

The Public Hearing opened at 7:05 PM with technical difficulties.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Doug Dubitsky (online), Randy Godaire, Dave Garceau, Peter Fiasconaro, Eric Beer, Helen Weingart, Alternate Peter Haines, Alternate Bill Ireland.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vice-Chair Ken Fortier, Dan Pearce.

ALTERNATES SEATED: None

ALSO PRESENT: Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) Jay Gigliotti and Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott.

D. Dubitsky read the Legal Notice that was published twice in the Chronicle. Materials are available at the Town Hall, on the Town website or by appointment.

SUBJECT OF HEARINGS:

A. RC22-167-Proposed Text Amendment to Section 5.3.B of Zoning Regulations, Charles River Laboratories, Inc.-Applicant, Proposed addition of "Research & Development, Laboratories to section 5.3.B-Special Permit Uses in Business Zoning District:

ZEO J. Gigliotti reported this hearing is for an addition to the regulations in the Business Zone that needs to be completed by the end of the next meeting and voted on within 65 days. The applicant sponsored text amendment is for the simple addition of Research & Development Laboratory Use in the Business Zone with a special permit (can control with conditions).

- Avian Vaccine Services Executive Director Deb Tosto spoke about Charles River being in business for over 65 years with an established lab in Storrs (has outgrown the space and looking to expand). Chaplin is a great area to keep things local. The lab produces agricultural poultry vaccines under the observation of the USDA and CT Department of Environmental Health (a lot more people are eating chicken and eggs).

The hearing was opened for public comment.

Public comment in support of the proposed Text Amendment:

- Mike O'Neil of 8 Federal Road is a Professor of Genetics at UCONN and teaches Genetic Engineering that involves vaccine technology. The text amendment would allow Research & Development labs to come to town (supports application for the lab with special permit down the road). The Charles River lab is self-contained and uses pathogen free eggs (couldn't ask for a cleaner or safer lab).
- Leslie Ricklin of 138 England Road spoke about the labs being a different type of business that offers job opportunities in an ideal location on Route 6 with not a lot of traffic in and out (would be good neighbors).
- Rachel O'Neil of 8 Federal Road spoke about the growth in the Biotech industry in CT that is not in this part of the state (people train here and leave). The addition of this lab would bring intellect, tax revenue and jobs to the area.

Public comment in opposition to the proposed Text Amendment: None

Motion to close the Public Hearing at 7:30PM for RC22-167 proposed text amendment, by H. Weingart, seconded by E. Beer. All in favor, motion carried.

The Commission took a 10-minute recess to fix technical issues.

PUBLIC HEARING RECONVENED FOR:

B. SP22-163-64-66 Willimantic Road- Mehak Realty, LLC- Special Permit Application for Gasoline filling station and convenience store per section 5.3.B.m:

P. Fiasconaro recused himself from the Public Hearing for proposed gas station and left the table.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Doug Dubitsky (online), Randy Godaire, Dave Garceau, Eric Beer, Helen Weingart, Alternate Peter Haines, Alternate Bill Ireland.

ALTERNATES SEATED: Seat Peter Haines for Ken Fortier.

ZEO J. Gigliotti reported that this is the 3rd Public Hearing for proposed gas station that needs to be closed with available extension time to carry to the next meeting if needed. New items entered into the record today include: review by Towne Engineering and review by the ZEO. Revised plans and other documents were received this week and posted on the website and at the Town Hall.

- Attorney Dori Famiglietti (representing the applicant) spoke about resolving the issues with revised plans submitted to the town and hopes to get through the hearing tonight without the need to grant an extension.
- Engineer Tristan Wallace (representing the applicant) presented an overview of the site with major components including: dispensers in the front, one-way traffic in and out, parking in the rear and in front by the dispensers, underground storage tanks, drive-thru, Stone Water Management Plan (water filtration discharges out front to Route 6 and in the rear to the wetlands area), buffering (landscaped with significant vegetation and fence for additional screening), removing large tree by driveway (approved by DOT), additional oil/water separators near the dispensers and trench drain (final discharge out of the site), isolator row (removes sediment prior to going through the system). Addressing public comment concerns: Infiltration System proximity to embankment - added liner to outside to contain any possible seepage; increased traffic – majority of traffic per statistics for fueling station is for traffic passing by naturally (50-75%); environmental impact – received approval from Wetlands, intent of the treatment in the isolator rows is to prevent any pollutants or washout (all designs compliant with Aquifer Protection).
- Attorney Dori Famiglietti addressed prior public comment concerns including: not needing more gas stations in town – anti-competitive and violates uniformity requirements (towns don't typically regulate the number of specific types of businesses); difficulty pulling out of driveway and crossing Route 6 – gas station on the other side of Route 6 would help reduce the need to cross traffic; negative impact to surrounding property values - any impact already happened when zoned Business for Commercial Use; unsafe sight lines - adequate per DOT with removal of a tree and the addition of No Parking on the Shoulder sign posted at the frontage; impact to Wetlands – received approval from Wetlands with permit issued (Windham Water Works has been notified); activities within the 50 ft. buffer – landscaped (work limited to grading and underground leach field) and privacy fence to protect adjacent properties (noise, dust, lighting); minimal encroachment within the buffer - far removed from the residences at the rear of the property and Town Attorney satisfied with requirements for protection of property (opinion from February of last year); number of parking spaces required – no specific regulations for service stations, using general retail requirements with 24 spaces dedicated in the rear and side of the building and 12 spaces under the canopy and pumps (excess of minimal retail requirements).
- This plan meets all the regulatory requirements in the following regulations: Section 8-2 - location of the building and pumps; Special Permit in Section 5.2.B – conformity and character of the neighborhood, location of the building, height of the building in relation to surrounding developed businesses (presented map of properties looked at with tax card #s – old Ribbits, Self-Storage, Stop & Go Gas Station, Back Door Café), grading of the street (curve is ¼ mile from the property), traffic

volume, means to access and exit, water supply and sewage disposal system (received Department of Health approval for both), protection of neighboring property values by planted buffer zones; Corridor Overlay District – discourages strip development, promotes community character, protection of water quality, excellence in building design. This plan also addresses all the concerns noted in the review comments by Towne Engineering and the staff.

The hearing was opened for public comment.

Public comment in support of the proposed gas station in-person or online: None

Public comment in opposition to the proposed gas station in-person:

- Diana Fiasconaro Alvarez of 36 Phoenixville Road commented about not needing another gas station in town and expressed concerns about safety pulling out of her brother's driveway next to the property.
- Sylvia Godbout of 305 Chaplin Woods Drive (across the street) expressed concerns about additional accidents with 2 fatalities recently and would like to see the speed limit reduced (Route 6 is a hazard).
- Mike Healy of Lynch Road expressed concerns about the hearing process (applicant not present at the 2nd hearing) and just receiving updated plans (has other concerns to submit in writing).
- Jeff Woodward of 63 Willimantic Road (across the street) expressed concerns about adequate sight lines (large number of people in and out on Route 6 with multiple accidents recently).

Comments in support of the proposed gas station in-person:

- The applicant's brother spoke about owning a comparable gas station in Franklin with traffic of about 20,000 and 3 gas stations within a ½ mile (will be opening a new gas station on Route 6 in Bolton and has good relationship with the towns). There are accidents with night vision from poor lighting (talked to the state about installing lights).
- The owner of the property spoke about working very hard on this plan (loves the Town of Chaplin) that will bring more jobs to the town and not create more traffic (no issues with nearby gas stations).

Comments opposed to the proposed gas station online:

- Jennifer Sprague expressed concerns about accidents and not needing another gas station in town (traffic is horrendous on Route 6).
- Rusty Lanzit expressed concerns about the neighbors and their property values.
- Don Slowik expressed concerns about property values going down, more residential than business properties, traffic (tragic accident yesterday with state trooper catching speeder driving 70 mph), sight line on the corner (vehicles tend to crossover to the breakdown lane that may cause accidents).
- Rebecca Stockdale-Woolley is opposed to the proposed gas station for the reasons already brought up.

Attorney Dori Famiglietti addressed concerns from public comments: Route 6 traffic - Route 6 would be better with some improvements (traffic calming measures and speed enforcement); more residential than business properties - appropriate as a Business Zone parcel. The late submission of review by Towne Engineering includes conditions for approval (can do an extension if necessary for more time to review).

Public comments opposed to the proposed gas station in-person:

- Mike Healy presented photos of various sites in Hebron and Chaplin and expressed concerns about traffic circulation with the tight radius in the drive-thru (difficult for a pickup truck to maneuver), buffer (snowplowing activities will destroy the fence), Stone Water Filtration System (not a standard design) and submitted written comments for the record.
- Paul Zlotnick of Zlotnick's Realty expressed concerns about the size of the septic tank and grease trap (much smaller in comparison to his property), congestion near the drive-thru and diesel island, crossing traffic for rear parking and radius of drive-thru causing a traffic jam.

Public comments in support of the proposed gas station in-person:

- The applicant's brother spoke about the Dunkin Donuts drive-thru at his site in Franklin (has a stopper with trucks not allowed) and invited the Commission to visit the site at 96 Route 32. A Dollar General was just approved with an in and out directly across the street.

The Commission took a 10-minute break to allow the applicant time to review new documents presented by Mr. Healy.

- Attorney Dori Famiglietti speaking for the applicant asked to continue the Public Hearing and will grant the required extension to the next meeting (10-page memo submitted by Mr. Healy requires more thorough review and response).

Public comments in opposition to the proposed gas station in-person:

- Sylvia Godbout expressed concerns about the height and illumination of the sign and how it will affect across the street.

Motion to continue the Public Hearing (9:45 PM) for SP22-163 proposed gas station until the next meeting on May 12, 2022 in order to give the applicant time to respond to new information presented this evening, by P. Haines, seconded by H. Weingart. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott