

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Avon held a meeting at the Avon Town Hall on Tuesday, January 28, 2020. Present were Tom Armstrong, Vice Chair, Joseph Gentile, Mary Harrop, Lisa Levin, Brian Ladouceur, Jr., Dean Hamilton and Alternates Drew Bloom and Elaine Primeau (not sitting). Peter Mahoney was absent. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and Zoning Commission.

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

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Ladouceur nominated Mr. Armstrong for Chair; the nomination was seconded by Mr. Hamilton and received unanimous approval.

Mr. Gentile nominated Mr. Ladouceur for Vice Chair; the nomination was seconded by Mrs. Harrop and received unanimous approval.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ladouceur motioned to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2020, meeting. Mr. Gentile seconded the motion that received approval from Messrs. Ladouceur, Gentile, Armstrong, Hamilton and Bloom and Ms Levin. Mrs. Harrop abstained.

PUBLIC HEARING

App. #4916 - Avon Mill LLC, owner, Lee Land Development LLC, applicant, request for Zone Change from RU2A to AHOZ (with subdistricts MF and Duplex), 29.39 acres, 64 Avonwood Road, Parcel 1220064

App. #4917 - Avon Mill LLC, owner, Lee Land Development LLC, applicant, request for Special Exception under Section III.H.2 of Avon Zoning Regulations to permit earth removal, 64 Avonwood Road, Parcel 1220064, in an RU2A Zone

App. #4918 - Avon Mill LLC, owner, Lee Land Development LLC, applicant, request for Special Exception under Sections IX.G.6., VIII, and X of Avon Zoning Regulations to permit modifications to dimensional standards, 64 Avonwood Road, Parcel 1220064, in an RU2A Zone

NEW APPLICATION

App. #4919 - Avon Mill LLC, owner, Lee Land Development LLC, applicant, request for Site Plan Approval, pursuant to Section X, to permit 250 new residential units, 64 Avonwood Road, Parcel 1220064, in an RU2A Zone

Present were David Whitney, PE, Consulting Engineers, on behalf of the applicant; Tim Lee, Lee Land Development, applicant; Attorney Robert M. Meyers, on behalf of the applicant; Louis Pfaff, Hunts Bridge Companies; Mark Vertucci, PTOE, Fuss & O'Neill; Donald Poland, CT Planning & Development LLC.

Mr. Armstrong reported that all information received in connection with the public hearing for the prior applications (Apps. #4898-99-00-01) that is not in conflict with the information for the subject applications is accepted and made part of this record.

Andrew Bloom (new alternate member, January 2020) stated for the record that he has reviewed all the information (audio recordings and written material) for the previous applications and is therefore eligible to vote on the subject applications.

Dean Hamilton (new member, January 2020) stated for the record that he has reviewed all the information (audio recordings and written material) for the previous applications and is therefore eligible to vote on the subject applications.

In response to Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Lee confirmed that an agreement for emergency access has been entered into with River Mead as well as a private wall. An audience member, Rich Charbonneau, noted his agreement.

In response to Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Meyers addressed the language in the emergency access agreement and explained that the applicant had offered to the residents of River Mead one-sided access to the gate to cross Avon Mill property to exit at the traffic light (Avonwood Road) but River Mead has decided, for now, not to have this access. He further explained that the applicant is ok with a condition, if an approval is granted, to allow the one-sided access should River Mead change their mind. Mr. Meyers added his understanding that any condition (if an approval is granted) involving such an easement would have to be reviewed and acceptable to Town Staff prior to being executed.

Mr. Meyers indicated that short presentations will be made by Messrs. Lee and Whitney. Mr. Peck notes in his Staff comments that Mr. Vertucci's traffic report was done in accordance with the usual standards and the resulting conditions will be substantially better than existing conditions. Mr. Poland provided a report relative to costs and revenues in connection with school enrollments. He explained that Mr. Peck has been in contact with Milone & MacBroom, the Town's selected consultant for a review of both traffic and school enrollment information. Mr. Meyers stated that the increased revenue to the Town from this proposed development (taxes, sewer hookups and use fees) are significantly in excess of the education costs.

Mr. Lee explained that the goal is to renovate and then maintain the existing buildings, which are currently in terrible disrepair, and in turn improve the lifestyle of the existing residents. A playground area is proposed as well as a barbeque area, vegetable gardens and other amenities. Construction of 250 additional units (original proposal was for 270) is proposed; the number of three-bedroom units has been reduced which reduces the number of families with children. Some of the units proposed adjacent to River Mead have also been removed. The new traffic study proposes adding right turning lanes out of Avonwood Road as well as possibly adding a right turning lane exiting River Mead, both of which would improve traffic conditions. Taxes/revenue far exceed the student costs (\$17.5K cost per student times 32 students is far below the revenue that would be generated); the project would be a positive tax incentive to the Town. Revenue from renovating the existing buildings will be received by the Town before there are any new student costs. Additionally, the land use permits will bring in a total of about \$900K of revenue. He stated that he is willing to meet and work with everyone to find solutions to create a project that works for the entire Town.

Mr. Whitney displayed maps of the site explaining that the site is 46 acres located on Avonwood Road; a recent ALTA survey, prepared by Neriani Surveying, was used as the basis for all other

plans/mapping. He reviewed the “Existing Conditions Plan” noting that each of three existing apartment buildings (built in the late 1970s) contain 63 units (189 units in total) and there are associated driveways, parking lots, and utilities. The site was hooked into public sewers sometime between 2011 and 2014. The majority of the site perimeter is currently wooded. There are two man-made retention basins on the site that are classified as wetlands (one basin has been part of Avon Mill since 1970s and the other basin accepts water from an adjacent development known as Avon Place, that has three apartment buildings at a higher elevation). He noted that there is overflow down to the Farmington River from the basin collecting water from Avon Place. He clarified that while there are no wetland soils on the site the site does extend down to the River and about 170 feet of the site is on the edge of the Farmington River. Also, Meadows (owned by the Town) is located between the River and the subject site. Mr. Whitney reviewed the “Overall Plan of Development” addressing the proposed 3000-foot loop road (aka Road A) that goes around the site; there are also interior roads totaling 5,410 feet to be constructed as private roads, 22-foot wide with curbs and sidewalks. Two large apartment buildings containing 98 units each are proposed (original plan proposed 100 units in each building). Thirteen duplexes (two story, two unit townhouses, so to speak) and seven quads (two story, four unit buildings) are proposed.

In response to Mrs. Harrop, Mr. Whitney explained/clarified that the duplexes (13 in total) have two driveways adding that there are different styles and models of duplexes so they won't all look the same. He acknowledged the details can be difficult to see on the reduced sized maps. The quads (seven in total) have two driveways plus four additional parking spaces. Each quad has two garage spaces and two driveway spaces (four spaces in total, two spaces per unit). The duplexes have two garages for two of the four units plus a parking spot in the driveway and four other spaces, two each for the other two of the four units. Quads have eight spaces and duplexes have four spaces but with two driveways.

Mr. Whitney explained that as part of the plan revisions include the elimination of two duplexes and three quads in various locations on the site but noted that two of the units eliminated were located on the northern portion of the site closest to River Mead.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Whitney explained the differences between the original proposal and the revised proposal presented tonight. He referenced the dwelling unit summary explaining that each large apartment building was reduced by two units (100 units each building revised to 98 units each building = 196 total units, reduction of four units). There were 15 duplexes and now there are 13, two have been eliminated (a reduction of four units). There were 10 quads and now there are seven, three have been eliminated (a reduction of 12 units). He explained that 20 units in total have been eliminated (4 + 4 + 12 = 20) (270 units originally proposed, now 250 units). He further explained that 10 one-bedroom units have been eliminated; six, two-bedroom units have been eliminated; and four, three-bedroom units have been eliminated. He indicated that a total of 34 bedrooms have been eliminated.

In response to Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Whitney confirmed that the three-bedroom units will be located in the duplexes and not in the quads.

Mr. Ladouceur asked if the student study is based on the current bedroom breakdown. An unidentified audience member said “yes”. Mr. Ladouceur commented that if the current

bedroom configuration were to be revised (e.g. swap out three bedroom units for one or two-bedroom units) that the aforementioned student study could be revised.

Mr. Whitney continued his presentation addressing the proposed overlay zone change area explaining that the existing three buildings along with the existing parking lots (approximately 17 acres) will remain within the existing zone which is RU2A; the entire site at this moment is zoned RU2A. The remaining 29 acres of the site is proposed to be changed to AHOZ (Attainable Housing Overlay Zone); all the proposed new construction activities would take place in the overlay zone (AHOZ). He stated that the proposed zone change is in conformance with the 2016 POCD and added that the subject site is not located in the Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone (Chapter 4, Map 4-4 in the POCD). He referenced the Plan of Circulation (Chapter 10, Map 10-1 in the POCD) and confirmed that there are no proposed road extensions shown anywhere near the subject site. He explained that the subject site is one of eight properties in Avon that warrant study for multi-family or cluster-style development, as noted in Map 7-1, Properties that Warrant added study for Multifamily and/or Cluster Style Development, found in Chapter 7 of the POCD. The AWPCA, in December 2018, granted approval for 270 new units to be connected to the public sewer system. Mr. Lee hired Fuss & "O'Neill (the Town's sewer consultant) to do a sewer capacity study at the AWPCA's request and it was determined that there is adequate capacity in the Town's sewer system for anticipated additional flow from 270 new units. He explained that Mr. Lee committed to the AWPCA that all new water fixtures to be installed during renovation of the existing buildings as well as all fixtures to be installed in the new buildings will be water-saving fixtures. He reiterated that the proposed number of new units has been reduced to 250, from the 270 originally proposed and approved by AWPCA. He addressed wetlands area #1 (retention basin for Avon Place Condos) explaining that the wetlands approval (received July 2019) requires that storm water runoff from existing parking lots be put into an infiltration system rather directly discharge to the wetlands. The applicant also agreed to repair eroded areas from the pipe leading to the wetlands and remove invasive species.

Mr. Whitney addressed topography noting that there will be some grading needed in the areas of new construction, as the land has some steep areas and knolls. There is approximately 16 acres (34% of site) of existing development, which is open and mostly grass and ornamental trees and will not be disturbed. The area to be disturbed for development is about 16.5 acres. The remaining wooded areas comprise about 14.5 acres (31% of site). He noted there will be cuts and fills associated with construction of the buildings and the road but further noted that due to the proposed phasing plan all the activity will not take place at the same time. Phase One involves renovation of the three existing buildings (budget is \$4M) and would begin immediately following an approval and issuance of permits; Spring of 2020 is the proposed start date to be completed in about two years and no grading is involved. Phase Two consists of about 7.5 acres and would be the construction of apartment building #1 as well as the construction of the new clubhouse, new pool, and some parking. New apartment building #1 will be located where the existing tennis courts and pool exist now. Phase Two is estimated to begin in the fall of 2020 and be completed in fall of 2022. Phase Three consists of about 8 acres and involves the construction of large apartment building #2 as well as a total of 12 duplexes and quads. Phase Three is estimated to begin in the spring of 2021 and be completed in three years by the spring of 2024. The aforementioned access road would be constructed in Phase Three and extend through into Phase Four where utilities would come up. The access road (about 8 acres) would provide a

second means of ingress and egress for Phase Three. Phase Four is the last phase where eight duplexes and quads would be built as well as completion of the road; this phase would last about one and a half years. He pointed out that the entire site would not be opened up all at the same time and excavation would not happen all at the same time. It was agreed upon with the CREC School that dump trucks leaving the site with earth material would not run between 8am and 9am and also not run between 3pm and 4:30pm to avoid school bus traffic. He noted the times of truck traveling down Avonwood Road would be 6am to 8am then 9am to 3pm then 4:30pm to 6pm.

Mr. Lee pointed out that trucks would not be running every minute of the schedule just noted; there would not be a constant stream of trucks and maybe 20-22 truck trips per day.

Mr. Whitney explained that earth removal for Phase Two would take about four months with 25 truck trips per day, on average, out of the estimated two-year construction schedule. Phase Three removal is estimated to take eight months with 25 trucks per day for a three-year project. Phase Four removal is estimated to be about two months for a one and half year project. Trucks would not be running the entire time that work is being done on the site. He noted that the trucks would leave Avonwood Road and travel down Route 10 in both directions, not traveling through any residential neighborhoods. He indicated that the proposed earth removal is in no way the same as the earth removal for the Avon Village Center project.

Mr. Whitney addressed parking explaining that slightly more than two parking spaces per unit was constructed on the Avon Mill site. The AHOZ parking requirement is 1.5 spaces per unit which equates to 375 spaces; the total required parking spaces per the Zoning Regulations is 753 spaces and 909 spaces are shown on the plans. Relative to the existing buildings there are 128 spaces, 140 spaces, and 126 spaces (2.0 or higher spaces per unit). For apartment building #1 175 spaces are proposed (1.8 spaces per unit) and for apartment building #2 177 spaces are proposed (1.81 spaces per unit). The duplexes each have four spaces (two spaces per unit); the quad units have eight spaces (two spaces per unit); there are three locations with additional guest parking totaling 55 spaces. He explained that a total of 909 spaces are shown which is 156 spaces more than the minimum required (average of 2.07 spaces per unit overall).

Mr. Armstrong said that it seems like too much parking adding that when he has visited the site there are many unused parking spaces in the rear. He noted that he would leave the parking issue up to Mr. Peck and the applicant but suggested that overflow parking could be located near the new pool. He commented that maybe green pavers could be considered for overflow parking.

