The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Avon held a ***GoToMeeting*** on Tuesday, November 17, 2020. Present were Thomas Armstrong, Chair, Brian Ladouceur, Jr., Vice Chair,

Peter Mahoney, Lisa Levin, Dean Hamilton, Mary Harrop, Joseph Gentile, and Alternates Elaine Primeau (did not sit) and Drew Bloom (did not sit). Absent was Alternate Raz Alexe. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and community Development.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mrs. Harrop motioned to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2020, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahoney and received unanimous approval.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

App. #4933 - Avon Park South Office Center Assoc., LLC, owner, Bruce Shein and Jerry Cohen, applicants, request for Special Exception under Section VII.C.4.b.(2) of Avon Zoning Regulations to permit low-profile detached sign, 15 Darling Drive, Parcel 2030015, in an IP Zone

Present were Bruce Shein and Jerry Cohen, applicants/owners.

Mr. Armstrong commented that while the Commission can approve an application for a detached sign, the Commission does not have the authority (per the Zoning Regulations) to grant approval for the requested number “One” at the top of the sign. (The subject parcel is identified by the Town as 15 Darling Drive). This request would require application to and approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance.

Mr. Peck explained/clarified that the Commission must act on this application one way or another (either approve or deny). A decision/determination cannot wait until the Zoning Board of Appeals makes a decision, should an application be applied for.

In response to Mr. Armstrong’s suggestion, Mr. Shein noted his understanding but indicated that he doesn’t think it’s a good idea to have two addresses at the top of the sign (both 15 and One Darling Drive) as that would be very confusing to people driving by. He noted that the existing detached sign has been there for 33 years and says “One Darling Drive”. He noted that this sign was approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 1987 and that the Town approval indicated that 15 Darling Drive would also be known as One Darling Drive. He explained that he has been marketing the building as One Darling Drive for the past 33 years, adding that some existing tenants have also been using One Darling Drive as their address this entire time.

Ms. Levin asked if the real issue is that the sign must reflect the legal address, regardless of whether numbers or letters are used for identification.

Mr. Peck explained that the Zoning Regulations are clear that the number on top of the sign needs to represent the actual building location so that emergency services personnel can find the property. He indicated that the Assessor is responsible for assigning property addresses and referenced a memo from the Assessor, dated November 12, 2020, where the Assessor is adamant about this situation (the legal address for this site is 15 Darling Drive). Mr. Peck explained that he thought a good compromise would be to have the number 15 at the top of the sign with the name of the property as “One Darling Drive” right below it, as that would allow this Commission to render an approval without the need for an application to ZBA.

Ms. Levin commented that it would be hard to understand that emergency services would not know where this building is after 33 years of it being known as One Darling Drive as opposed to 15 Darling Drive. She acknowledged that address changes can be awkward especially after 33 years.

Mr. Shein noted his understanding that the Land Records and the Assessor’s map shows the site as 15 Darling Drive but indicated that no one knows the property as 15. He explained that his request is only to keep the property as it has been known as One Darling Drive.

Mr. Peck pointed out that there should be solid reasons in place for changing an addresses because it could set a precedent down the road for other requests for address changes that do not make any sense.

Ms. Levin agreed with the need for good rational for changing an address. She noted that she is trying to understand why the address was ever been allowed in the first place, back in 1987.

Mr. Shein noted that the subject site is the first building on the odd side of the road; the first building is number “One” and that is why we asked for it back in 1987 and the Commission at that time agreed. The building across the street is 12 Darling and the next building up the road is 25 Darling. He noted that Harry (Assessor) has a system that he can’t figure out but noted he doesn’t want to change; he only wants to keep his sign as it’s been for 33 years.

In response to Mr. Ladouceur, Mr. Shein confirmed that emergency personnel have not had a problem finding his building in the last 33 years. He also confirmed that his building is the first building on the street.

Mr. Ladouceur commented that because the subject building is the first building on the road there is no chance that a new building could be built in front of it as no lot exists. He pointed out that there are other signs in Town where the address is not displayed on the top of the sign (Avon Park North, etc.). The Commission could approve the proposed sign with “15” at the top and “One Darling Drive” below it with tenants names. The applicant could then apply to ZBA to ask for the “15” to be changed to “One”. If ZBA does not grant an approval the applicant has the choice to keep their existing sign.

