REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES REVISED

THURSDAY, July 7, 2022
Council Chambers & Virtual on WebEx
5:30 P.M.

The meeting was held both virtually and in-person. Members of the public had access via https://webex.com, the WebEx application, and via telephone.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present:  Steven Kovach
          Jonathan Pulino
          Linda Reil
          Kevin Brignole

Absent:  Nicholas Ficaro, David Booth

Staff:    Tom Hazel Zoning Enforcement Officer

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1. Regular Meeting of April 7, 2022

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2022 meeting
Moved by Pulino, Seconded by Brignole
Voting in favor: Kovach, Pulino, Reil, and Brignole,
Passed 4-0-0

5. Old Business

None.

6. New Business

None.

7. Public Hearing

7.1. Request for a G.S. 14-54 location approval for the sales of used cars at 455 Middlefield Street in the I-2 zone. Applicant/Agent: Manuel Sebastian Castro Largo.
Applicant present.

Applicant Manuel Castro 32 George Street was present and approached the podium. Due to an explained language barrier the applicant was unable to speak to the application. Chairman Kovach asked staff for a brief description. Staff stated that the application was for a used car sales location approval at 455 Middlefield Street. Staff also stated that the applicant was looking to operate under an existing Special Exception form 1993 which was conditioned for 5 cars maximum to be put out for sale with no advertisements other than the sign for the business.

Public comment was opened.

Kathy Dwyer of 515 Middlefield Street approached the podium to speak. She stated that there several zoning and health violations at this site due to the environmental issues and that this application would only add to these issues. She was also concerned about the limited amount of time to prepare for the meeting due to short notice. The posted notice on the location was first noticed by the residence on Friday prior to the meeting. She asked if a verification of the sign was performed. Staff answered yes, a staff member verified the sign Friday morning. It was contracted to be posted by a private printing company. The “virtual” language was noted and the contractor was supposed to change that to “hybrid”. Mrs. Dwyer spoke about the various abandoned cars and their proximity to the Coginchaug River. She stated that they vehicles had been there for decades. She also stated the impacts to the neighborhood due to the painting of cars.

Next Diane Przekopski from 404 Middlefield Street spoke in regards to the application. She stated that the property at 455 Middlefield Street had once been cleaned up but increasingly the cars have returned and have begun to pile up again. She also stated that her main concerns are with the fumes from the painting of vehicles at this location. She stated that this application should not be approved without bring the property in to compliance with existing zoning and environmental regulations.

Next Richard Sweet, 465 Middlefield Street came forward to speak. He stated that he is the owner of the property and that it is zoned industrial. He also stated that there has been a long standing approval for the sale of used cars. He pointed out the land records reflecting the Special Exception allowing used cars sales.

Next Eric Przekopski from 404 Middlefield Street spoke. He pointed out the conditions during weather events and spoke to the relief the residence have been afforded by the city due to the conditions at the properties in the I2 zone. He also spoke to the condition of the building at 455 Middlefield Street.

Again Kathy Dwyer of 515 Middlefield Street approached to speak. It was reiterated that to sell used cars at a location that is not in compliance with environmental and zoning regulations would not be appropriate. She also reiterated the long standing issue of the storage of vehicles which are sure to be leaking fluids etc.

Richard Sweet of 465 Middlefield Street again spoke and refuted the fumes issue and stated that while he is present on the property often he senses the fume issue is coming more from the Baldwin furniture property at 440 Middlefield Street and from their incinerator.
Eric Przekopski approached to state that the permit for the burning is only good from April to October and the fume issue is year round.

At this point Chair Kovach made the point that the public forum is not for debating statements and if there are no other public that wishes to speak questions the chair asked if the commission had any questions or follow ups need for details.

Commissioner Pulino sated he saw the signage as the public had stated and staff reiterated the timelines and discussions with the applicant and business that was hired to post the sign. Some more discussion was had and some clarifying details in regards to process were provided. Also clarification was provided on which exact property was under consideration due to multiple properties being under Mr. Sweet’s ownership and several being in the condition described by the public.

Motion to close public hearing
Moved by Pulino, Seconded by Reil
Voting in favor: Kovach, Pulino Brignole, and Reil
Passed 4-0-0

Motion to the variance
Moved by Brignole, Seconded by Pulino
Voting in favor: Kovach and Brignole
Voting against: Pulino and Reil
Denied 2-2-0

**8. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn
Moved by Brignole, Seconded by Pulino
Voting in favor: Kovach, Pulino, Reil, and Brignole.
Passed 4-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Submitted,

Thomas Hazel, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Department of Land Use