

TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

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JUNE 11, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bart Pacekonis, Kevin Foley, Frank Bonzani, Stephanie Dexter, Kevin Greer, Bill Flagg

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Michael LeBlanc, Paul Bernstein

STAFF PRESENT: Michele Lipe, Director of Planning; Jeff Doolittle, Town Engineer, Lauren Zarambo, Recording Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC HEARING / COUNCIL CHAMBERS 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Pacekonis called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

Secretary Commissioner Bonzani read the legal notice as it was published in the Journal Inquirer on Thursday, May 30, 2019 and Thursday, June 6, 2019.

Chairman Pacekonis appointed Alternate Commissioner Bernstein to be seated for Commissioner Wagner.

- 1. Appl. 19-25P, Evergreen Walk, LLC** – request to modify the Evergreen Walk General Plan of Development concerning Unit 8 to provide for 140 units of independent living use, on property located at 151 Buckland Road, GD zone

Attorney Christopher Smith, land use attorney with Alter & Pearson, LLC, on behalf of owner/applicant Evergreen Walk, LLC, with Mr. Alan Lamson, Vice President, architect and planner with FLB Architecture and Planning, Mr. Ron Bomengen, licensed civil engineer with Fuss & O'Neill, Mr. Steven Mitchell, senior transportation manager with Trans Systems Corp., real estate consultant Ms. Maura Cochran of Bartram & Cochran, and Mr. Robert May, founder and managing partner of Avenida Partners LLC, presented the application.

Attorney Smith submitted copies of certified notice letters to utilities DPH, MDC and Connecticut Water and requested approval to amend the general plan of development for Evergreen Walk by substituting commercial office space to accommodate a 140 unit independent senior living use. A utility impact analysis and traffic analysis have been submitted. This is the first in a two-step process to obtain approval for the independent senior living use to be followed by a special exception site plan application.

Mr. Lamson gave a power point presentation regarding Unit 8 showing its location on the west side of Tamarack Avenue just below the middle of Evergreen Walk bounded by wetlands to the south and west. The proposal is to change the use of the 7 acre site to allow a 140 unit senior independent living facility which would have frontage on Tamarack Avenue and would complete the southern portion of Tamarack up to Hemlock Avenue. The land use table has been modified to transfer 30,000 square feet of retail from this site to Unit 12 behind LA Fitness and to Unit 7C behind Tempo Apartments. Another 50,000 square feet of office use will be moved to Unit 7C and 20,730 square feet of office use will be removed from the general plan.

The demolition of the two houses on Buckland Road will be complete within the month. Two barns at the rear of the property are also in process of being removed. Foundations will be filled and the areas top seeded.

The trail system covering five parcels of property was shown as proposed. The first part of the trail was constructed by the Tempo Apartment developer at the southern end up to the property line of Unit 8. An agreement with Cameron General Contractors requires them to construct a portion of the trail as part of the Evergreen Crossing development. Other parts of the trail system to be constructed were noted. Evergreen

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Walk LLC will construct a small portion on Unit 14 when Unit 12 is built. Part of the trail system will also be completed with approval and construction of this project.

Mr. Bomengen went over the utility infrastructure report. Land use tables and maps have been modified with square footages, reduction in office use and increase of residential use. Water and sewer demands have been slightly updated with this project but are still below the 2015 calculations. Infrastructure is in place for gas and electric and will be addressed on site plans. Storm drainage will be addressed through the detention basin behind Unit 8 with modifications to the outlet control structure.

Mr. Mitchell referred to the traffic impact statement for the site that is presently approved for 70,000 square feet of office use and 30,000 square feet of retail to be replaced with a 140 unit senior living use. The reduction of 20,730 square feet of office use and replacement by senior housing will result in about 2,000 fewer trips in the course of an average day resulting in less traffic and marginally better operations. During peak hours there would be 30 fewer trips in the a.m. and 36 fewer trips in the p.m. and 17 less on Saturday.

Town Manager Matt Galligan spoke in support of the project referring to a study on impacts to Town services and working with Buxton on demographics showing this type of facility having little impact on Town services while generating property taxes of \$982,000. This type of residential base creates a synergy with people walking around Evergreen Walk opening up more opportunities for restaurants and services to come in.

Ms. Cochran continued the power point presentation on the project for 55 and older, independent living in a 165,000 square foot, four story building with 140 one and two bedroom units. The growing senior population has need for different types of housing and price points. This project appeals to those who have an active lifestyle and want minimal hassles often downsizing from a single family home. There is also an in-migration of aging parents moving back from the south to be close to their children and grandchildren.

A Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) is being created within Evergreen Walk from Tempo Apartments all the way up to skilled nursing in other facilities. An 854 square foot one bedroom apartment at Tempo runs about \$1800/month while a 750 square foot one bedroom apartment in Avenida will run approximately \$2275/month.