Mr. Peck noted his understanding adding clarification that all the parcels and stores in the Avon Village Center will all have assigned numbers. He offered a suggestion for the subject application such that the Commission could consider approving a 24 SF detached sign and let Town Staff work out the wording/address with the applicant. He noted that the existing detached signs in Town that do not have an address number at the top were in place before the Regulation required the address number.

Mr. Ladouceur suggested that if the applicant ultimately decides to apply to ZBA they may want to obtain letters or records from various emergency personnel (police/fire) providing a basis/history as to why the address (number or written word) on top of the sign could be changed. This information would help explain the unique circumstances of the request for this site and hopefully eliminate the possibility of creating a precedent.

Mr. Shein stated that he has talked with the Assessor who has noted that he is not going to change the number to 1 (One) regardless of the Commission’s ruling in 1987 that 15 Darling Drive will also be known as One Darling Drive. He commented that anyone that has anything to do with this building knows it as One Darling Drive (utility company, police, fire, etc.). He noted that he could live with having the number “1” on top of the sign but would prefer it spelled out as “One”, as that it more easily recognized and this building is the first one on the street..

Mr. Hamilton noted that “Google” maps shows 1 and 15 Darling Drive in basically the same place; the tax bill for 15 Darling Drive is mailed to 1 Darling Drive, per the Avon Assessor records.

Marcin Maleky noted he is a brand new tenant in this building and not yet open; his business is called Smileys LLC. He noted that he uses One Darling Drive on everything and no one seems to be confused by the address.

Mr. Ladouceur noted, for the record, the unique circumstances of this property. It is the first property on the road giving the owner the opportunity to market the building for 30+ years as One Darling Drive. The building is adjacent to the Fire Department and there has been no instances of any emergency personnel being confused by the building being called One Darling Drive versus 15 Darling Drive. He indicated his strong recommendation that the building number be allowed to be changed but if the Assessor does not agree the applicant has the ability to apply to ZBA.

Mr. Shein commented that he will find out how to apply to the ZBA but also noted that if this Commission makes a strong recommendation to the Assessor to change the address because it makes more sense to allow it maybe he will.

Mr. Gentile asked if the Commission legally changed the address (in 1987) from 15 to 1 or said that the property can also be known as One Darling Drive.

Mr. Shein reiterated that the 1987 approval states that in relation to the following property street address 15 (aka One Darling Drive) Assessor’s Map #9. The Commission approved the sign and the use of One Darling Drive. The approval also said that the applicant has the right to install a detached sign at One Darling Drive.

Ms. Levin asked if anyone knows the Assessor’s rational for holding steadfast to 15 Darling Drive.

Mr. Peck explained that the Commission does not have the ability to change building numbers; the Commission may have said “the building is also known as….” which is fine but it’s the assessor’s job to assign the numbers. He indicated that the Commission has authority to approve the sign but stressed that the ultimate decision on whether the number at the top gets changed (from 15 to 1) is up to the assessor and/or the ZBA.

Ms. Levin noted her agreement with Mr. Ladouceur such that the Commission could approve the sign but does not have authority with regard to the number/address; that decision is up to the ZBA if nothing can be worked out with the assessor.

Mrs. Harrop noted her agreement adding that it’s time to move on.

Mr. Mahoney noted his agreement.

Mr. Shein asked that the Commission make a recommendation to the Assessor that the change be reconsidered (change from 15 to One) to avoid application to the ZBA. He acknowledged that the request would not be binding.

Mr. Armstrong indicated that he’s not sure that the Commission can make that recommendation because they are bound by their Regulations, which require numbers and not letters on the top of signs.

John Lew noted that he is a tenant in this building and asked if the Assessor is the same person that was in the job 33 years ago.

Dave Ivanoudis noted that he is a tenant in this building and impacted by the decision for the sign and asked if the number “1” could be placed at the top instead of the word “One”.

Mr. Armstrong explained that the Commission is still bound by the fact that this building is identified by the Assessor as 15 Darling Drive.

Mr. Peck suggested that the public hearing be continued to the next meeting to allow time to possibly work something out with the Assessor.

Mr. Shein agreed to allow the public hearing to be continued to provide time to possibly convince the Assessor to allow the number “1” on top of the sign and avoid the ZBA. He noted that the Regulations require the number be 9 inches in size adding that the current sign has 5 ½ inch letters which can be read just fine from Darling Drive. He thanked everyone for their time.

There were no further comments.

Mr. Ladouceur motioned to continue the public hearing for App. #4933 to the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamilton and received unanimous approval.

App. #4934 - Avon Town Center, LLC, owner, Carpionato Group, LLC, applicant, request for Special Exception under Section VI.I.5.of Avon Zoning Regulations for modification to Special Exception for Phase One (approved July 31, 2018) for Avon Village Center, 55 Bickford Drive, Parcel 1300055, in an AVC Zone

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

App. #4935 - Avon Town Center, LLC, owner, Carpionato Group, LLC, applicant, request for Site Plan Modification to eliminate Building R3 and add additional parking as part of Phase One, Avon Village Center, 55 Bickford Drive, Parcel 1300055, in an AVC Zone

Present were Robert M. Meyers, on behalf of the applicant; Kelly Coates and David Taglianetti, Carpionato Group, LLC; Michael Cegan, ASLA, Richter & Cegan, Inc.; and David Chamberland, Greene Construction.

Mr. Coates referred to a PowerPoint presentation detailing the request in Apps. #4934 and #4935. He explained that the Whole Foods (R4) building (exterior) is completed; Building R5 (exterior) is substantially completed; and the exterior of Building R8 is coming along. He noted that Covid has substantially impacted retail and restaurants but supermarkets and home improvement stores are doing well. He explained that the request is to add 33 more parking spaces in the area that was previously approved for Building R3, at the intersection of Route 44 and Climax Road. Whole Foods has experienced problems with a lack of parking during Covid creating conflicts and safety issues between cars and pedestrians. An increase in screening is proposed for the area formerly proposed for R3 and the wall as well as the addition of a tower feature to serve as an entry element.

In response to Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Taglianetti indicated that while he is not sure of the exact number of parking spaces he noted that there are about 270 spaces in total. Mr. Armstrong referenced Mr. Peck’s comments that recommend that parking information be sought from other Whole Foods as well as adopting a three-year moratorium for no construction of building R3 to see if the subject Whole Foods will need more parking.

Mr. Coates noted that while he appreciates Mr. Peck’s recommendations he asked for a modification to the request such that parking be allowed there with a review in three years. If it turns out that the parking was not used/needed the applicant will return to discuss another alternative. The additional landscaping and tower proposed would provide additional screening but it doesn’t screen the Whole Foods building, making it more inviting.

Mr. Cegan explained that a key part of the additional landscaping proposed for this corner is in keeping with the original important requirement of the Town and Commission to screen the parking from Route 44. The brownstone wall and the hedge behind it are extended around the corner where Building R3 was proposed to be built. The canopy and tree program is extended down into the parking lot. The key elements including the sign (to be discussed later) are consistent with the original approval for this area.

Mr. Armstrong referenced Mr. Peck’s comments where he recommends that a tower not be placed in this area and asked whether the applicant and Whole Foods prefer that the tower not be placed there at this time.

Mr. Coates indicated that the tower is not a crucial element adding that additional parking on the corner and not an additional demand for parking is what is of crucial importance. The construction of building R3 would have a parking demand and would also have pedestrian traffic; the hope is to eliminate that conflict. He noted that the request to the Commission is to add 20 additional parking spaces (reduced from the aforementioned 33 spaces as a compromise) with reduced conflicts for vehicles entering this area from the parking lot. He noted that Whole Foods is important to attracting other tenants; Whole Foods says they need additional parking.

Mr. Armstrong asked Mr. Coates what he thinks about Mr. Peck’s recommended/suggested compromises, contained in his memo.

