legal services, which will not likely be enough considering the lawsuit issue they just discussed. The Commission also discussed increasing the \$2,000 proposal for consulting to \$5,000 and using that money if necessary for legal fees if less consulting services were needed.

**6. Adjournment**

Ron Houle made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kathy Bachiochi. All were in favor. The February 13, 2018 meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Annie Gentile  
Recording Secretary