

THE ZONING COMMISSION
Town of New Fairfield
New, Fairfield, CT 06812
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
DATE: January 16, 2024
TIME: 7:30 pm
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Call to Order

John Moran called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

Present

John Moran, Kevin VanVlack, Mark Lamanna (late), Jane Landers, Gabriel Gouveia, Tomas Kavaliauskas (alternate), Ken Huwer (alternate), and Town Official Zoning Enforcement Officer Evan White.

Business Items

Discussion regarding new hire for Zoning Regulations consultant.

John Moran stated that the First Selectman has sent a letter to Miller Planning Group to terminate the contract with them. John Moran also stated that additional monies will need to be asked for in the new budget due to the change. The bid process will start over and be posted according to the rules and guidelines of the Town of New Fairfield. The process should take around 30 days.

Discussion of elderly housing in the Town of New Fairfield on behalf of developer Rock Harbor Builders. Discussion of multi-family district for elderly housing on behalf of developer Rock Harbor Builders.

Neil Marcus, attorney for Rock Harbor Builders, stated that the owners are trying to decide the best options for the use of property, formerly known as the October House, keeping the needs of the town in mind. Neil Marcus went over the reasoning behind the previous zoning regulations being set at five acres. Neil Marcus inquired about if the commission is in favor of a modification to reduce the lot size to four acres. Christian DaCunha stated that Rock Harbor Builders is not the owner of the property. The owner of the property is JMC which consists of three owners. He stated that the lot is currently zoned for four single family homes. He stated that the need in the town is for elderly housing, affordable housing, and not for single family homes. They have looked at options for buying adjacent properties but that idea did not pan out and was not feasible. Neil Marcus stated that small retail is challenging in the center of New Fairfield and is supported by data in the market place. Neil Marcus questioned what the state is wanting for affordable housing. He stated that this is an opportunity to address the needs for affordable housing and elderly housing. John Moran asked for the exact acreage. Christian DaCunha stated that the acreage is right around four acres. John Moran clarified that the question being asked is whether the four-acre lot would be considered for elderly housing by the Zoning Commission. John Moran stated that he thinks the lot is an ideal spot and great opportunity for the Town of New Fairfield to move forward with what the state is looking for. Kevin VanVlack stated that the location is key, being close to town, for affordable/elderly housing. Kevin VanVlack questioned the five-acre rule and what their senior housing ideas currently are, is it apartments, or what is the housing structure. Christian DaCunha stated that they are looking at small apartment style buildings that meet the current elderly housing regulations, condo style housing, and the main intent is to have it feel like a village style living setting. Gabriel Gouveia clarified that location of the lots. John Moran explained the location of the lots. Gabriel Gouveia asked about the water and septic. Neil Marcus stated that if the buildings are on septic, then it could hold at the max 50 bedrooms. Christina DaCunha stated that the property would max out at 24 units with the capacity for septic. John Moran asked about tapping in to the town water system. Christian DaCunha stated that there has not been any talk about tapping into the town water system and that all studies have been done

with septic. Gabriel Gouveia stated a concern about the septic being overworked with this number of units. Jane Landers would like to know if these would be senior housing, affordable housing, or senior affordable housing. She also requested a picture/drawing of what the result would be. Neil Marcus stated that the plan at this point would be favoring the senior housing that would have an affordable component. He stated that with the current plan would be six units per acre. If it is senior housing then the design concept would be a village style that would highlight parklike space that seniors would use. He stated that these lots would be an introduction to the center of New Fairfield and the look of the village should be welcoming and make a statement about New Fairfield. He stated that the aesthetics will be an important part of the community and that the builders are aware of this. Tomas Kavaliauskas stated the he would also like to see drawings of how the buildings will look. Gabriel Gouveia asked about how many units would be affordable housing. Neil Marcus stated that a small percentage would be set aside for affordable housing and that all units would be senior housing. Gabriel Gouveia asked if it would be like the project in Kent. Neil Marcus stated that it would be like Kent. Ken Huwer stated that 25% is the limit for affordable housing, that the location is a major entrance and exit to the town and will have to look right, and would like to see drawings. He inquired about the abutting property owners and knowing if they are onboard with this project. He also stated that purchasing rather than renting would be a better option due to pride in ownership. He stated a concern about the space being set up so that it looks right and that there is not too much in one space. Neil Marcus stated from his perspective and feedback from the commission that the concept should be pursued. He understands the concerns and these will be addressed as the project moves forward. Ken Huwer inquired about a precedent being set of moving from four acres vs five acres. John Moran stated that a precedence is not being set. John Moran stated that there is a buffer and that it will be looked at moving forward. Ken Huwer suggested putting a memorial to the October House on the site. Kevin VanVlack stated that this would be change to the current regulations so this would have to voted on and approved as well as have a public hearing on. This is first steps to a formal submission.

Adjournment

Kevin VanVlack made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 pm. Jane Landers seconded the motion. **All in favor.**

John Moran	Yes
Kevin VanVlack	Yes
Jane Landers	Yes
Gabriel Gouveia	Yes
Mark Lamanna	Yes

Received by email on 01/22/2024 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield