

PLANNING & ZONING
COMMISSION
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TOWN HALL ANNEX
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES*
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 REGULAR MEETING
(CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM)**

PRESENT: Chairman Rick Tomasetti, Vice-Chairwoman Melissa-Jean Rotini, Secretary Eric Fanwick, Commissioners Jill Warren, Matthew Murphy, Christopher Pagliaro, Christopher Wilson, Ken Hoffman, Mark Ahasak

Also present was Town Planner Michael Wrinn.

REGULAR MEETING

A. CALL TO ORDER at 7:05 PM by Chair Tomasetti

B. SEATING OF MEMBERS – Members present were seated by Chair Tomasetti.

A brief moment was taken to honor the victims of September 11, 2001

Motion was made to change order of discussion of Pre-Applications, moving AMS Acquisitions ahead of Fuller Development. Motion passed unanimously.

C. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. SDP#6-23 – Lupinski, 53 Sugar Loaf Drive**, to rebuild existing retaining wall and associated site grading

Mr. Tomasetti stated that this will be held over until the next meeting on September 26. Mr. Wrinn stated that more information had been received from the applicant and that it will be posted on the website.

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- 2. REG #23402 – MCL Piersall, LLC**, regulation change to allow for dance studio and similar artistic endeavors on first floor of commercial buildings in the WCZD.

Mr. Wrinn reviewed the details of the request to eliminate a section of the zoning regulation. He stated that WestCOG had no comments. Mr. Wrinn mentioned that certain artistic endeavors are allowed on the first floor within Wilton center, such as karate yet not others, such as dance studios.

Mr. Chris Lavin, representing the applicant was introduced. He stated that his clients would consider the second floor of the Piersall building, however would prefer the first floor for its visibility.

There were no comments/questions from the Commission so Mr. Tomasetti opened the hearing for public comment. Wilton residents Kelly Morron, Barbara Geddis, and Peter Squitieri were in favor of the regulation change.

Mr. Murphy made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Fanwick. The motion passed unanimously.

D. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE ACTION ON PUBLIC MEETING ITEMS

SDP#6-23 – Robert Lupinski, 53 Sugar Loaf Drive

This cannot be acted on as it was postponed until the September 26 meeting.

REG #23402 – MCL Piersall, LLC

No comments/concerns/questions from the commission. A resolution of approval will be created and shared at the next meeting.

E. SITE DEVELOPMENT PLANS / POSSIBLE ACTION

- 1. SDP #8-23 – Wilton Library**, 137 Old Ridgefield Road; request to add library banners.

Mr. Wrinn said that this application had been discussed at the ARB/VDDAC Committee meeting. The response from the Committee was favorable, with only font size of the bottom right lettering being an issue. Ms. Caroline Mandler and Mr. Sandy Stein, representing The Wilton Library, joined the meeting. Ms. Mandler explained that the application would create sixteen double-sided, permanent banners that would hang from existing light poles in the library parking lot, incorporating words from the library mission statement. Ms. Mandler then showed

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Slides depicting where the poles were located on the property, and the various banners. After receiving feedback from the ARB/VDDAC Committee, the font size of the bottom right text was enlarged. Mr. Stein explained the development of the signs, and emphasized how the colors stand out and bring vibrancy, contrasting the white color of the library.

Mr. Wrinn then explained that this application is an alternative sign program over which the Commission has oversight.

A motion was asked for that would grant Mr. Wrinn the authority to amend the resolution to allow the banners. Mr. Fanwick made the motion, seconded by Mr. Murphy. The motion then passed unanimously.

2. SDP #7-23 – Glengate, 47 Old Ridgefield Road; modify signs and landscaping.

Tabled

F. PRE-APPLICATIONS

1. AMS Acquisitions, 131 Danbury Road; proposed 208-unit multifamily development

Mr. Wrinn began by stating that the meeting between the AMC Acquisitions team and the ARB/VDDAC Committee on September 7, 2023 was very positive, and that the Committee had very few negative comments.

Mr. Craig Flaherty (President, Redniss & Mead) representing the applicant, introduced himself and his team. Mr. Flaherty stated that after the team's meeting with the ARB/VDDAC Committee, the Committee stated that it was a project that they could endorse. He then described the logistics of the property, and stressed that it sits in a DE-5 zone, which allows for the DE-5R multifamily overlay.

Mr. Rafi Mitnick (AMS Acquisitions) introduced himself and then introduced Mr. Seelan Pather (Beinfeld Architecture) who discussed site detail. Two defining questions based on the volume of residents: how to create a sense of place, and how to create a sense of community. He then displayed an early rendering, and started by concentrating on the forward most two-story, New England vernacular building, designed to be the signature of the development and create the first impression. Meant to be a jewel box that glows at night. He then described how the second story walkway from the amenity to the primary, 4-story building will create a covered entry area.

Mr. Pather discussed the 4-story building behind the amenity building. 208 units spread over four floors, with 18 units having lofts. They are planning 339 parking spaces, 1.6/unit, with 228 covered and 121 on the periphery, and approximately 18,000 SF of internal courtyard.

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Mr. Jason Williams then discussed the landscape architecture. He said that there are three main exterior components that can be used to create a sense of space and community and improve the ecology of the site: the front public space that is viewed from Danbury Road; central corridor (entry area under bridge); and rear restoration area.

In front of the amenity building there is a lawn that abuts Danbury Road, with a meadow behind which includes meadow plantings and zig-zagged stone walls. The pick-up/drop-off area, which is curbless, shows colors, textures, pavers, trees, bollards, and planters which will delineate the vehicular and pedestrian spaces. In the rear of the property there will be the riparian buffer, with overlook seeding areas, infiltration, rain gardens, and a new, completely restored buffer. Also, a trail system with seating areas. White birches shade the area.

Mr. Tomasetti seated Vice-Chairwoman Rotini and opened the meeting to comments from the Commissioners. Mr. Tomasetti liked the overall presentation. He then asked about grade change, as the 141 Danbury Road development did. Mr. Williams responded that the grade increases 3' from Danbury Road to front entry. Mr. Tomasetti then asked about pedestrian access from the sidewalk. Ms. Rotini inquired about fire equipment access, referencing the bridge. According to the Wilton Fire Marshall, some vehicles can move beneath the bridge, but the primary route would be around the building. Ms. Warren commented about pedestrian access to the building and, overall, felt positive about the application. Mr. Flaherty stated that they are working with the CT DOT regarding traffic on Danbury Road. Mr. Wilson stated that he liked the plan. Mr. Fanwick asked about affordable housing units; 10% will meet the affordable unit requirement. Mr. Pagliaro liked the plan, with his only comment being that on the west side of the four-story building there would be no setting sun view from the internal courtyard. Mr. Ahasic expressed concern about the Rings End throat and the throat of this development and asked about the separation between the two. Mr. Daly said that this has been discussed with the DOT district office and that they had no objection.

Mr. Wrinn then stated that the applicant needs to continue working with the various departments, including DPW and Fire. There will likely be a request for a peer-reviewed traffic study

2. Fuller Development, 64 Danbury Road; proposed 100-unit multifamily development

Mr. Pagliaro recused himself. Mr. Wrinn then introduced the applicant, Mr. Sam Fuller, who then introduced his team. He also gave a brief description of some of the comments made during ARB/VDDAC meeting on September 7. He also noted that the applicant will need a steep slope regulation change.

Mr. Fuller started by providing some history of his involvement with sight, dating back over two years. His work on the 141 Danbury Road development and difficulties with a 64 Danbury Road tenant slowed the process. He then mentioned challenges building on the property, as there is an elevation change, moving from front to back, of approximately 25', as well as adjacent buildings

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exhibiting a mixture of differing architectural designs.

Mr. Fuller then began discussing the floor plan. What is being proposed is direct entry buildings, with every unit having a private entry. The buildings would be built in modules of three, with each module having two garages and a one-bedroom apartment in the back of the garages. Above the one-bedroom apartment and garages would be a (2) two-bedroom town homes, back to back.

There are north and south entries/driveways into the development after exiting the circle. The driveways are formed by mews, which are lined by trees on both sides, on islands, separating the garages. Also, the site is constrained by a very large drainage conduit running through the development. The other driveway curb cut runs by a small amenity building (~1500 SF, pool, gym, landscaped area).

Mr. Fuller then started speaking about the elevation. He stated that he thinks flat roofs make the most sense for this site for both technical and architectural reasons. Flat roofs would blend in with area flat-roofed office buildings, and mechanicals can be placed there. Before Mr. Lessard spoke, Mr. Fuller explained that the site plan being shown was new, not the one which was shared at the ARB/VDDAC meeting, taking input from the Committee. It would feel like an individual entry building so the focus was on making the entries straight. Mr. Lessard said he believes the design is not finished, that privacy fencing and landscaping could be used between units and Danbury Road, and seating on sidewalks. He also said that three of the buildings had been moved from the original site plan to allow more space in the road entry and more room for trees. He said that the design appeals to a consumer that is not looking for a traditional apartment, instead a build to rent which would be larger with more amenities and features.

Mr. Tomasetti opened up the meeting to comments from the Commissioners, and started. He began by acknowledging the difficulties of the site. He then said that he does not like the two points of entry. The swimming is in full view of the entry circle. He also said that more work needs to be done on the architectural side, such as the modulation, which is too clunky. He wants a full site model. Mr. Ahasic is concerned about the traffic plan relating to the circle at the entry and asked if there could be a back entrance/exit to Grumman Hill. Mr. Fuller stated that topographically it would not be feasible. Ms. Rotini didn't like the placement of pool. She expressed concern about the drainage ditch, and taking away green space, so she wanted to know what the storm water plan is. Mr. Fuller stated that there is storm water drainage under the parking lot and that the situation is safe. She also expressed concerns about placement of hydrants and having a rendering with a view from the street. Regarding regulations, this is zoned D-5, and Mr. Fuller said that for sites of over twenty acres the steep slope ordinance would use the D-10 steep slope ordinance. Change the text of the underlying zone to say lots of a certain size. Mr. Hoffman commented on the blocky, institutional, feel, no individuality within the development, and no feel for wanting to spend time in the development versus getting in a car and driving away, and they don't feel light and airy.

G. ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS

1. **SP#513 – Cactus Rose Restaurant, 5 River Road;** legalize 225 SF seasonal patio under permanent awning.

Mr. Wrinn said that the ARB/VDDAC Committee would like to see a variation of the windows, which are currently plastic sheets. This will come back to the P&Z Commission after the next ARB/VDDAC Committee meeting.

2. **SP#514 – ASML US, LLC – 77 Danbury Road;** 167,000 SF addition at south side of building

Mr. Wrinn said that in addition to the large addition on the south side of the building they have a parking amendment request to eliminate the regulation requirement that parking must be within 500'. They will need to provide a traffic management plan. There will be a public hearing.

H. COMMUNICATIONS / REPORTS

1. Brewery Ordinance

Twelve Gods Brewery will work through the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting. So this will eventually work its way back to the Commission for a zoning amendment to allow for a brewery.

2. **Cannabis** – Schedule Public Hearing on cannabis prohibition – current prohibition ends October 29, 2023

Should be put on the agenda of the September 26 meeting and a public hearing scheduled for the October 10 meeting.

3. **Nissan Dealership** – 978 Danbury Road – Noise complaint/review of conditions of approval

Needs to be reviewed before the next meeting.

4. Education Requirements

Need the Commissioners to complete four hours of education, with at least one hour covering Affordable Housing. Mr. Wrinn will provide sources.

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I. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. **SP#512 – The Lake Club, 175 & 195 Thayer Pond Road**, tennis court modification for tennis and pickleball.

A new application has been submitted and we are working with them to get a sound engineer to review their new or existing plan.

Mr. Tomasetti would like to add Outdoor Dining to the next meeting agenda. He would like it to be codified to make it permanent.

J. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the July 24, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously

K. ADJOURNMENT

UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. Thursday, September 19 – Wilton Center Area Master Plan Subcommittee Special Meeting (7:00)
2. Monday, September 26, 2023 – Planning and Zoning Commission Regular (Electronic) Meeting 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Rich Callahan – Recording Secretary

***MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN REVIEWED BY THIS COMMISSION AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVISION IN FUTURE MINUTES. FULL AUDIO RECORDING OF MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT: <https://www.wiltonct.org/node/86/minutes-agendas>**