REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022
Council Chambers, City Hall & Virtual on WebEx
7:00 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.

Start: 7:01 PM
End: 8:12 PM

1. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was made.

2. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Thomas Pattavina
Commissioner Marcus Fazzino
Commissioner Shanay Fulton
Commissioner Richard Pelletier
Commissioner Catherine Johnson
Commissioner Hillary Thompkins
Commissioner Sebastian Giuliano
Commissioner Kellin Atherton (Alternate)
Commissioner Kelly Sweeney (Alternate)

Absent: N/A

Staff: Marek Kozikowski, Director of Land Use

Public: Five members of the public were present.

3. Items removed from the Agenda

Director Kozikowski noted that public hearing item 6.1 was originally postponed until the September 14th meeting, however since the posting of this agenda, the applicant has withdrawn the application.

4. Public comment on items on the agenda which are not currently scheduled for a public hearing

No public comments.
5. **Confirmation that all hearing signs have been properly posted**

Director Kozikowski confirmed that all public hearing signs have been properly posted.

6. **Public Hearings**

   6.1. **Request for a special exception for a new farm winery located at 519 Miner Street in the R-30 zone.** Applicant/Agent: Joseph DeFrancesco/Fallsbrook Farm. SE2022-6

   (*Postponed by applicant to the September 14th Meeting.*)

   This application has been withdrawn by the applicant. No discussion.

6.2. **Request for a special exception for a change of use from a residential to a commercial/office use at 316 and 324 Washington Street in the MXC zone.**
 Applicant/Agent: Aston House, LLC. SE2022-7

Steve Rocco – architect – presented the application. The two houses that are located within the historical district received Design Review and Preservation Board approval. They must follow the Secretary of the Interior’s design guidelines to qualify for local, state and federal tax credits which is what they will be going for. They will be restoring the interiors and exteriors. The main improvement is the parking lot by raising the grade five to six feet. The properties will remain separate so cross easements for access, parking and drainage will be required.

Commissioner Thompkins asked how much space is there in front of 324 Washington Street to put parking and if they will be utilizing the driveway between the two buildings for access in and out of 324 Washington St, or are they thinking of creating another access point out to Newfield St. for 316 Washington St.

Steve answered that there is no space for parking in front of 324 Washington Street. He continued on to explain that 316 Washington Street has no access to parking in the back lot so both lots need to be combined to gain access to the back of both lots. So, far that driveway is the only access point for entry and egress. They are, however, in talks with Faith Lutheran Church to utilize access through their parking lot to Berlin St. If they created their own driveway to Berlin St, the costs would be too high. Bob Dylan later answered that the option of creating a driveway out to Newfield St is not possible because that is “no access”.

Commissioner Thompkins asked if these buildings will be used during certain times of the day so that entering and exiting the property won’t be too much of an issue in concerns to traffic.

Steve answered that the time these offices will be open is during weekdays during normal business hours. They will be used as a law firm.

Commissioner Giuliano commented that Berlin Street has limited access as well and asked if the access to 316 and 324 Washington Street they have right now is between the two buildings.

Steve answered yes.

Commissioner Giuliano commented that he can’t make it a condition of approval that they get the access to Berlin Street from the Faith Lutheran Church parking lot. It’s whatever the State would allow them to do for egress from the property.

Commissioner Fulton asked if the parking lot would be for both buildings.

Steve answered that yes the parking lot would be for both buildings and the parking exceeds the required parking requirements.

Commissioner Pelletier asked if there will be handicap accessibility to the building.
Steve answered that yes, there will be handicap accessibility.

Commissioner Fulton asked if Steve could state for the record how many parking spaces would be available.

Steve answered twenty-six.

Bob Dylan, engineer, continued with the presentation. He addressed the staff report issues that need to be resolved including landscaping, they added an electric vehicle charging station, a crosswalk has been added between the two properties and to create cross easements between the two properties including cross easements for the parking and parking space use.

Bob Dylan went on to explain that the application needs to go to the D.O.T. because they want to change the radius of the turn in and out of the driveway because it is a difficult access especially leaving the property.

Bob continued with the list of issues stating the location of a dumpster, which will serve both buildings. A bike rack has been added as well. A photometric plan, they will get from the manufacturer they purchase the lights from.

They will be taking the garage away at 316 Washington St. They also provided drainage calculations for the site.

Move to close the public hearing.
Moved by Commissioner Giuliano, seconded by Commissioner Fulton.
Passed unanimously, 7-0

Commissioner Johnson commented that she’s happy that these properties will be restored. She made some recommendations for the applicant to consider: add a pull-back to the site plan, put in pervious surface for the parking spaces and part of the driveway, plant a front hedge, install individual bike racks, and to keep any original doors or windows in case a future owner wants to use them again. A Commissioner Pattavina also expressed his delight in knowing that these two properties will be restored.

Motion to approve with conditions.
Moved by Commissioner Giuliano, seconded by Commissioner Pelletier.
Passed unanimously, 7-0

Conditions
The applicant must address the staff comments yet to be addressed with the exception of number seven, which would require the applicant to pursue Faith Lutheran Church.

7. Old Business

7.1. Discussion on riverfront master plan: Phase II: Implementation 220805 PZ
Commission Aug 10 V2

Technical difficulties prevented the making of a presentation.

Commissioner Giuliano made a motion to postpone this item until the September 14th meeting. Commissioner Fulton seconded the motion.
Passed unanimously, 7-0

8. New Business

Motion to move item 8.1, new business, ahead of old business.
Moved by Commissioner Fulton, seconded by Commissioner Fazzino.
Passed unanimously, 7-0

8.1 Request for an affirmative GS 8-24 to upgrade the Red Road Pumping Station at 90 Red Road. Applicant/Agent: City of Middletown/Water & Sewer Department. GS 8-24 2022-12

Director Joe Fazzino of the Water & Sewer Department presented the application. Director Kozikowski began to explain that the pump chamber which was originally installed in 1979 will be replaced as well as removing the existing control and electrical panels. A new pre-cast wet well and valve vault will be installed as well as a new stand-by generator with a 200 gallon diesel tank. An alarm system will be installed to inform city staff of any issues. There will also be installation of a transformer pad. The Wetlands Agency had a public hearing for this application, but held off on making a decision because of some concerns by the public that they wanted to address.

Director Fazzino continued the presentation stating that the 48 year old pump station has come to the end of its useful life. With the Wetlands Agency, the concerns were what types of trees will be planted so Water and Sewer will be working with Urban Forestry for plantings.

Motion for a favorable request to upgrade the Red Road Pumping Station
Moved by Commissioner Pelletier, seconded by Commissioner Johnson.
Passed unanimously, 7-0

9. Public comment on topics which are not or have not been subject of a public hearing

No public comment.

10. Minutes, Staff Reports and Commission Affairs

10.1. Minutes of the August 1, 2022 special meeting

Motion to approve the minutes as published.
Moved by Commissioner Giuliano, seconded by Commissioner Fulton.
Passed unanimously, 7-0

10.2. RiverCOG Report

There was no meeting. No report.

10.3. Staff Report

Director Kozikowski informed the Commission that there will be a Public Hearing on the September 14th meeting for a Cannabis Retail Outlet on Washington Street. He is also anticipating a Special Exception application to be submitted for 550 Highland Ave for a Big Y. 550 Highland Ave will have a Wetlands Public Hearing on September 7th first.

Director Kozikowski read into the record the Zoning Report. Lawn maintenance is a top issue despite the draught. Two Middlefield Street properties are under notice for illegal junkyards. A property on Maple Street is in progress towards compliance with heavy blight.
Also, as a reminder, the Commission voted to cancel the August 27th Planning and Zoning meeting.

Commissioner Johnson asked if Director Kozikowski said blight or grass during his report.

Director Kozikowski answered that he referenced both blight and grass in his report.

10.4. Commission Affairs

Commissioner Fulton asked if at the September 14th meeting the presenters of the Riverfront Masterplan will be here in person. Commissioner Pattavina answered that they voted to postpone the presentation so they can be here in person.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn
Moved by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Giuliano
Passed, 7-0

Submitted,

Marek Kozikowski, AICP
Director of Land Use