

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

Minutes of the January 13, 2020 Special Meeting

Jan Wojas called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Attendance:

Members		Alternates	
A	Boyle, Kevin	A	Hinsch, Ken
X	Brown, Jay	X	Pizzo, Paul
X	Ekblade, Eric		
X	Wojas, Jan	Others	
		X	Newton, Robin
		A	Curtis, Brian
		X	Russ, Jerry
		X	Bailey, Ed, <i>ex officio member</i>

A=Absent

X=Present

Paul Pizzo was seated on the Commission.

Public Comment

None.

Report of the ZEO

Robin Newton explained that Jerry Russ could not attend tonight, but he wanted to report that a CO has been issued for the solar farm installation.

Jan Wojas had asked Mr. Russ about the parking across from Liberty Bank and Ms. Newton will follow up with Mr. Russ. Mr. Wojas felt it was too close to the road.

#### Report of the Town Planner

Robin Newton reported that she will draft some by-laws for the next meeting. She will send them out ahead of time for the Commissioners' review. The first thing she would like to do before jumping into content update on the regulations is to reorganize them. It was generally agreed to have Ms. Newton go ahead with that. She would also like to implement using DropBox for the agenda packets and plans which would be more cost effective. Jan Wojas thought it might be important to keep the option for hard copies available.

Robin Newton added that they are in the process of looking at the application process, including a checklist with sign-offs.

Jan Wojas stated that Ms. Newton's report was very well-done. She commented that that was a standard report that the Commission can expect to get from her.

#### Approval of 2020 Meeting Schedule

Robin Newton stated that they chose the fourth Wednesdays as they don't conflict with any other town meetings. She noted that the meetings in November and December are very close to holidays, but the scheduled can be adopted as is and those meetings can be changed as they get closer.

Eric Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Jan Wojas, to approve the 2020 meeting schedule, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

#### Election of Officers

Jan Wojas explained that he would like to wait until all members are present. It was agreed to postpone the elections until the next meeting.

#### Chairman's Report

None.

#### Approval of Minutes - December 16, 2019

Jan Wojas made a motion, seconded by Jay Brown, to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2019 meeting, as presented. Motion carried, with Eric Ekblade abstaining.

Paul Pizzo made a motion, seconded by Jay Brown, to suspend the regular Planning and Zoning meeting until 7:00 PM when the public hearing starts. Motion carried unanimously.

Eric Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Jay Brown, to reopen the public hearing at 7:00 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

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Public Hearing

7:00 PM

Connecticut Self Storage of Middlefield, LLC; Application for Special Permit or Special Exception; Self Storage Buildings with 30 x 30 ft. Office, 129 Meriden Road, Middlefield, CT

Jan Wojas reviewed that this is a continuation of the public hearing and John Corona, from Lang and Corona, was present on behalf of the applicant. J.R. Clisham, a principle of the firm, and Jim Sakonchick, a design engineer, were also present. Attorney Corona presented the certificate of mailing for the notice and the sign was posted.

Attorney John Corona went on to review that the project is on the southerly side of Route 66 and is a little bit east of the Agway building. The site has a driveway leading into an open field. It is in the Design Development district. He presented a rendering that has been refined over the past couple of months. Attorney Corona also reviewed that a text amendment had been approved that allows the self-storage facility. There will be no outdoor storage. No repairing or activities will go on inside the units. There is no plumbing other than the climate-controlled portion of the structure.

Attorney Corona explained that they went before the Wetlands Commission on December 18, 2019 and they determined there was no impact. They recently met with some of the Crestview neighbors to hear their concerns and feel that they have met those concerns.

Attorney Corona explained that they have met with the Fire Marshal and Fire Chief. Chief Tyc had requested a dry hydrant system with one hydrant on Route 66 and two locations within the site. Chief Tyc has reviewed the plans for the system and Brian Curtis has made some comments on that as well.

The facility will be open 365 days a year, from 6:00 AM until 10:00 PM. The area will be lit after dark. There is a gate that controls access via a card. The office hours will be 9:00 AM until 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. There is a cut sheet included in the plans showing a light fixture, but Attorney Corona had an updated cut sheet tonight. They have recently agreed to move the pole lights to the opposite side of the driveway to minimize any impact on adjacent properties.