Avenida Evergreen Walk is Independent Living 'Light' for active adults with no medical staff and services offered ala carte. Continental breakfast is offered but no lunch or dinner served. They do not have housekeeping but services are available ala carte. Evergreen Crossing, in comparison, is considered a resort style Independent Living for active adults, with no medical staff, offering 3 full meals a day restaurant style, and housekeeping with a manager on staff 24/7. Other area independent and assisted living facilities in the area were compared. Estimates for tax revenue and costs of community services were shown. A 95% occupancy is projected for Avenida within 36 months of opening.

Mr. May introduced Avenida Partners as developers of a new type of senior housing intended to address the needs and desires of Baby Boomers. They have identified the need between downsizing from a single family home and commitment to full independent living.

Independent Living Light focuses on the real estate, activities and programs. A continental breakfast is offered to begin the day to recreate the experience of gathering in a single family home. Demographics of the residents were described as 65 - 70 % single females who are often widowed, 25% married and 5% male with an average resident age of 72. Sixty-five percent of residents sell a single family home to come live in an Avenida community which attracts the youngest and most active seniors wanting amenities and dynamic locations near where they already live.

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Avenida is self-managed and totally committed to the active independent adult segment of the population. Avenida Life offers a holistic approach with an enrichment program called Five to Thrive with the objective of expanding life's interests, feeling safe, feeling physically fit, mentally fit, and creating and expanding valuable relationships. There is no live-in staff but they are fully staffed with a community director, life enrichment director, a move in coordinator, executive director, maintenance, housekeeper and maintenance techs. Other amenities described were a boutique hotel style lobby, great room, bistro, private dining with catering kitchen, theater, game room, fitness center with yoga and other group activities, creative arts center, library, garden plots, pool with jacuzzi and spa, and tool cave. The luxury apartments were described with fully applianced stainless steel kitchens with granite countertops and 9 foot ceilings. Residents have year leases paying only for the services they want.

Site location was described overlooking wetlands and grasslands. It was noted 85% of residents have cars and garages were described. Each Avenida development is site specific. Elements from Evergreen Walk in a modern farmhouse style will be developed in stone, brick and hardy siding with cupolas, dormers, ornamental iron and gas lanterns. Images of other Avenida locations were shown.

Attorney Smith closed the presentation reading a letter of support into the record from Resort Lifestyle Communities also known as Evergreen Crossing, owner of Unit 3 in Evergreen Walk, requesting approval for the development as proposed which is compatible with their independent living facility currently under construction.

Director of Planning Michele Lipe gave staff comments:

1. The original general plan approved in 2001 and this plan was renewed in 2014 and modified several times over the past few years and is recently as February of this year with the addition of a daycare facility approved for unit 7D.
2. This proposed changes with this modification include:
 - Eliminate 30,000 sf retail proposed for unit 8; add approximately 12,000 sf of retail to unit 12 (resulting in no net change)
 - Eliminate approximately 70,730 sf of office from unit 8 and 50,000 of office from units 7c (resulting in a reduction of 20,730 sf of office space; and add 140 units of Independent Living in an 180,000 sf facility to Unit 8.
3. Utility impacts to assess proposed changes were addressed in the report that you received. This report was reviewed by Town Staff. Adequate public water is and sewers are available in the area and details designs would be reviewed at the time of site plan approval. Tony Manfre, Superintendent of Pollution Control did indicate that the WPCA would likely be asking the developer to perform a flow and capacity evaluation of the Clark Street pump station to ensure that there is adequate capacity. As of 2012, 31% capacity was remaining in the station.
4. I did receive comments from several other departments to add to the record:
 - Andrea Confrancesco, Director of Human Services indicated that the biggest concern they have with senior services is transportation needs; otherwise seniors pay for programs.
 - Walter Summers, Fire Marshal, indicated with the approved budget he will be adding a fire marshal position that will assist with construction projects.
 - Fire Chief Cooney addressed no specific concerns with this project.

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- Police Chief Custer reviewed the company's website and feels that they will not see significant calls from this type of development.
 - Environmental Planner Jeff Folger submitted a memo that was read.
5. The traffic analysis submitted shows a minor reduction in traffic projected in the peak traffic volumes based on the change in uses.
 6. Some of the remaining items include future phases of the walking trail; removal of structures on site such as the old barns and the vacant houses along Buckland Road.
 7. Prior to any actual building or site construction, a request for a special exception and site plan of development that is in conformance with the approved general plan must be submitted and approved by the Commission as well as the Inland Wetlands Agency and the WPCA. The site plan will include all of the engineering details as well as final building design and site layout.

If this General Plan is approved, Planning Department requests:

All of the conditions of the 2014 general plan approval will remain in effect.

Town Engineer Jeff Doolittle had no additional staff comments.

The Chairman asked for comments from the public in support of the application.

State Representative M. Saud Anwar, resident of 93 Rockledge Drive, spoke in support of the application stating he is proud to be in South Windsor, a community where four generations can live together and this project enhances that capacity.

Mr. Phil Forzley of 28 Eagle Run and partner at Fuss & O'Neill for whom he was asked to speak as someone living in a 55 and older community at Eagle Run and with a mother at a continuing care retirement community, Arbors of Hop Brook, in Manchester. Mr. Forsley noted the gap in senior housing in South Windsor that this Avenida product can fill for older active adults looking for housing filled with amenities and community.

Honorable Mayor Andrew Paterna of 301 Strawberry Lane spoke in support of the application which will keep more residents in town and bring in others to strengthen the community. He noted the walking trails that will total 5 miles when complete which will support active, healthy lifestyles and that this project offers a new way to provide independent living for the senior population.

Town Councilor Jan Snyder of 191 Bourbon Street spoke in favor of the application from the perspective of her family and neighbors, who are aging, may be downsizing and looking for a place that is fun with all the amenities in the environment of Evergreen Walk's shopping district. It fills the niche for those who do not want to move far away from the next generation of their families.

The Chairman asked for comments from the public in opposition to the application.

No one from the public spoke against the application.

Chairman Pacekonis asked for comments from commissioners.

Commissioner Bernstein asked Mr. Lamson if the walking trail will be paved with concrete noting trails paved with other materials could be challenging for older adults. Mr. Lamson stated the trail is made of bark mulch and where it crosses wetlands, flat plate structures that are constructed to float on the surface of the wetlands will be used. All materials used are to have minimal impact on the wetlands.

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Commissioner Greer confirmed with Mr. Lamson that the foundations of two houses being demolished will be removed. The commissioner asked Mr. Mays about the ala carte services offered at Avenida. Mr. Mays stated all services described are inclusive with the exception of what their concierge service can provide such as the need for meals to be delivered.

Vice Chairman Foley complemented the presentation and facility proposed and noted retail and office uses being moved and some removed asked for an update on restaurants. Mr. Lamson indicated layouts that have included restaurants have been designed for Unit 5 where the two houses are being demolished and is being actively marketed and noted Poag and McCuen who manage the shops are always looking for opportunities.

Commissioner Bonzani discussed WPCA's upgrade on the pumping station with Town Manager Galligan who assured there is adequate capacity for projects at Evergreen Walk.

Commissioner Flagg asked regarding the tax base if more money is generated from retail than residential. Town Manager Galligan stated more money is made on commercial residential and described a great mix of people being attracted to renting at Evergreen Walk and noted the value of what will be offered with this project.

Chairman Pacekonis noted this change in the general plan will displace 70,000 square feet of office by eliminating 20,000 and moving 50,000 behind Tempo Apartments. The Chairman voiced concern stating in past discussions it was noted the only use that could be successful in that area would be residential. Mr. Lamson stated they are land banking the use, not eliminating it, and are continually try to get more retail and office, however, since Evergreen Walk has been developing no one has inquired about those pieces for retail or office.

Chairman Pacekonis noted there has been much discussion in the general plan about trails being completed. Mr. Lamson stated after this application there is only one more that is the key to the whole trail noting the community under constructed has to do the trails there. Chairman Pacekonis requested the completion of the trails stating there is a commitment from Evergreen Walk to complete the project but if the last development does not come in why should South Windsor have a split trail system? The Chairman noted progress with the two houses being demolished and confirmed with Mr. Lamson the foundations will be removed in the process. Mr. Lamson stated he will pass on the request for the trails completion.

The Chairman asked Mr. May about their transportation program who stated is tailored to residents and not dependent on the Town's transportation system. Uber and Lyft certificates are provided to residents monthly.

Chairman Pacekonis asked about the watercourse and a letter from Senior Environmental Planner Jeff Folger. Attorney Smith stated the watercourse and WPCA would be addressed at the time of the Special Exception relative to a site specific proposal. Fuss & O'Neill is starting to work with Mr. Folger on it.

Mr. May concluded stating their company does 3 to 4 projects a year coast to coast in special locations and commended the Commissioners and staff for creating a unique laboratory of multiple generations of housing in one dynamic location. It is the very best example of mixed use and housing types.

The Chairman closed the public hearing at 8:50 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING / MADDEN ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: The Chairman called the Regular Meeting to order at 8:56 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

NEW BUSINESS: Discussion/Decision/Action regarding the following:

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1. **Appl. 19-30P, Ticket Network Livestock Temporary and Conditional Permit** - request for renewal of a 2-year temporary and conditional permit (Section 2.13A) for an animal agriculture permit to allow 64 chickens, 2 geese and 2 goats, on property located at 83 Gerber Road East, I zone

Mr. Jim McKinney of Ticket Network presented the renewal request.

