

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Avon held a virtual **GoToMeeting** on Tuesday, November 15, 2022. Present were Peter Mahoney, Chair, Lisa Levin, Vice Chair, Mary Harrop, Chet Bukowski, Dean Hamilton, Robin Baran, and Alternates Tom Armstrong (sat), Elaine Primeau (did not sit), and Julie Rousey (did not sit). Joseph Gentile was absent. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and Community Development.

Mr. Mahoney called the meeting to order at 7pm.

PUBLIC HEARING

App. #4993 - Avon Marketplace Investors LLC, owner, Scout Services, applicant, request for Special Exception under Section VI.C.3.b. of Avon Zoning Regulations to permit Class III restaurant, 380 West Main Street, Parcel 4540380, in a CR Zone

In attendance were John Greenspan, owner; Eric Friedman, Salsa Fresca; and Sanjeev Oommen, project manager, Empire Core Group LLC

Mr. Oommen explained that new plumbing is being installed along with a kitchen hood and there is some mechanical and electrical work also being done for the proposed restaurant Salsa Fresca. The tenant space includes an office, two bathrooms, and a walk-in freezer.

Mr. Peck indicated that the tenant space is 2,100 SF in size with 30 seats.

In response to Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Greenspan confirmed that this tenant space is half of the space that was formerly occupied by Victoria's Secret (there will be another tenant on the other side). Mr. Greenspan noted his support of this application.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Oommen explained that Salsa Fresca has hired a structural engineer who had originally designed this space (30 years prior) who will provide details on how the floor will be cut to allow installation of needed drain piping. The area will be inspected by the Town Building Official.

In response to Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Oommen explained that deliveries will be accomplished using the door to the rear.

In response to comments from the Commission, Mr. Peck indicated that the applicant has no interest in delaying moving forward with this restaurant. Mr. Friedman confirmed that they would start next week if they could and believe this will be a great addition to Avon.

There being no further comments, the public hearing for App. #4993 was closed, as well as the entire public hearing portion of the meeting.

Ms. Levin motioned to approve App #4993 subject to the following:

1. Prior to applying for a building permit, the applicant shall meet with the Town Engineering Department to ensure/demonstrate compliance with all AWPCA sewer requirements/codes relative to discharge from the restaurant (Salsa Fresca).
2. Applicant shall demonstrate compliance with all requirements/codes of the Departments of Engineering, Building, Fire, and Health. No site work shall begin until a building permit has been approved by all Town Departments.
3. No signage is approved at this time. Applicant shall submit to the Planning Department for review and approval any requests/proposals for signage.

Mr. Bukowski seconded the motion that received unanimous approval.

STAFF UPDATESOld Farms Road – project update

Mr. Peck reported that a public information meeting was held about a week ago regarding the Old Farms Road project (the northern section of the realignment of Old Farms Road). He explained that the Town Engineering Department has been working on this project for many, many years; this project is called out in the 2016 POCD, which was approved by the Commission. He asked that if anyone has any questions on this project to please contact him. Funding for this project is almost 5M\$ (State) but the cost to the Town is zero. The Town Engineering Department has done an incredible job planning this project that spans the time period of at least two Town Engineers. The Town will be holding a referendum very soon. Questions have been raised regarding the impact to the rural character of the area as well as the Town Engineering Department attempting to incorporate the bicycle pedestrian trail along the new roadway, as well as connecting it to a new section of the trail running down to Fisher Meadows. He explained that maps for this project are available at the Town Hall and urged anyone with questions to please contact him, as this is an important project that has been included in the POCD for a very long time.

In response to Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Peck indicated that 17 people attended the public information meeting; several people spoke in opposition. He said that because this project has been planned and talked about for so long that it's somewhat surprising that people have concerns about it at this point in time. He stressed that he wants everyone to understand that the information is available for everyone to look at.

Mr. Peck further explained that the northern section of this road is very tough for motorists especially in bad weather. This first part of the project should help to alleviate a lot of problems. The new road will be wider than the existing road and will include a roundabout to control traffic and make the intersection a lot safer. The Town Engineering Department has made great efforts relative to the design of this project; for example, there are areas where steel guard rails are proposed that will look much better than traditional guard rails seen on State highways. He stressed the importance of getting correct information out to everyone.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Peck explained that some of the concerns involve the removal of some vegetation and that the road will be slightly wider than it is now. The idea is to try and make the road as safe as possible without having it look like a highway (Route 84) so it's always a delicate balance. This realignment has some benefits for the School such that they have been anxious for this project to move forward. There have been many considerations over the years that have played a part in the final design.

Mr. Bukowski said that people have been talking about this project for 30-40 years. He said that he used to ride his bicycle in that area years ago noting how dangerous it was. He noted that we should be doing whatever we can to ensure that the referendum passes. The area has become even more dangerous because it is used as a cut through from Simsbury.

Ms. Baran asked if there is a good way to get this information out to the public so people can become informed prior to the referendum. She offered to post the information on Avon parents connect group pages on Facebook.

Mr. Peck agreed on the importance of informing the public about this project. He indicated that he could forward to the Commission all the information that was presented at the aforementioned public informational meeting. He clarified/confirmed that members of the Commission would be passing along information and speaking about this project as residents of the Town, not as Commissioners.

Mrs. Harrop commented that since there were very few people who spoke against the project at the meeting it most likely means that most people are in favor of the project.

Stratford Crossing – status update from developer

Mr. Peck reported that he has not received any update from the developer. He noted that he will continue to request updates for both Stratford Crossing and Bailey Road.

AVC update on tenants

Mr. Peck reported that there is nothing significant to discuss on the latest report. The developer is in the process of submitting their plans for the tower sign (Climax at Route 44) that was approved some time ago. He noted that he's waiting for information regarding the dimming of the lights on the sign before the permit will be approved/issued. He added that he doesn't know yet when the tower sign construction will begin.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Linda Sadlon
Planning and Community Development