Mr. Whitney noted his understanding but added that there were concerns at past meetings about the parking ratio of 1.5 per unit so the parking was increased.

Mr. Meyers suggested that maybe some of the proposed spaces could be held in reserve and determined at a later date if they are needed.

Mr. Gentile commented that oftentimes parking spaces are lost due to snow storage and asked if there is a plan for snow removal.

Mr. Whitney explained that snow storage areas have not been designated but confirmed that

there is plenty of room to do so. He added that the applicant is willing to reduce the parking if that is the consensus.

In response to Mr. Ladouceur, Mr. Whitney explained that the total area of new development is about 16.5 acres, which is about 57% of the total AHOZ acreage of 29 acres.

Mr. Whitney addressed drainage noting that the soils on the site are very well drained. All the stormwater runoff will be discharged into the ground via infiltration systems. The entire 100-year storm will be captured onsite and infiltrated; there will be zero flow from the subject development to the Farmington River.

Mr. Vertucci, professional traffic operations engineer, addressed the traffic study explained that the traffic study was updated for the reduction in units to 250 (from 270). Three intersections in the study area were looked at 1) Avonwood Road at Route 10; 2) River Mead at Route 10; and Route 44 at Route 10. Traffic counts were done at each intersection and existing data was also obtained from the Avon Village Center Study (also prepared by Fuss & O'Neill). Traffic counts were grown to the anticipated design year 2021, based on a 1.25% growth rate obtained from the State DOT. A trip generation analysis was performed to calculate the number trips generated by the proposed additional 250 units. The analysis was done using the industry standard, published rates contained in the ITE Trip Generation Manual. The morning peak hour results in 23 additional trips entering and 67 additional trips exiting Avonwood Road. The afternoon peak hour results in 67 additional entering trips and 43 additional exiting trips. A capacity analysis was run at each of the study intersections adding these trips to the background volumes to compare before and after. Each intersection is based on a Level of Service (LOS) from A to F ("A" means very little delay while "F" means significant delay – the DOT typically considers "D" an acceptable LOS). Route 10 and Avonwood Road operates acceptably in the current background condition in the peak hours – LOS B in the morning and LOS D in the afternoon. To maintain these LOS a restriping of the Avonwood Road approach to Route 10 is proposed to allow an extra turn lane (road is currently 32-33 feet wide) to allow motorists to turn either right or left onto Route 10. Signal timing modifications are also proposed at this traffic light to allow for more efficient operation. With these proposed changes, the LOS at this intersection in the morning peak hour would be a "C" (a reduction but still an acceptable LOS) and the LOS D is maintained in the afternoon peak hour. Mr. Vertucci confirmed that bus turning movements were done in and out of Avonwood Road with the proposed lane restripings (addition of one lane) to ensure that the buses can make the movements. If it is determined to be necessary there is room to widen the road.

Ms. Levin commented that adding the development is making the traffic at Avonwood Road worse on weekday mornings and adding another lane doesn't help going from LOS B to LOS C.

Mr. Vertucci noted that there is a decrease in the LOS but it is still an acceptable LOS; there is only one way in and out of the development and 250 units are being added so there will be more trips. He explained that adding a right-hand turn lane and optimizing the signal timing can allow the intersection to operate better than it does today.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Vertucci explained signal optimization works by plugging information into the capacity analysis program that, in turn, calculates what the best "green time" is for each phase of the intersection allowing it to operate at peak efficiency. He pointed out that

the traffic light at Avonwood Road is located on a State Road (Route 10) such that if local approvals are granted an application and approval by the State DOT/OSTA would be required before any changes could be made.

In response to Mrs. Harrop's comment about traffic backups on Avonwood Road for cars trying to turn right, Mr. Vertucci explained that the aforementioned improvements should definitely reduce queues on Avonwood Road trying to exit onto Waterville Road. He explained that typically "no turn on red" signs are used when there is not adequate sight distance adding that that is not an issue in this location and no sign would be recommended. He added that the proposed restriping would help the existing condition, regardless of the proposed development.

