The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Avon held a meeting at the Avon Town Hall on Tuesday January 29, 2019. Present were Peter Mahoney, Mary Harrop, Joseph Gentile, Lisa Levin, Brian Ladouceur, Jr., and Alternate Linda Preysner (sat). Absent were Linda Keith, Chair, Thomas Armstrong, Vice Chair, and Alternates Elaine Primeau and Jill Coppola. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and Community Development.

Mr. Mahoney, acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7pm.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

App. #4887 - One Thirty Five Darling Drive LLC, owner, Larry Newquist, applicant, request for Special Exception under Section VI.G.3.e. of Avon Zoning Regulations to permit specialized small school, 135 Darling Drive, Parcel 2030135, in an IP Zone

Also heard at this time but not part of the public hearing.

App. #4888 - One Thirty Five Darling Drive, LLC, owner, Larry Newquist, applicant, request for Site Plan Modification to permit specialized small school, 135 Darling Drive, Parcel 2030135, in an IP Zone

Present were David Whitney, PE, Consulting Engineers, LLC; Larry Newquist, applicant; and Maury Smith, realtor, Cushman & Wakefield.

Mr. Whitney displayed a map of the site and explained that the subject building has been vacant for the past three years and is the last building on the right (on Darling Drive) before the entrance to Pond Place. CT Online Computer was formerly located in the subject building but is now located at 105 Darling Drive. The request is to occupy 10,000 SF of the building to The Webb School; the entire building consists of approximately 40,000 SF and is one-story office building. There are 221 parking spaces on the site. The proposed School, grades K-12, will occupy only a portion of the building and no exterior construction is proposed other than a sign to identify the School. He explained that the Webb School is run by the Institute of the Living, a division of Hartford Hospital. The Webb School is specialized education for troubled and disadvantaged youth to try to integrate these students back into public schools. The School is currently located at 150 Fisher Drive and has 18 students and 7 teachers. Students arrive via vans or busses and there is no parent drop off and hours are 8:15am to 2:30pm; this schedule would be the same at the proposed location. Mr. Whitney referenced the floor plan showing the classroom layout for the proposed space for the Webb School. No cafeteria is proposed and no meal preparation on the site; students and teachers bring lunches. Mr. Whitney concluded by noting that there are no definite plans for the remaining space in the building and the existing parking is adequate for the proposed tenant and square footage proposed to be occupied.

In response to Ms. Levin’s questions, Mr. Whitney explained that although a playscape was initially proposed it is no longer proposed at this time and noted that he feels it is feasible to locate a playscape somewhere on the site.

Mr. Peck indicated that should a playscape be proposed at any time in the future that the applicant and Town Staff would work together to ensure an appropriate location that would not interfere with parking and/or wetlands.

In response to Mrs. Harrop’s question, Mr. Whitney explained that if additional tenants are proposed in the future it may need to come before the Commission for approval and parking could be reviewed at that time.

Mr. Mahoney commented that the existing parking is adequate for the size of the existing building.

Mr. Whitney agreed noting that the parking is more than adequate with 221 spaces.

In response to Mr. Ladouceur’s questions, Mr. Whitney referenced the site plan map pointing out the driveway entrance, the main entrance to the building as well as another entrance located on the north corner of the building which will serve as the entrance to the proposed Webb School. He confirmed that any future tenants would utilize the existing main entrance that has a lobby that is not part of the proposed Webb School.

Mr. Whitney submitted photos of the existing building for the record.

Mr. Peck explained that Town Staff would want to be aware of any future tenants to ensure compatibility between all tenants of the building, adding that this recommendation is included in his Staff Comments. He referenced the provided floor plan map noting that the Building Official and Fire Marshal will ensure that all Building and Fire Codes are met during the tenant fit out process.

In response to Ms. Levin’s question, Mr. Whitney explained, to the best of his knowledge, that most of the businesses located in Avon Park South are specialized such that there are no factories with large shift changes that could cause traffic backups for the proposed School. He noted that while the area is busy during normal rush hours (both in the morning and afternoon) that the traffic from the School will be much less than when the building was occupied by CT Online Computer utilizing the entire parking lot.

