

Chaplin Planning and Zoning Commission
Public Hearing Minutes
Chaplin Senior Center
February 13, 2020

The Public Hearing opened at 7:10 PM.

Members present: Doug Dubitsky (Chair), Peter Fiasconaro (Vice-Chair), Helen Weingart, Ken Fortier, Randy Godaire, Alan Burdick, Dave Garceau, Eric Beer.

Alternates seated: Ken Fortier was seated for Peter Fiasconaro.

Also Present: Jay Gigliotti, Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO); Kathleen Scott, Recording Clerk.

Subject of Hearing: SP19-115- 64-66 Willimantic Road-Bestway Food & Fuel-Applicant, Canterbury Horticulture LLC-Owner, Assessor's Map 91-35, Proposed Convenience Store and Gasoline Station:

Peter Fiasconaro recused himself from this application and left the table.

Doug Dubitsky read the Legal Notice that is posted at the Town Hall.

Consulting Engineer Frank Magnotta presented plans for a Convenience Store and Gas Station. The property is located on 2.96 acres on Route 6/Willimantic Road with wetlands in the back. He also presented new drawings that have not yet been reviewed. Demolition will include removing four structures (house, large barn, small barn, shed) and vegetation. The new 5,061 sq. ft. building will include a drive-thru with no inside seating and 31 parking spaces with 2 handicap parking spaces. The entrance and exit will be one way with plenty of room for large trucks to move around the building. Lighting will be state of the art with certified dark sky to reduce the glare. There are 4 small areas that were not able to be avoided in the 50 ft. buffer. There are 2 residential driveways within 100 ft. of the entrance/exit and 1 entrance for a greenhouse across the street.

Public comments were opened.

Comments in favor of the Proposed Convenience Store and Gas Station:

- Steve McCormick, a realtor from Brooklyn recommends the town approve the project as the property is level, site lines far exceed state requirements and the project would be good a development for the town.

Comments in opposition of the Proposed Convenience Store and Gas Station:

- Peter Fiasconaro on 68 Willimantic Rd (his house is 310 ft. from the corner of the site) expressed concerns with the buffer by the diesel tank, vegetation line across the back of the property, flooding in his front yard (presented pictures), will flooding get worse during construction, retention basin at exit, extended hours and obtaining license to sell beer. He also cited many items from the Plan of Conservation and Development (reduce the number of driveways and curb cuts on Route 6, target development within village nodes, develop pedestrian path and bicycle path, and economic development by taking care of current businesses and promoting diversity).
- Shirley Fiasconaro on 68 Willimantic Rd expressed concerns with tractor trailer trucks parking on the highway (makes it difficult to pull out of driveway), the impact of an oil or fuel spill to wells and

property, hours of operation (will lights be dimmed when closed), and decrease of property value with gas station out front (per realtor).

- Lisa Rice who owns property on Willimantic Rd expressed concerns with not using the property for agricultural use as encouraged by the town, road safety (review traffic patterns to prevent future accidents), gas tank safety, close proximity to other gas stations and property values. She suggested scaling down the size of the facility and/or number of pumps to accommodate larger vehicles.
- Diana Alvarez of 36 Willimantic Rd expressed concerns with the short distance of 2 other gas stations, safety with difficulty pulling out of driveway (poor site distance).
- Karen Woodward of 63 Willimantic Rd (across the street from the property) expressed concerns with the lighting affecting their greenhouse, and would like to see one way entrance and exit due to fast traffic.
- Gloria Godbout of 305 Chaplin Woods expressed concerns with the safety in pulling out of driveway.
- Carol Tetzlaff of 46 Willimantic Rd expressed concerns with headlights from parked cars shining in her windows, vermin and animals scattering from old buildings during demolition, use of her driveway for a turn around when entrance to facility is missed, safety issues on the curve, foot traffic, poor shape of property as is (development is needed with a different venue).
- Mike Healy on 126 Lynch Rd who is a licensed land surveyor would like to review the new drawings (Pdf file if possible), and expressed concerns with elevation on sheet 1, no wetland flags on site, and project not on appropriate datum.

The Public can submit technical data in writing to the Commission for review.

- Dan Slowik on 108 Willimantic Rd expressed concerns with run off to the DOT drain that dumps into a pond he owns down the road that is not shown in drawings.
- Izzy Alvarez of 36 Phoenixville Rd expressed concerns with some tankers parking on the road due to not being able to enter the proposed gas station possibly causing blocked driveways and accidents.

The applicant reported that no complaints have been received at his other facilities (there is a facility in Franklin that has high visibility) and is willing to work with neighbors on lighting. He suggested looking online to check on other sites and said that no beer will be sold at the proposed site.

Consulting Engineer Frank Magnotta commented on the following concerns expressed during public comments:

- The buffer is based on visibility and acoustics. A variety of plants can be planted to address parked vehicle headlights.
- Doesn't envision trucks having to park on the highway and is surprised it is allowed.
- There is a 12 ft. wide shoulder to accommodate foot and bicycle traffic.
- A zone change is not done for a specific application.
- There is sophisticated technology with the fuel and oil tanks that are sealed off with monitors and captures spills.
- The well is under strict regulations due to public health.
- There is a small brook that runs through the wetlands. The retention basins will stop any water from the paved area from contributing to flooding.
- The highway and DOT discharges water to the pond down the road.
- All site lighting turns off at closing with a timer. Limited lights stay on around the building for safety.
- A one way entrance and exit reduces safety and functional issues.
- Extermination needs to be done before demolition of old buildings.
- Surveying was completely redone and verified to current conditions.

Comments in favor of Proposed Convenience Store and Gas Station:

- Steve McCormick speaking as an appraiser is pleased with the good suggestions made to address concerns from the public.

Comments in opposition of Proposed Convenience store and Gas Station:

- Peter Fiasconaro of 68 Willimantic Rd expressed concerns with plantings across the back of the proposed site, lack of barrier for debris once the site is paved, and barrier to block headlights.
- Dan Slowik of 108 Willimantic Rd asked what the inside kitchen would be used for.
- Mike Healy of 126 Lynch Rd asked about low impact retention basins for roof runoff and cited requirement to pretreat roof runoff.
- Diana Alvarez of 36 Phoenixville Rd commented on residents wanting properties with long driveways due to safety concerns and property values.

Consulting Engineer Frank Magnotta commented on the following concerns expressed during public comments:

- Food service will be a drive-thru with no restaurant or seating inside.
- Roof runoff is not clean and regulations require pretreatment before discharge into the ground. The retention basins are designed for flow and treatment.

Doug Dubitsky read a letter from Paul and Susan Peifer regarding lighting, exterior speakers and written requirements for buffer.

Motion to suspend the Public Hearing at 9:48 PM to review new drawings, was made by H. Weingart, seconded by E. Beer. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Kathleen Scott
Recording Clerk