In response to Mr. Ladouceur, Mr. Vertucci confirmed that the aforementioned changes to the LOS only applies to the peak hours based on the traffic counts which are 7:15am to 8:15am and 4pm to 5pm. The counts are higher in the commuter peak hour than the school peak hour. He explained that the difference between LOS B and LOS C is generally, on average, 10-15 seconds of delay but noted that it gets higher the closer you get to LOS E (55-80 seconds). He noted that the actual delays are included in Table 4 (Appendix A) in the traffic study. He explained that most drivers would not recognize a delay of 10-15 seconds.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Vertucci referenced Table 4 and explained that, relative to the intersection at Avonwood Road and Route 10, in the morning the LOS goes from a B to a C and with the improvements a LOS C is maintained and in the afternoon the LOS goes from a D to an E and with the improvements the LOS is back to a D. He explained that the background traffic volumes in the afternoon at the intersection are higher as well as the number of right-hand turns. He confirmed that adding a dedicated right-hand turn lane out of Avonwood Road is one of the proposed improvements. He reiterated that he would not recommend a "no turn on red" sign adding that the State DOT would likely question the use of such a sign as it would reduce the capacity of a State intersection.

In response to Mrs. Harrop, Mr. Vertucci explained that the length of the lanes (right hand and left hand turn lanes proposed to be restriped on Avonwood Road) would extend back to the CREC School driveway, which is about 150 feet, allowing for stacking/queuing of seven to eight cars in each lane (left and right) for a total of 15 to 16 vehicles. He agreed this scenario would help the School traffic as well.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Vertucci addressed trip generation results explaining that the ITE Trip Generation Manual contains data for a large variety of different land uses; everything from retail and commercial office to residential. The Manual contains average trip generation rates for each land use based on counts for similar for developments all over the country. The land use code that is most applicable to the subject proposed development is Multi-Family Housing Mid Rise; 100 data points for similar developments have been counted around the country to arrive at an average trip generation rate. This rate and land use code were applied to the 250 units to arrive at the trip generation projection, which is 90 trips in the morning peak hour and 110 trips in the afternoon peak hour. He further explained that because there are existing residences the road was counted and the existing rate is very close to what the ITE Manual would project; a good check and balance that the correct peak hour rate is being used.

In response to Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Vertucci addressed the access gate at River Mead explaining that the traffic study was done for both scenarios – both with and without using and/or have the gate be operational. The River Mead approach to Route 10 is a LOS F in the peak hours; this is an existing condition. He explained that while there is not very much traffic at all on the River Mead approach but the Route 10 peak hour traffic is significant such that a vehicle waiting to turn left out of River Mead is about a 50-second delay (LOS F). He indicated that the River Mead approach has also been proposed to be restriped for the right-turn lane, which would add a small improvement but noted that the bigger improvement would be to allow River Mead traffic (exiting left onto Route 10) to cut through the Avon Mill site to reach the traffic signal on Avonwood Road. He explained that if this scenario were to occur, that driveway approach would improve to a LOS C. He confirmed that the buildout of the Avon Village Center (1M square feet) is included in the background traffic which is included in the traffic study. The intersection of Route 10 and Route 44 is one of the busier intersections in Town, being a LOS F in both the morning and afternoon peak hours. About 5,000 cars go through this intersection during the peak hours and we're adding about 60-70 trips; roughly about a 1% increase which is not even to the level of what the background traffic growth rate is at this intersection. The projected increase is insignificant and not a noticeable traffic increase to the average driver. He explained, however, that discussions could be had with the State DOT on the timing of the traffic lights (at Route 10/Route 44) for adjustments that could potentially decrease delays by as much as 30-40%. Mr. Vertucci pointed out that it's all about balance, if you improve one approach you take away from another, adding that the final call is up to the State DOT (Route 10/Route 44 is a State controlled signal).

In response to Mr. Ladouceur, Mr. Vertucci confirmed that adding a right-turn only at River Mead will not change the LOS F that now exists during the morning peak hour when turning left out of River Mead. Mr. Ladouceur said for those taking a right it would drastically change it because they will not have to wait for the cars taking a left. Mr. Vertucci explained that the right-turn-out movement is a LOS C so it's not nearly as bad. Mr. Ladouceur said that it's LOS C but if you're stuck behind a person turning left it is one lane only, right? Mr. Vertucci agreed it's only one lane. Mr. Ladouceur said that even though it's a C it's really an F if you have a car taking a left in front of you. Mr. Vertucci explained that it's a LOS C when it's restriped; when it's a single lane the whole thing is an F if a car is not moved over enough to allow a car to bypass on the right.

Ms. Levin referenced Table 3 Tab A asking for clarification on what he column labeled "improved" means relative to River Mead; does it mean that River Mead residents are exiting the site and traveling to the traffic light on Avonwood Road or does it mean they are turning right out of River Mead onto Route 10.

Mr. Vertucci explained/clarified that the improvement column means that both aforementioned improvements would be in place (restriping of driveway at River Mead and allowing exiting via Avonwood Road).

In response to Mr. Bloom, Mr. Vertucci explained that existing traffic volumes for Route 10 and Avonwood Road are found in Appendix B (background traffic conditions) and are the existing 2019 counts grown to the year 2021.

Mr. Gentile asked if the applicant has met with River Mead residents to alleviate any concerns regarding noise, buffering, trespassing, etc.

Mr. Lee explained that he had a positive meeting this past Saturday at the Avon Library with a River Mead resident about buffering between the properties and building a wall was decided upon which would buffer noise and headlights. The access gate was also discussed and an agreement was signed. He indicated that he is approachable and wants to work things out to do what's right for the Town and all of its residents.

The hearing was opened for public comment.

Juan Rosario, Apt C6 at Avon Mill, said that he has talked to Mr. Lee who has addressed a lot of issues that he has had living in this complex for the past 25 years. The conditions in the place have gone downhill and the current management company has neglected the place; there is no communication and if you call with a problem no one calls you back. He said that he hopes Mr. Lee will be considered to come in and change the place.

A male audience member (name inaudible) residing in Apt 65 at Avon Mill, noted his concern with stolen cars and broken windows last year. He said that he has lived here for 13 years but has never had this concern before. He commented that he thinks Mr. Lee is going to be better than the current management adding that we need the Town to be like it was before cars were being stolen.

Peter Hayes, 38 River Mead for 19 years, asked if the subject traffic study is an update of the 2015 traffic study, adding that he has not had a chance to read the subject study. He said that the current traffic study took into account the Avon Center project but did not include the 3000+ units located north into Granby which is an omission in traffic volumes that needs addressing because it will radically change the LOS at the Route 10 and Route 44 intersection, which is a hardly a safe intersection. He noted that he got hit by a car while riding his bike and added that there are lots of accidents at this intersection noted in the traffic study. He asked if an update to the report could be provided to include the aforementioned 3000 units north into Granby. He noted his concerns with additional traffic from construction trucks and also existing noise from the dumpsters during trash pickup.

Mr. Lee addressed the dumpsters noting that it is his plan to move them to a location so that the trucks never have to back up using reverse, which makes a lot of noise. He added that trash pickup would be in the middle of the day.

Becky Salerni, 23 River View, said that there's no need for a right turn lane out of River Mead as there is room to get by. The problem is turning left out of River Mead in the morning and turning left to get back into River Mead when returning home in the evening. She noted her fears for her driving age children. She noted that the traffic study is flawed because she experiences the traffic every day; more units will be a problem as there is already a problem. She noted opposition to the access gate because she doesn't want to look at it; she already has to look at dumpsters and trash outside near dumpsters that blows near her yard and noted concerns with truck traffic.

Mr. Meyers indicated that the site plan must show where dumpsters would be located; the Town has control and can mandate location. Mr. Lee is willing to contract with trash haulers to come at a specific time. The applicant is required to comply with a schedule for truck traffic which is determined by Town Staff.

Mr. Ladouceur commented that Mr. Lee does not currently own the property and has no control over the issues and concerns being voiced. If an approval is granted, Mr. Lee would buy the property and then be in control of managing the site.

Mr. Lee confirmed that he will be hiring a management company that will perform far better than the current company; he reiterated he will move the dumpsters and fencing will be added for screening. The property will be kept neat and safe. He noted that the emergency access gate is a life safety issue for the residents of both Avon Mill and River Mead; emergency vehicles (fire trucks and ambulances) need to be able to access both sites at all times. He communicated that he will be a good neighbor and approachable to anyone who has concerns.

Louis Pfaff explained that he has worked with Mr. Lee for many years on this project and has 20 years of experience in apartment and multi-family management. He noted that he is passionate about keeping areas trash free and wants to hear any and all concerns from residents. He noted that while he and Mr. Lee are from out of Town and residents do not know them he stressed how important it is to them to ensure that their properties are run well and that they have a good relationship with the surrounding communities and the Town as a whole.

Shelley Waxman, 15 River View, said that once the existing units are renovated, as proposed, that the rents could go sky high and what protection do the existing tenants have. She asked that residents just be aware of potential pressure in the future. She said she takes a left out of River Mead every day and goes over the Mountain. Changes are proposed to the traffic signal at Avonwood Road but traffic is already backed up to Route 44 from Route 10. She noted concerns with the proposed 900 parking spaces and the existing traffic such that this project would add more and asked that the size of the proposal be reconsidered.

Mr. Pfaff explained that they have had in-person discussions with all the residents at Avon Mill and they have all been sent letters. He indicated that assurances have been extended to all residents of Avon Mill that they do not have to have their unit renovated if they do not wish to; the only units that will be renovated are those where the tenant makes a request and the units that become vacant naturally. No existing residents will be forced into a renovation and pay higher rent. He confirmed that everything has been put in writing for the existing tenants.

Mr. Vertucci addressed the proposed number of parking spaces and explained that parking spaces and traffic generation are not correlated and are completely different calculations. Not everyone, from the proposed 900 spaces, would leave the site at one time during the peak hour; many people would remain on the site during the day.

Rick Chosek, resident of West Hartford, noted that he is a long time multi-family specialist and explained that he can relate to all the residents' concerns because a large apartment complex (200 units) was built about two years ago near his home and all the neighbors were upset. He noted that rarely does he see cars coming in and out of the new apartment complex that is

inhabited predominately by empty nesters and young professionals; the neighbors are happy with the reality of the situation. Avon has an aging population; the young people are leaving for college and not coming back because they cannot afford to buy houses in Town. Providing apartments for millennials will encourage them to come back and in time become the future home buyers.

Robin Baran, 182 Woodford Hills, said that last Thursday the traffic report and school enrollment report were circulated online via a private Facebook page to hundreds of Town residents. She noted that plenty of people present tonight have read the school report noting her shock that the Commission has not. She said that she confirmed with the principal of Pine Grove that they are maxed out and hopes the Commission is taking that into consideration.

Ms. Levin clarified that the Commission just received the school enrollment report tonight at this meeting adding that her agenda package sent by the Town did not include the school information. She indicated that the public hearing will remain open in order for the Commission to review the school report. She noted her concern for the number of projected students, from a brief review of the report material.

Mr. Ladouceur said that he looks at the information provided in his agenda package provided by Town Staff as that is what's before the Commission to consider. Commission members are not supposed to have ex parte communication with the public. He pointed out that he does not look at blogs or Facebook pages because the information is not verifiable and may not be accurate and doesn't want his decisions questioned due to inaccurate information. He agreed that the public hearing will be kept open to allow the Commission time to review the school information received tonight, as well as letters received from the public.

Mr. Armstrong explained that the Commission received the traffic study report in their agenda packages but just received the school information tonight. He indicated that Mr. Lee has agreed to pay for an independent study for both traffic and school information.

Mr. Peck reported that the Town is still waiting for the results of the independent study for both traffic and school.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Peck explained that the Commission asked at the last meeting about an independent study for both traffic and school enrollment. He further explained that he told the Commission that Town Staff would select the consultant and as soon as the traffic and school info was received it would be forwarded to the consultant for review. He clarified that he tried to get the consultant's report for tonight but it is not yet ready. When the consultant's information is available all the information (from both the applicant and the consultant) will be transmitted to the Commission at the same time for comparison. He confirmed that there was no intent to mislead anyone and added his agreement that while anyone can read things on Facebook it is never relevant information to this Commission.

Mr. Meyers explained that the applicant is paying the Town who contracted the aforementioned consultant who was hired to determine if the applicant's traffic study and school enrollment was properly done.

In response to Mr. Bloom, Mr. Peck explained that the consultant will examine the information provided to the Town by the applicant (both traffic and school) to determine based on standards whether the studies were properly done and the conclusions are accurate.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Peck explained that the consultant was selected, contracted, and hired by the Town, not the applicant.

Matt Guyer, 78 Woodford Hills, said that he has reviewed the 2015 traffic report for Avon Park North that Fuss & O'Neill converted into the Avon Town Center report that was the basis for the traffic report at Avonwood Road. The traffic problem in Avon is much bigger than just the subject proposed development; it's about safety, congestion, and quality of life. He said he is puzzled by the current traffic study and amazed that it got past Town Staff to the Commission. It's based on 2015 study and assumes an average 1% growth rate, which doesn't work; what works is observation by drivers of the community. People drive on the shoulders of Waterville Road causing problems for other drivers; this is an existing problem aside from subject proposal. He said that the LOS cannot go below an F, per the traffic study, so a developer can say that his proposal will not make a meaningful difference on the LOS. He noted that he waited three minutes and 51 seconds to turn onto Route 44 at a signaled intersection. This is compared to LOS F which is 80 seconds (signaled) and 50 seconds (unsignaled). The report data is flawed and not accurate.

Mr. Armstrong addressed LOS noting that it is viewed both as a grade score and as time and both are in the traffic report. He said that if anyone disagrees with the traffic report to email the Town with specific information on how the report is incorrect so it can be verified; anecdotal data is not sufficient.

