

ORANGE ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 MEETING

Unapproved Minutes

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission held a meeting on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., lower level, Orange Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, Connecticut.

Oscar Parente, Esq., Chairman
Paul Kaplan, Esq., Secretary
Tom Torrenti, P.E.
Kevin Cornell, Esq., P.E.

Jack Demirjian, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Tamara Trantales, Administrative Assistant
Robin Gengaro, Recording Secretary

2022 SEP 13 PM 2:48
PAUL KAPLAN
RECORDING SECRETARY

Chairman Parente welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked those seated at the table to introduce themselves for the record. He noted that Commissioner Judy Smith was unable to attend this meeting.

Review of the Minutes from the August 16, 2022 meeting.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Kevin Cornell to accept and approve the Minutes from the August 16, 2022 meeting, as amended. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Cornell, aye; Torrenti, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 4-0 to accept and approve the motion.

There were no additional comments.

Old Business

Chairman Parente asked Zoning Enforcement Officer Jack Demirjian about signage along the Boston Post Road. ZEO Demirjian stated that he addressed some signage last week. A brief discussion ensued.

Commissioner Kaplan asked ZEO Demirjian the status of the facility at 197 Indian River Road. ZEO Demirjian stated that they seem to be moving quickly. He noted that the permitting process takes some time because the Fire Department and the Building Department must inspect each unit. There are several wings to the facility. Discussion ensued. ZEO Demirjian noted that all site work has been completed.

Chairman Parente asked about the Firelite Plaza. ZEO Demirjian stated that they are progressing.

There were no additional comments.

New Business

None

Report of the Zoning Enforcement Officer

ZEO Demirjian stated that he was going to discuss signage violations, which he already spoke about earlier in the meeting. He noted that he has sent out several anti-blight letters to residents.

There were no additional comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: 7:00 p.m. – (2)

SITE PLAN APPLICATION - Submitted by Stellato Realty, LLC. For property known as 403 Derby Avenue. To add 31 additional parking spaces, assorted tables for outdoor seating, and widening the entrance lane for easier access to the property. A LIGHTING SUPPLEMENT has also been submitted in conjunction with this application. (Continued from the 8/16/22 meeting).

Chairman Parente stated that the applicant requested more time to prepare their revisions. A 30-day extension was granted by the applicant. This public hearing will be continued at the next TPZC meeting on September 20, 2022.

PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS – Article 1 §383-14 & §383-19, Article V §383-42, and Article XIV §383-143. Submitted by Southern CT Wellness and Healing, LLC. To allow cannabis establishments in the Commercial C-1 District by special use permit.

Commissioner Kaplan read the legal notice into the record.

Marjorie Shansky, Esq., New Haven, stated that she is representing Southern CT Wellness and Healing, LLC, and Green Thumb. Attorney Shansky distributed a letter to the commission, dated September 6, 2022.

Attorney Shansky stated that a moratorium on cannabis was enacted almost a year ago. She noted that the medical marijuana establishment in Milford would move to Orange if the proposal were adopted.

Anne Marie Zsamba, Green Thumb, stated that this company was founded 2014. They have 77 dispensaries over 15 states. Ms. Zsamba explained the handout she distributed. The building is a former bank. Ms. Zsamba discussed parking. She stated that the facility meets the distance requirements from places of worship and schools. She noted the windows would be frosted to prevent the product from being visible from the outside.

Ms. Zsamba stated that there would be a pharmacist available to consult with customers in person or by phone. She stated that there would be curb side dispensing as well as a drive-thru. She noted that cannabis has been dispensed via drive-thrus in other states. Ms. Zsamba stated that safety and security is very important to them. A government issued ID must be presented at the facility. Anyone under the age of 21 would not be allowed to enter the building. There would be constant surveillance. The products would be locked in the former bank vault for secure employee procedures. Ms. Zsamba stated that they have zero tolerance for onsite use. There will not be any live plants in the facility.

Tim Gorman, vice-president of Green Thumb, met with Police Chief Gagne. He stated that there will be over 50 cameras inside and outside the facility. He noted that this facility far exceeds a retail environment, using bank security. A brief discussion ensued. Mr. Gorman stated that operational controls were reviewed and discussed on site.

Rich D'Andrea, a traffic consultant for Colliers Engineering & Design, stated that they are focused on traffic generation and reuse of a bank, which are both commercial uses. Mr. D'Andrea asserted that there would not be a significant impact on traffic in the area.

Attorney Shansky stated that this facility must conform to state law. She stated that Town Counsel prepared the regulations. This business is operating successfully in Milford. A brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Zsamba stated that the state is amenable to this location. They have approved the drive-thru. Commissioner Kaplan inquired if there would be delivery to homes. Ms. Zsamba replied affirmatively, but on a limited basis. The person receiving the product must present their government issued card and an ID. The product would be delivered by staff.

Chairman Parente asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Mitch Goldblatt, 291 Drummond Road, Orange, stated that since a Special Permit would be needed for a potential dispensary, the commission still has some control over the proposal. He stated that the dispensary this company runs in Milford has been successful for years. Mr. Goldblatt stated that he is in support of this proposal. He expressed his belief that this use would benefit our citizens. He noted that there used to be a restaurant in this location with significant traffic, so he does not believe traffic would be an issue. Mr. Goldblatt expressed his belief that this location is the perfect site for this use and would be a benefit to the town.

Chairman Parente stated that he would like to keep the public hearing open to give the commissioners another chance to review the application. Also, he would like to give Commissioner Smith an opportunity to participate in discussion of this proposal. Chairman Parente stated that this public hearing would be continued to the next TPZC meeting on September 20, 2022.

There were no additional comments.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Tom Torrenti to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 4-0 to accept and approve the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Trantales,
Administrative Assistant