Attorney Corona has been working with the Town Planner to develop conditions of approval. He would like to add a few last minute developments, including the relocation of the lighting poles and some supplemental tree planting that was requested along the southerly and easterly perimeter of the property.

Jim Sakonchick, an engineer and land surveyor, stated that he has been working on facilities like this for 20 years throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. He went on to review the maps and explained that

the structure was minimized so that it did not encroach on the wetlands buffer. There will be one entrance off of Route 66 by way of the existing driveway, with parking available for the first building that includes the office. There will then be a gate that allows access to the storage buildings. The buildings will be about 9 feet tall. They have greatly exceeded the 25-foot setback, with a 40-foot buffer from the property line with the neighboring condominiums.

Mr. Sakonchick also reviewed that there are two detention areas that are positioned to discharge water on uplands more than 100 feet from the wetlands. He also noted that there is more than 20 feet from the property line and 40 feet from the pavement at the front of the building. With the building set back, there will be almost 70 feet of grass. He reviewed the parking spaces and stated that they will actually have more than what they need. They have also proposed a row of arbor vitae and some trellis work in order to break up the appearance of the side of the building. Brian Curtis had suggested relocating another buffer and Mr. Sakonchick has proposed that. He presented a submittal with the relocated trees and also pointed out that the lighting fixtures are all dark sky and shine down. As requested, they moved the lights outside the curve and cut the height of the poles down to 10 feet. They have also agreed to extend the tree line to the last building to intercept the line of sight there.

Mr. Sakonchick summarized that this land is well-suited to this type of use and will generate taxes for the town.

Attorney Corona submitted the letters from the Fire Chief and Fire Marshal for the record.

Robin Newton stated that she had sent a copy of her report and has handed out two additional conditions of approval. She feels that the application is complete and all of the Town Engineer's comments have been incorporated into the plans. The only remaining item was changing the elevation to the storm water detention basin and that will be accepted as a condition of approval. That will be reviewed by Brian Curtis before Ms. Newton signs the final plans. She had recommended 12 conditions and there are two additional conditions as well.

Ms. Newton explained that she always writes a motion to approve an application, however the Commission can always vote in the negative.

At this point, Jan Wojas opened the hearing for public comments.

Joyce Scallon asked exactly where the driveway is located on Route 66 and the building itself. Attorney Corona reviewed the location of the Agway building and showed where the entry is located between the two existing houses. He reviewed where the buildings will be located and showed the areas of the property that will not be built on. Wetlands are on either end of the site, but there is no activity within the wetland or the buffer area.

Sal Warena, a resident of Crestview, stated that Attorney Corona has met with the neighborhood residents a number of towns and addressed their questions and concerns, but not everyone had a chance to

attend. Neighbors have asked him to ask about the noise level of the air conditioning and dehumidification and if there will be any impact on the neighboring wells.

Jim Sakonchick explained that only the first building will have air conditioning and the units proposed will be the same type as those outside of the condominium units. They will be located on the west side of the building in order to keep the refrigerant lines close. Mr. Sakonchick added that they will have a well, but they will have very little water usage. There is one toilet and one worker with an occasional customer using the bathroom. He also added that there is considerable distance from the ground water areas and any activity that will be done. Mr. Sakonchick added that any contamination would have to be cleaned up by the operator.

Joyce Scallon asked how many units are being proposed and how large the property is. J.R. Clisham, the applicant, explained that there are 677 units being proposed. He reviewed his background in the self-storage business and that he will not be an absentee owner. The units will range from 5 x 5 to 10 x 35 feet. The climate-controlled building will be kept within 48 degrees to 78 degrees and those units will range from 5 x 5 to 10 x 20. There is at least 30 feet between all of the buildings. Ms. Scallon asked how much traffic will be generated and Mr. Clisham explained that it would be rare to have more than three cars in front of the building. He felt that the traffic may be higher when they first open, but the average trip volume would be maybe 30 to 35 cars a day. Most vehicles are pick-up trucks, trailers and vans with not many large trucks.

Mr. Clisham also explained that his customers will come primarily from a three-mile to a five-mile radius. He stressed the positive effect that this will have on businesses to be able to store their items. Mr. Clisham clarified that the office will be open 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. The busiest time is usually Saturday from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM. People can gain access to their storage units up until 10:00 PM every day. The total property is approximately 21 acres and they are proposing to use approximately 20 percent of that.

Jim Morowski, a resident of Crestview, thanked the applicant for their response to the neighbors' concerns. He asked if the lighting will be on during the whole night and Mr. Clisham stated that it will be kept on all night. Mr. Sakonchick explained that there are just enough lights for traffic to get around the buildings.

Karen, from Crestview, has no concerns about traffic as she has used storage areas in the past. In terms of natural growth of the white pine trees, she felt that the soil is terrible and thought they may want to consider something else. Mr. Sakonchick thanked her for the information and hoped that they could incorporate white pines or equivalent types of trees. Attorney Corona suggested that be a condition of approval.

Another resident of Crestview asked about the area of grass at the front of the property and if they will plant any trees in that area as well. Mr. Sakonchick reviewed the plans to show the tree line and grassy area.

Mr. Warena asked about the color and materials of the roofing and Attorney Corona explained that he had emailed that information and the surface of the roofs will be Galvalume which is a dull silver color. Mr. Sakonchick explained that roofs have to be a lighter color to keep the heat from generating inside the building. Attorney Corona explained that the building color is shown on the drawings and are white and sandstone in front and just sandstone in back.

Jay Brown asked about the trees that are below the top of the slope and how long it will take for them to do their job as a visual buffer. He also asked if there was a fence for security. Attorney Corona explained that there will be a black vinyl chainlink fence surrounding the open areas that wraps into the tree line. The trees will be 5 to 6 feet when they're planted and the drawing shows the maturity and elevation. Attorney Corona added that there is a tree line present now.

Jan Wojas asked about the elevation of the storage building vs. the driveway of the closest house. Jim Sakonchick reviewed the elevation of the homes on Crestview, the trees on the property and the height of the buildings. Attorney Corona added that the neighbors' preference was to not have the slats installed in the fencing.

Jay Brown also asked about the hours of operation and wondered what was to stop people from using their key to go in to party at the back of the site. Mr. Clisham explained that there will be cameras throughout the entire property and they would see that. They also have a number of rules in their lease. Mr. Brown also asked if automobiles can be stored and Mr. Clisham stated that automobiles can absolutely be stored and they have a lot of people who do just that. Owners of the vehicles are responsible for any damage done to the concrete and they suggest under-car barriers. Mr. Clisham added that the gate card will not work from 10:00 PM until 6:00 AM.

Another question was asked about the fencing blocking the natural pathways of the wildlife and Mr. Sakonchick explained that they will not be blocked from passing through and reviewed the fence location.

Jan Wojas made a motion, seconded by Paul Pizzo, to close the public hearing regarding Connecticut Self Storage of Middlefield, LLC, application for Special Permit or Special Exception; Self Storage Buildings with a 30 x 30 ft. office, 129 Meriden Road, Middlefield, CT. Motion carried unanimously.

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Connecticut Self Storage of Middlefield, LLC; Application for Special Permit or Special Exception; Self Storage Buildings with 30 x 30 ft. office, 129 Meriden Road, Middlefield, CT

There was discussion about the landscape buffer and adding the two additional conditions.

Eric Ekblade made a motion, seconded by Jay Brown, to approve application #1101-19 of Connecticut Self Storage of Middlefield, LLC. Applicant; Barbara Penney and Ann Charton, Owners; for a Special Permit and Site Plan. Approval for the construction of a self-storage facility and associated office with a

total building footprint of 87, 350 square foot with associated site improvements on property located at 129 Meriden Road, Middlefield, CT. (Parcel ID 2/23) Zone DD1, with the conditions 1-15 in the Town Planner's memo. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Jan Wojas made a motion, seconded by Eric Ekblade, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Debi Waz*

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First

## **Middlefield Planning and Zoning Commission**

2020 Meeting Schedule  
Fourth Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)  
Middlefield Community Center Meeting Room

\*January 13, 2020- Special Meeting

February 26, 2020

March 25, 2020

April 22, 2020

May 27, 2020

June 24, 2020

July 22, 2020

August 26, 2020

September 23, 2020

October 28, 2020

November 25, 2020

December 23, 2020