In response to Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Vertucci confirmed that one of the biggest delays/backups is while heading east on Route 44 and turning left onto Nod Road.

Ron Tedeschi, 100 Woodford Hills, noted his concerns, in general, with over development in this Town. He noted his agreement with Mr. Guyer's concerns about the traffic report which tries to be convincing to get an approval because improvements have been proposed to make things better. Adding a right-turn lane on both Avonwood Road and River Mead makes things worse if you look at the Route 10/Route 44 intersection. More vehicles will be heading towards this intersection more frequently, which is the real issue because this intersection is already a problem for everyone in Avon. Changing the timing of traffic lights won't make a difference. Adding additional traffic from the Avon Center project and new development in Simsbury is going to make the existing bad condition worse; we're going to end up with a Berlin Turnpike. Mr. Lee is doing a great job and his project is not the real problem; stop overdevelopment in general.

There were no further comments from the audience.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Peck confirmed that he will forward the consultant's report to the Commission as soon as possible. He added that it should be available well before the next meeting on February 18.

In response to Mr. Armstrong regarding the easement, Mr. Peck explained that this is not a new easement and was required when River Mead was built. He indicated that he has extensive discussions with the Fire Marshal about this easement such that if there is a gate it will be available to be unlocked for emergency access and confirmed that this has been the case ever since River Mead was constructed.

In response to Mr. Bloom, Mr. Peck explained/confirmed that the Fire Marshal is adamant that the gate be reinstalled for public safety, regardless of whether or not the subject applications are approved. Currently, there is only one way in and one way out to both Avon Mill and River Mead and emergency personnel want to know there is at least two ways to get in if needed.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Vertucci explained that the background traffic from Simsbury and growth rate has already been accounted for in the traffic report and has been discussed with the State DOT Planning Division on several occasions and the volumes have been approved by the State DOT. He confirmed that the background traffic is reflected in the 1.25% contained in the study and also shown are 1,000 trips in the background for the Avon Village Center project, which are not even on the road yet. He explained that the background volumes in the traffic study have been bumped up very high.

In response to Mr. Bloom, Mr. Vertucci explained that he doesn't know where the 3000 number discussed earlier (new units in Simsbury) is coming from but further explained, for instance, that a development in Granby may be generating a small amount of traffic down to the Avonwood Road intersection but noted that traffic from developments disperse all over the place and this is how background growth rates are determined. The State DOT Planning Division keeps a database of all the developments and major traffic generators approved all over the State. The Census data is constantly being reviewed and the growth rates are updated for each area of the State. All traffic studies are done in coordination with the State DOT to ensure that all the background traffic generators and appropriate growth rates are included. He indicated that the State DOT Planning Division tracks workforce demographics for each town.

Mr. Peck acknowledged receipt of a petition submitted by an unnamed female audience member at the beginning of tonight's meeting. He noted that it will be reviewed by the Town Attorney.

Mr. Bloom motioned to continue the public hearing for Apps. #4916, #4917, and #4918 to the next meeting scheduled for February 18. The motion was seconded by Ms. Levin and received unanimous approval.

Mr. Bloom motioned to table App. #4919 to the next meeting scheduled for February 18. The motion seconded by Ms. Levin received unanimous approval.

The public hearing portion of the meeting was closed.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

OTHER BUSINESS

Staff Updates

Mr. Peck reported on the Avon Village Center project noting that there is a lot of earth movement going on as the foundation for Whole Foods is being constructed. Minor architectural details are ongoing and being worked out; Staff meets with the developer every Thursday afternoon. The grading for the steep bank located on the other side of Climax Road is still being reworked and the three tiered walls that were to be installed to support that bank will now be two walls with additional landscaping. The area should look even better than the plan originally approved. He explained that there is an annual maintenance plan for the underground drainage material (very large yellow plastic pieces) that were just installed/buried underground (well below grade and laid on top of two to four feet of crushed stone which forms the important subbase) beneath what will become the parking lot for Whole Foods. These pieces provide space underground to allow for storage of storm water that will soak back into the ground. These drainage pieces are plastic and very large such that they won't clog and therefore won't likely decompose (plastic doesn't break down very well). He noted that the newly installed bike trail will be brought back into full operation as soon as is possible. He addressed signage for the temporary roads noting that new revised signs have been installed every few weeks to add clarity. He clarified that all the details (building materials and architecture, trucking offsite safety, alternative energy/microgrid) of the entire project are managed on a day to day basis by Staff to ensure that the result will be a quality project in every aspect.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10pm.

Linda Sadlon
Avon Planning and Community Development