

MIDDLEFIELD PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the September 16, 2019 Regular Meeting

Erin Howard called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Attendance:

Members		Alternates	
X	Boyle, Kevin	X	Hinsch, Ken
A	Brown, Jay		
X	Ekblade, Eric		
X	Howard, Erin	Others	
X	Wojas, Jan	X	Warner, Bill (Interim Town Planner)
		A	Curtis, Brian
		A	Russ, Jerry
		A	Bailey, Ed, <i>ex officio member</i>

A=Absent
X=Present

Ken Hinsch was seated on the Commission.

Public Comment

None.

Report of the ZEO

Erin Howard stated that Jerry Russ had sent his report. There has been substantial progress with the solar project on Route 66. There has been movement with a couple of properties at the lake.

Bill Warner added that the plans are almost done for the self-storage facility and some of the area has been cleared out for a future site visit.

Report of the Town Planner

Bill Warner reported that he attended a meeting today about the Town Planner's position which has been re-advertised and 10 completely unqualified applicants were received. Laura Francis suggested going through an executive search at CCM. Frank DeFelice thought it may be because it is a shared position, but there no real consensus was reached. Mr. Warner will establish some part-time office hours here in Middlefield.

Chairman's Report

Erin Howard had nothing to report other than a conference is being held next month and the town still needs to figure out what they are going to do with the Town Planner position.

Approval of Minutes - August 19, 2019 Meeting

Erik Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Jan Wojas, to approve the August 19, 2019 meeting minutes, as presented. Motion carried, with Kevin Boyle abstaining.

The meeting recessed at 6:40 PM.

Eric Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Jan Wojas, to re-open the regular meeting and suspend it for the public hearing at 6:54 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

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PUBLIC HEARING
6:54 PM

Powder Ridge Veterinary Hospital, LLC; Request for modification to special permit approval and revised site plan for expanded parking at Powder Ridge Veterinary Hospital, 375 Baileyville Road, Middlefield, CT

Eric Ekblade read the legal notice into the record.

Erin Howard explained that the applicant has been in contact with the Town Planner and the plans before the Commission are a revised set of plans. The applicant would like to begin a paving schedule this year.

Jim Fasano, facilities manager, and Blaire Michael, the primary doctor of Powder Ridge Veterinary Hospital were present. They had originally wanted to expand their parking lot from eight spaces to 22 spaces, but have removed some of the spaces up by the road to allow for more of a buffer. There are three

different varieties of plantings on the roadside along with some grass. Most of the parking spaces will run east-west. They are also proposing lighting in the parking lot.

There will be a handicapped parking space in front of the building, with a new sidewalk and handicapped ramp. There will be a light near the handicapped parking space and three lights throughout the parking lot. The office closes by 6:00 or 6:30 and the lights will be shut off after that. Kevin Boyle asked how tall the light poles would be and it was found to be 16 feet. The lighting will be minimal.

They will also be installing some drainage and have received approval from Inland Wetlands. The water will sheet across the parking lot into a grass swale and then on to a mini retention area with a perforated pipe. The entire parking lot will be paved in two phases, with the binder this Fall and the top coat in the Spring.

Kevin Boyle asked why they would binder now and top coat later. Mr. Fasano explained that his contractor's concern was that he wanted to make sure it was absolutely compacted, but he did say that if the weather holds out, they will do both phases this Fall.

Kevin Boyle asked for an overview in response to the engineer's comments. Bill Warner reviewed Brian Curtis' comments and explained that the applicant has responded to each of them. Mr. Curtis has reviewed the revised plans.

At this point, Erin Howard opened the hearing to the public.

Eric Stone, 385 Baileyville Road, stated that he was concerned to have a lot more cars closer to his property and the noise will rise. The trees were a noise and privacy buffer. He was curious to know what would be placed in that area.

Jim Fasano reviewed the plans with Mr. Stone and explained that six- to eight-foot trees will be planted. He reviewed where the property line is and explained that there will be a 10-foot swale. Mr. Fasano noted that many of the trees that are being removed are dead and present a safety hazard.

Erin Howard reviewed that a lot of trees had been cleared and the current plans do not show any fencing, but do provide for some landscaping. She noted that the Commission can consider more noise and privacy buffers, per Mr. Stone's request. Mr. Stone did agree that his house is close to the property line, but he would like to see a fence in the area. Bill Warner noted that he had also suggested a fence. Mr. Stone also asked about the lighting and Mr. Fasano stated that it will be full cut-off lighting with no bulbs visible.

Another member of the public wanted to be sure they take into account that they do not obscure the sight lines getting off the property.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Howard asked the Town Planner to review his comments.

Bill Warner stated that a revised letter has been received from Brian Curtis, the Town Engineer, on September 13, 2019 in response to Milone & Macbroom's plans.

It was then noted that since the public hearing started early, no new people from the public have entered the room.

Mr. Warner reviewed that Milone & Macbroom have revised the plans to address both Mr. Warner's and Mr. Curtis' comments. Brian Curtis did state that there were areas where more topography is required and there should be a note indicating when the lights would be on and off. Mr. Warner noted that the regulations state that the parking lot should be shielded from the road, so a landscape buffer has been provided on the eastern side, along the road, which will not affect the sight line. On the northern side, Mr. Warner suggested a combination of evergreen trees and fencing. He felt that there should be a significant division between the commercial property and the residential property.

Bill Warner reported that Inland Wetlands has determined that a permit was not required. He reviewed the 1986 original approval and no conditions were of any concern.

Jan Wojas felt that the buffer was a little too close to the road and felt it should be at least five to 10 feet further off the curb. Mr. Warner explained that they were to the property line, not the curb, and there would be another 10 feet to the curb. Mr. Wojas felt that the buffer should be kept at least 20 feet off the curb. He also agreed with having mixed plants and trees and would like to see that extended to the delineation of the wetlands. Mr. Wojas also asked how the snow will be removed and Mr. Fasano explained that he will do it and push it down the hill to the upland review area. Mr. Wojas also felt that the lights were a decent cut-off but suggested that be put on the building as well.

Kevin Boyle asked if the islands were going to be bituminous curbs and Mr. Fasano wasn't sure. It was not listed as a curb, but he may like to do that. Mr. Boyle also asked if a wheel stop would be installed at the handicapped spot and Mr. Fasano agreed that he would do that. Mr. Boyle also asked about directional signage and Mr. Fasano explained that the handicapped space would be designated. They will also stripe the parking spaces. No current signage will be moved.

Erin Howard noted that the regulations state that dumpsters must be shielded with some type of enclosure. She explained that it would need to be fenced or landscaped. It was agreed that doors would not be necessary. Ms. Howard added that parking is also supposed to be shielded from the road and while they are doing that in the bigger parking area, the parking at the top is not shielded. Mr. Fasano explained that the trees in that area have been there for years and it is pretty dense.

Kevin Boyle asked about existing lighting on the building that is not shielded. Mr. Fasano explained that there are residential floodlights with motion sensors and one light on a post. They will change out the light over the door that is not shielded.

Jan Wojas stated that the plans show 20 parking spaces, not 22, and impervious coverage is 19.9 percent. Mr. Fasano noted that they worked hard to be sure to keep the coverage under 20 percent. Mr. Warner

asked how many cars currently park there on a busy day and Mr. Fasano stated that there are eight spots, with 10 staff cars which is why they started this project. This will also provide an area for deliveries. Blaire Michael added that they try to schedule patients to keep the number of cars down and will continue to have the staff park in front of the garage. Dr. Michael also noted that they have no plans to increase the size of the business in terms of the number of customers they see.

Erin Howard asked about overnight stays and if they need access to the property at any time of the day. Jim Fasano noted that they have had a case or two when the animals have stayed overnight in the last six months. Blaire Michael explained that they are working to send everything to emergency hospitals and overnight stays at the property are rare. She felt that having just one light on at the doorway would be sufficient.

Mr. Fasano explained that they will probably be removing most of the vegetation to the north of the property as a lot of it is dead and underbrush. They plan to replant trees in the area and will likely plant grass as well. Erin Howard felt that the clearing has completely opened up the connection between a commercial property and a residential property. She felt that the Commission will need to take that into consideration. Bill Warner is concerned about dogs and owners trespassing on the neighbors' property.

At this point, the Commission members felt that they had enough information to close the public hearing.

Eric Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Jan Wojas, to close the public hearing and reopen the regular meeting at 7:44 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

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Powder Ridge Veterinary Hospital, LLC; Request for modification to special permit approval and revised site plan for expanded parking at Powder Ridge Veterinary Hospital, 375 Baileyville Road, Middlefield, CT

Erin Howard explained that she would like to move this application along with some conditions and allow the Town Planner to monitor the project. She did feel that they need to make sure there was enough buffering between the neighbors' house and the property and would want to require a fence as well as trees. She would also want to be sure they take sight lines into consideration. Kevin Boyle stated that the number of feet needed to be identified and Bill Warner added that that was one of Brian Curtis' conditions and he had suggested that all low branches be removed within the DOT right-of-way.