In response to Mr. Mahoney’s question, Mr. Whitney indicated that approximately 10 vans are expected in and out of the site daily; students come from all over.

In response to Mr. Gentile’s question, Mr. Peck explained that the subject application proposes 18 students with a maximum of 40.

Mr. Whitney clarified that the School does not anticipate any growth at this time because they have no room in their current space (150 Fisher Drive) but noted that if they move to the subject site they would have the ability for growth. He added that the proposed maximum of 40 students arises from the fact that there are six classrooms, and one is used for enrichment, so there are really five classrooms with a maximum capacity of 8 students per classroom but clarified that they are nowhere near this count now. The School does not anticipate growing to 40 students but will have the ability in the proposed location.

In response to Mrs. Harrop’s question, Mr. Whitney confirmed that students of the School could not enter their space through the building’s main entrance.

Mrs. Harrop noted her concerns for security at the main entrance as it looks like anybody could walk in and go into the classroom area.

Both Larry Newquist and Maury Smith explained/confirmed that students of the School would not be permitted to enter the building via the main entrance. They explained that access to the School will be locked off from the main building entrance; people accessing the building via the main entrance would not be permitted to access the School from that location. There will be a lot of security on site.

Mr. Ladouceur commented that the door leading to the unoccupied building space would be locked until it is occupied. Mr. Smith concurred.

In response to Ms. Preysner’s question, Mr. Whitney outlined on the displayed map of the site the route the School vans would use when exiting the site. He noted that if the parking lot is full the vans would follow the lane that travels all the way around the parking lot before exiting; if the lot is empty the vans will likely cut through the parking lot.

In response to Mr. Ladouceur’s question, Mr. Newquist explained that while the entire parking lot could be plowed (snow) it may not be necessary if the remainder of the building is empty. If the lot is empty a shorter plow path may be used; maybe plow half the lot.

Mr. Whitney stated that the applicant has no issues with the contents of Mr. Peck’s Staff Comments.

There being no further comments, the public hearing for App. #4887 was closed, as well as the entire public hearing portion of the meeting.

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING**

Mr. Ladouceur motioned to waive Administrative Procedure #6 and consider the public hearing item. Mr. Gentile seconded the motion that received unanimous approval.

Mr. Ladouceur motioned to approve Apps. #4887-88 subject to the following conditions:

1. Tenant space for the Webb School shall be fit out in accordance with and in compliance with all Building, Fire, and Traffic Safety Codes prior to occupying the building. A Mylar map of drawing TF-1A (Test Fit Plan – Demolition Plan) shall be prepared ***after*** the tenant fit out has been finalized/approved and determined to be in compliance with Avon’s Building, Fire, and Police/Traffic Safety Codes. This Mylar shall be submitted to the Avon Planning Department.
2. Property owner shall notify Town Staff of any future leasing proposals for the remaining vacant building space to ensure compatibility of all tenant uses.
3. Any future proposals to alter the existing parking and/or to locate an outside play area (e.g. playscape) shall be submitted to Town Staff for review and approval prior to any site activities taking place.
4. A maximum of 40 students is requested and is the permitted capacity for the designated space, as depicted on the submitted floor plan/fit out plan. Should any increase be proposed, Town Staff shall be notified in advance to ensure compliance with all Building and Fire Codes.

The motion seconded by Mrs. Harrop received unanimous approval.

Non-Printed Agenda Item - 20 Security Drive

Mr. Peck explained that the owner of 20 Security Drive would like to park vehicles in the existing parking garage on this site. He noted that cars from a local car dealership would be stored there but not be in and out constantly. He explained that he instructed the owner to contact Avon’s Departments of Police, Building, and Fire to ensure that everyone is aware and that all applicable Codes are satisfied. He noted that this site is the temporary location of a CREC School for about three more years and therefore the garage is not being used. Mr. Peck indicated that if the Commission is in agreement that he would handle this request with an administrative Staff approval. The Commission indicated their unanimous approval for car storage at 20 Security Drive.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Linda Sadlon

Avon Planning and Community Development