Mr. Coates commented that they have never argued about costs but noted that Whole Foods is the most expensive supermarket, per square foot, ever built in CT. A sidewalk has been suggested on the front of the property and he asked who would use it. He noted that that would be acceptable but said that it would be subject to approval by the State of CT.

Mr. Armstrong said he is ok with the part of the sidewalk running along Route 44 is postponed for now; the sidewalk could end at the crosswalk area serving Route 44 and Climax Road.

Mr. Ladouceur commented that he doesn’t see the point of a sidewalk along the frontage of this property because it’s a dead end on both sides unless a bridge is built over the bike path to continue the sidewalk along Town property. He noted that the original approval of buildings R4 (Whole Foods) and R3 provided adequate parking to be shared between both buildings. There is sufficient parking and more for R4 because R3 has not been built yet. He noted concerns with adding more parking (20 spaces) when there is already plenty for R4 and said that no one would walk that far to park. He suggested speed bumps if the concern is people driving too fast looking for parking spots. He noted concerns for taking out R3 as a trade for 20 parking spots; it was part of the approved plan sold to the Commission as a higher end building for professional offices and was also to serve as the visual anchor for the entrance into the development. He said he doesn’t want to lose R3 but may agree to postpone construction, as recommended by Mr. Peck. The area could be kept as greenspace for now and if additional parking is determined to be needed in the future it could be explored at that time.

Mr. Gentile noted his agreement with Mr. Ladouceur on building R3 adding that there seems to be an anecdotal need for additional parking. The original hysteria with Covid is over such that there is no longer a problem with parking at grocery stores. He noted that he would prefer that a need for more parking be established over time.

Mr. Armstrong commented that it’s unlikely that anything would be considered for a minimum of three years because the next phase of development is residential, which would also help Whole Foods. He said he would rather see the other side of Market Street built before a building is constructed on the corner of Route 44 and Climax Road.

Mr. Ladouceur noted his agreement but reiterated that he doesn’t want to lose R3 forever in exchange for 20 spaces because once the parking spaces are built R3 will never be built. He said he’s ok with delaying R3 for a few years while building the other side of Market Street.

Mr. Coates noted he is very willing to compromise but explained that paving the subject area does not prevent a future building from being constructed. Whole Foods is the anchor tenant, as well as the best possible tenant, and they are very concerned about having enough parking to operate successfully. He noted that the tower does not have to be built there but the development really needs an anchor tenant. On the plan it shows that the majority of the area is not impervious area but rather is green space; it’s 20 parking spaces. The applicant’s request is to comply with Whole Foods’ request for additional parking. If the parking is not utilized the applicant will go back to Whole Foods and show how the parking hasn’t been used and come back to the Commission to build in the future. Planting landscaping and building parking will never prevent future building construction. Regarding Mr. Peck’s request for additional work on the bike path – the money can be better used to complete the other end of the bike path where it ends now. A master plan is being worked on for the multifamily area to present to the Commission in January. He noted that every resource available has been put forth on this project during Covid and reiterated that the anchor tenant cannot be risked. Whole Foods is terrified on parking. He noted that this proposal is reasonable and the applicant is willing to compromise on everything for a great project long term.

Ms. Levin asked what other demands the anchor tenant might have since this request is rather late in the game.

Mr. Coates said the anchor tenant will need signage but confirmed they will have no other demands; he noted that he was successful with Whole Foods on the 20 spaces and that is as far as they can be pushed. Projects always get done better when there is a spirit of compromise.

Ms. Levin said that if Whole Foods doesn’t get the additional 20 spaces they will not build out the inside of the store. Mr. Coates said that is correct. Ms. Levin noted her concern that there is no guarantee that more requests won’t be made in the future. Mr. Coates said there are no other site issues; the development has been paved. He noted that the applicant may return in January to present the next phase.

Mr. Ladouceur said that there are 270 spaces currently and asked how far the proposed additional 20 spaces are from the front door of the building. Mr. Coates said the distance is 200 feet. He noted that employees will initially park in the front of the store (not during Christmas) but eventually they will park in other areas of the development.

Mr. Peck said that we were told the employees would park in the back.

Mr. Armstrong noted his preference that paving blocks (grass grows between the blocks, similar to what exists West Farms Mall) be used for the proposed 20 additional spaces until we can get a handle on how much parking Whole Foods will really need. He suggested that after 6 months of Whole Foods being in full operation that they could demonstrate whether or not the 20 spaces are needed. He commented that building R3 is always going to come into play as long as Whole Foods is there because Whole Foods will likely attract tenants but added that he could see it not being built for at least five years.

Mr. Peck recommended one full year be the timeline to review parking at Whole Foods to allow the holiday season to be included. He noted his concern that Whole Foods is not present tonight and they have not provided any evidence from any other store in CT or in MA as to why they need more parking.

Ms. Levin said that for such a small number of parking spaces it’s hard to believe that there isn’t going to be more requests.

Mr. Coates said he wouldn’t risk his relationship with the Commission with 70 acres left to develop for this project. There is no other condition but he needs these 20 parking spaces for Whole Foods.

Mrs. Primeau asked what the rationale is for wanting 20 more spaces when none of the stores in CT, MA, or NY has even close to 270 spaces. She asked if the 20 additional spaces was requested before or after the lease was signed.

Mr. Coates commented that he accepts Mr. Peck’s information about stores in CT as accurate but indicated that there are stores in MA large enough to have 270 spaces, especially the most recent stores. He confirmed that there is a signed lease with Whole Foods and they require this number of parking spaces. He noted that there are no other conditions adding that he is in a very compromised position; if the spaces are not used he will be back before the Town. There will never be a better tenant than Whole Foods to serve as the anchor tenant.

Mr. Gentile commented that the Whole Foods buildings is much more visible without the R3 building and added that he is wondering if this is really about visual exposure. It doesn’t make any sense for 20 parking spaces.

Mr. Ladouceur asked if it has been investigated whether 20 more spaces could fit within the footprint of the existing 270 spaces or somewhere else on the site (i.e., outdoor patio area).

Mr. Coates commented that the outdoor seating area is located on Climax Road such that having parking there is not an alternative.

In response to Mr. Armstrong’s suggestion Mr. Coates said that adding 20 spaces to the approval helps but noted that Whole Foods is asking for the 20 spaces to be built now and not in one year. He indicated that he thinks it would be the same end result if the 20 spaces are built along with the additional green space that is proposed; if it turns out the parking is not needed it the applicant will return to the Commission.

In response to Mr. Ladouceur, Mr. Coates confirmed that adding 20 spaces was explored within the 270 parking area footprint but noted that it runs counter to all regulations and best management practices (eliminating green areas and walkways) relative to parking lots. Mr. Ladouceur said that the Whole Foods building was approved along with the R3 building and its associated parking and also building R4. He commented that it seems easier to show when additional parking is needed than to say there is too much parking. He commented that it doesn’t make sense to say that if it is found in a year that the extra 20 spaces are not needed that a 5K SF building could be built instead because parking is needed for the tenants of the 5K SF building. No one has shown that Whole Foods cannot function with the existing 270 spaces. He said that his preference is that the 20 spaces not be built until it can be proven that they are absolutely needed (maybe in a year from now) because if the spaces are built and not needed they will never be taken out and building R3 constructed. He noted his agreement with Mr. Gentile that Whole Foods does not want building R3 to block their building.

Mr. Coates noted his understanding of the concerns adding that Whole Foods is happy to add a tower and all the additional landscaping proposed. He said that for the foreseeable future he has no right to build R3 under their lease so they’re not going to have competition for parking there. Work on the inside of Whole Foods has been stopped for five to six months.

Mr. Ladouceur asked if the lease for Whole Foods contemplates no building R3 when R3 was clearly required as part of this original development approval a few years ago.

Mr. Coates said that he has laid the facts out and the request is reasonable. Tens of millions have been spent on this development with no cost spared and Whole Foods is crucial to the success of the project. We are up against a wall and Covid has exacerbated the situation.

Mr. Ladouceur said that Covid has nothing to do with the lease signing that doesn’t show building R3 being built when R3 was a requirement to be the building that that tenant is in. He asked if the request is to remove building R3 and it has nothing to do with 20 spaces.

Mr. Coates said that Whole Foods cannot live with building R3 as a competitor to their parking lot and they need an additional 20 spaces. We are willing to build a wall and a tower on the corner. He confirmed that the request does have to do with 20 additional spaces; he clarified that the preference is for 33 additional spaces but will settle and compromise for 20.

Mr. Hamilton asked why this request is coming so late and commented that once the 20 spaces are in Whole Foods would never let them go and therefore building R3 would never be built.

Mr. Coates said that some people are confident that Whole Foods does not need the additional 20 spaces but confirmed that Whole Foods does not share that confidence and they are very concerned with parking. The building costs went from $45M to $63M in a period of five years.

Mr. Hamilton commented that no one is parking there right now and asked if Whole Foods has projections on the number of cars that will be parking there on an hourly basis.

Mr. Coates said that Whole Foods has experience with all their supermarkets relative to parking adding that he is sure they have some estimates and in their estimation they need more parking.

Mr. Hamilton said that to be convinced he needs to see estimations in spreadsheet form showing their other stores and the number of parking spaces versus the store’s square footage.

Mr. Armstrong referenced Mr. Peck’s suggestion (in his Staff Comments) and said that he thinks the best we can do is to allow Whole Foods to come back after a year to say they need 20 additional spaces (from grassed paving blocks) to serve their customers’ needs. He said that he thinks this Whole Foods is going to be a very successful location noting that visibility seems to be the biggest concern. The Town will continue to work with the applicant regarding additional spaces for employee parking, if needed.

Mr. Ladouceur said that the concern that building R3 is taking away from parking is not anywhere near being demonstrated because R3 was originally intended to house high-rent, professional tenants that are not open on the weekends or late at night when grocery stores have their peak times.

We’ve seen this scenario in many other locations in Town that these two types of uses work well together and parking is complementary as their peaks are at different times. He reiterated his concerns with allowing any parking in this area but it means that R3 will never be built. This project is a destination such that people may come to Whole Foods but will also shop in other stores within the development. The entire site has plenty of parking spaces to allow for overflows including employees who will be required to park farther away to leave spaces close to the buildings for patrons. He asked for more information before any approval is to be considered outside of what Staff has recommended because 20 additional spaces is not going to make or break a store.

Mr. Hamilton noted his agreement.

Mr. Peck pointed out that there are 30 parking spaces on Market Street that will not be utilized for some time until the tenant spaces fill up. Employees could park in this 30-space lot and walk into the back door of Whole Foods.

Mr. Coates asked for Option A such that the area proposed as building R3 be left as grass. The Commission asks that the applicant return in one year to prove the need for additional parking spaces. He asked that consideration be given to take this plan that requests 20 spaces, with the tweaks discussed, and that the 20 spaces be placed on grassed pavers in the area of building R3 (as shown on the plan) and any request to make this permanent come back to the Commission but not before 12 months of operation. He noted that he wants to save his tenant and cannot compromise more.

Mr. Armstrong asked for clarification that the applicant would return to the Commission before the 20 parking spaces could be utilized.

Mr. Coates said that he doesn’t know adding that whatever he takes away from tonight’s meeting he will have to go and discuss with Whole Foods. He said there has been 180K SF of tenant cancellations on this site since Covid, adding that if he didn’t need help he wouldn’t be here.

Mr. Gentile asked if Whole Foods was aware of building R3 when they signed their lease and also aware that the developer can control the tenant in building R3 and dictate the parking needs.

Mr. Coates confirmed that they shared with Whole Foods all of their permits and approvals.

Mr. Peck explained that he has not seen the proposed plan (PowerPoint) prior to tonight’s meeting; Town Engineering has not seen the plan either. He recommended that before the Commission make any long lasting decisions that Staff be allowed time to review in detail the plans/requests as well as tonight’s discussion to prepare information for the Commission to review at their next meeting.

Messrs. Armstrong and Ladouceur noted their agreement to continue this application and any decision to the December 8 meeting.

Mr. Armstrong clarified that if approval is given at some point for the 20 additional parking spaces that Whole Foods does not have permission to use those spaces until they return to the Commission to demonstrate the need.

Mr. Ladouceur noted that he would be open in the future to the possibility of building R3 being reduced in size from 5K SF to a size that is workable to gain a tenant that is complementary to the parking situation.

Mr. Coates noted his understanding that the Commission requires Whole Foods to demonstrate the need for the additional 20 spaces (partially paved and partially grassed) a year after they have opened and before the spaces are utilized. He asked that the Commission take a vote tonight that only binds them to discuss the parking a year after Whole Foods opens.

In response to Mr. Ladouceur, Mr. Peck confirmed that Town Engineering would want/need to review the grassed paver option prior to an approval being granted.

Mr. Coates noted his understanding adding that we will see what happens.

Mr. Gentile asked that if building R3 is ultimately not built that a structure of some kind be built in its place. Not a tower as has been proposed but something.

There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Ladouceur motioned to continue the public hearing for App. #4934 to the next meeting, scheduled for December 8. The motion seconded by Mr. Mahoney received unanimous approval.

Mr. Ladouceur motioned to table App. #4935 to the next meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Mahoney and received unanimous approval.

The public hearing portion of the meeting was closed.

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING**

**Avon Village Center** - Signage Permit Information

Mr. Peck explained that the two proposed identification signs, for Avon Village Center, meet the Regulations with regard to location, size, design, and lighting. One sign would be located at the corner/intersection of Climax Road and Route 44 and the other sign would be located at the intersection of Bickford Drive and Climax Road (the sign will be mounted into the wall near the roundabout). He indicated that the Staff has worked closely with Richter & Cegan and recommends approval of the proposed signs.

Mesdames Primeau and Harrop and Mr. Gentile noted that they do not like the small “a” adding that Avon should start with a capital “A”. Mrs. Harrop said that she doesn’t like the sign and doesn’t think it clearly identifies Avon Center. Mrs. Primeau said that she also doesn’t like the layout – a small “a” with “von” on an angle – it doesn’t read right.

Mr. Ladouceur said that the word “Avon” needs to be more prominent on the signs regardless of the small “a”. He also said that the sign design as proposed does not communicate the name of the development effectively (“a” then “von” displayed up and down)/

In response to Mr. Peck, the Commission unanimously agreed that they would like Richter & Cegan to make some modification to the signs, as discussed, and return to the December 8 meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Request for Extension – Stratford Crossing Subdivision (PZC Apps. #4683-84)

Mr. Peck confirmed that a significant amount of work has been done recently, including paving corrections and repairs, but noted that there is still a list of items (e.g., landscaping, lighting, surveying, general improvements, and paper documentation) that still need to be corrected. He explained that he has asked for and has received from the developer a date for when each item will be completed. He indicated that he recommends granting a six-month extension (May 17, 2021) to complete the items. He explained that the Town has a good handle on all the outstanding items.

Mr. Mahoney motioned to grant a six-month extension (to May 17, 2021) to complete outstanding items for the Stratford Crossing Subdivision. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamilton and received unanimous approval.

**STAFF UPDATES**

Avon Village Center Status and Covid (Executive Order Revised)

Mr. Peck reported that the Town (Planning, Engineering, Public Works) has a meeting with the State DOT tomorrow morning regarding infrastructure details for Avon Village Center.

Affordable Housing Plan – Preparation Process Status

Mr. Peck reported that the Town has received a grant from the CT State Department of Housing to create an affordable housing plan, which is required under CGS Section 8-30j. This Affordable Housing Plan will ultimately become a component of the Town’s 2016 Plan of Conservation & Development. He explained that five candidates were considered and CHA (Clough Harbor & Associates) was chosen. The aforementioned State grant will cover all of the consultant’s work/fees, which is hoped to be completed within 6-9 months. The existing housing stock will be looked at to determine the Town’s needs for different types of housing as well as a review of the Regulations pertaining to housing to ensure that the wording is correct. Virtual meetings will be held to gain input from the public and the Commission will also have an opportunity to comment on the Plan.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Linda Sadlon

Planning and Community Development