Ms. Howard explained that the public hearing is closed and they cannot accept any comments from the applicant or the public at this time. She also wanted to be sure that all lighting be cut-off lighting and a time for the lighting to be turned off. She felt that all conditions made by the Town Engineer should be included as well and that the curbing be reviewed by the Town Engineer as well. Kevin Boyle suggested that traffic arrows and/or signage be included and would defer to the Town Engineer on that.

Ms. Howard stated that there needs to be a wheel stop in the handicapped parking spot and that the dumpsters need to be shielded on three sides. She would like to have the Town Planner give a final approval on the project as well.

Jan Wojas noted that the drawings state that the handicapped ramp is a 1:12 slope and he felt there was enough room to change that to 1:20 and they would not be required to have handrails which he believes would improve the curb appeal.

Kevin Boyle felt that the Commission should specifically identify the size of the fence. Bill Warner felt that it should be placed just off the property line, but Mr. Boyle felt that that could be left up to the Town Planner. He also felt that the Commission may need to see a cut sheet of the fence as the good side of the fence needs to face toward the neighbors and he wasn't sure if they could specify the material of the fence. Mr. Warner felt that the Commission could specify that as a condition. Ms. Howard suggested that the fence be the length of the parking lot, but Kevin Boyle wanted to have the fence go beyond the front line of the building. Mr. Boyle hoped that the fence should be wood and should blend into the landscape over time. It was agreed to leave this up to the Town Planner.

There was discussion about the types of trees in the landscaping and it was agreed that 10 white pines would probably be good as they grow fast. Mr. Warner also recommended that the fence be cedar. The type of landscaping around the dumpsters should also be included on the plan. Kevin Boyle suggested that the Town Engineer also look at directional signage. Mr. Boyle also suggested that a bond be required for the landscaping and fencing. Bill Warner explained that bonding for improvements on private property is a bit tricky and suggested that appropriate bonding be determined by the Town Engineer and be in place prior to commencement of work. Kevin Boyle explained that there is a 15-day appeal period and the applicant can get their bonding in place during that time.

Erin Howard explained that they are going through this process so that the applicant does not need to come back before the Commission. She thought that most of this could have been resolved before this point if the applicant had been made aware that Mr. Warner was the Interim Town Planner.

Ken Hinsch asked what the applicant can do if they reject the proposed conditions and Bill Warner explained that their only real recourse would be to appeal to Superior Court. Ms. Howard added that the Commission has the ability to oppose this because it is an amendment to a special permit application.

Eric Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Kevin Boyle, to approve the request for modification to special permit approval and revised site plan for expanded parking at Powder Ridge Veterinary Hospital, 375 Baileyville Road, Middlefield, Connecticut with the following conditions: (1) installation of cedar fence constructed along northern property line that runs approximately the length of the parking lot, per Town Planner's final approval; (2) ensure all existing and new outdoor lighting be full cut-off lights; (3) all parking lot lights be turned off by 8:00 PM; (4) all conditions be met that were issued by the Town Engineer's letter dated 9/13/19; (5) a wheel stop be provided at the handicapped parking spot; (6) all curbing to be reviewed by the Town Engineer; (7) all dumpsters to be shielded on three sides with landscaping; (8) Town Engineer to review and recommend any directional signage, if needed; (9) bonding

for landscaping and fencing to be determined by the Town Engineer and in place prior to commencement of work; and (10) subject to final review and approval of the Town Planner. Motion carried unanimously.

Erin Howard explained that there is now a 15-day appeal period and the applicant now has the ability to finalize their plans and work with Bill Warner and Brian Curtis. Mr. Fasano asked if he was now required to install a cedar fence or if they can use another type of fence. Kevin Boyle felt that if the applicant wanted to use another material that would be an improvement to what had been approved, that could be taken care of at the administrative level. Ms. Howard felt that that should be at the discretion of the Town Planner. Mr. Warner would be concerned with the quality of the fence. There was also some discussion about the time of year for plantings.

Mr. Fasano thanked the Commission for moving this along quickly.

Adjournment

Eric Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Ken Hirsch, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First