Director of Planning Michele Lipe gave staff comments.

Town Engineer Doolittle had no staff comments.

Commissioner Flagg made a motion to approve with the following conditions:

1. This permit will expire in two years, on June 11, 2021, and will have to be renewed at that time if the use is to be continued.

Commissioner Dexter seconded the motion.

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

2. **Appl. 19-25P, Evergreen Walk, LLC** – request to modify the Evergreen Walk General Plan of Development concerning Unit 8 to provide for 140 units of independent living use, on property located at 151 Buckland Road, GD zone

Chairman Pacekonis stated the Commission is adamant that the walking trail gets completed. Vice Chairman Foley stated they have worked with Evergreen Walk for every approval and feels like the Commission is being held hostage over the trails' completion. It has come to no trail, no further development.

Vice Chairman Foley brought up Commissioner Foley's question about WPCA and noted the Town Manager's comment that the upgrade has prepared the Town for future development but there is a lot of residential with this use. Commissioner Greer commented Evergreen Walk is turning into a big housing development the way it is going. The Commission was looking for more retail and office use components. Director Lipe noted the project has evolved over time as retail has changed.

Vice Chair Foley asked if a cap could be placed on residential with the approval of this desirable and needed project. Commissioner Bonzani noted it has been stated in preliminary discussions that we do not want more residential. Commissioner Flagg noted with this application there will be 600 residential units in Evergreen Walk and at some point it needs to be looked at. Commissioner Dexter stated with this type of development you have the right type of residents to go the retail shops and support commerce but there are a lot of vacancies.

Commissioners asked about tying the approval of this application to the trails. Director Lipe stated an approval condition could be included with the general plan approval stating the trails must be addressed at the time of future site plan application.

Commissioner Greer made a motion to approve with the following conditions:

The Commission notes that this approval is for a General Plan of Development, which does not address all engineering and site design details.

1. A Special Exception/Site Plan of Development approval is required prior to construction, per Section 4.2.15.D of the zoning regulations.

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2. At the time of site plan submission, the Commission will review all specific details of the project, including, but not limited to, the following concerns raised during the General Plan of Development update application process:
 - Removal of structures on site such as the old barns and vacant houses along Buckland Road;
3. No building permits will be issued until any required OSTA certificate has been issued (per CGS §14-311).
4. All approval conditions of the March 11, 2014 for Appl. 14-09P, Evergreen Walk General Plan of Development remain in effect.
5. Details for the completion of the trail system shown on the general plan shall be submitted with the filing on the Independent Living Special Exception/Site Plan application.

Vice Chairman Foley seconded the motion.

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

3. Preliminary Discussion with representatives of Geissler's Plaza regarding a mixed-use development

Mr. Peter DeMallie, President of Design Professionals, Inc., made a presentation with Mr. Tom Arcari, architect with QA+M Architecture, Mr. Donald Poland of Goman + York, Mr. Ron Webber and Mr. Gregg Nanni, general manager of Prospect Enterprises showing preliminary concept plans for Geisslers Plaza at 965 Sullivan Avenue for a proposed mixed use development.

Since the February 5th informal discussion on the project, a larger team has been assembled and wetland and topographic surveys have been done. The concept layout has been revised showing Geisslers' footprint will remain unchanged and 7 residential buildings with 14 units per building will be added. Ninety-eight units are proposed with 50% one-bedroom units and 50% two-bedroom units. Grades have changed based excavation and test pits. The plan no longer includes commercial on the first floor of the residential buildings.

Geisslers will remain the primary anchor tenant and will commit to a 20 year lease. Without the residential component, the project will not work on the 17 acre site. There are 482 parking spaces proposed with 325 spaces serving the commercial area and 157 serving the residential.

A traffic report from Milone & MacBroom indicated the traffic signal will be redone but no improvements to Sullivan Avenue will be required. There is an existing State traffic commission permit which will have to be revised and include accommodation for pedestrian access.

The Plan of Conservation and Development shows this part of Sullivan Avenue as a recommended location for mixed use development on the Residential Densities Plan. The next step in the approval process will be to create an overlay zone for residential for mixed use development.

Mr. Robert Rybick, CEO of Geisslers, spoke in support of the project having worked the produce department as a teen and in the first expansion of the building with Allied Construction. This next renovation is needed to build out the flagship store for the next generation and requires the entire project to be approved in order to go forward for Geisslers to continue to be part of the community of South Windsor.

Mr. Arcari described the architectural concept plans for the residential buildings with 4 units on the 1st floor and 5 units on the upper 2 floors totally 14 units per building. Traditional colonial architecture has been suggested as a starting point to work with the ADRC. The development will have a community building with

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multi-function spaces and meeting rooms at the center of the development to include outdoor patio space, fire pit and pool.

Mr. Poland reported the original estimated number of 16 - 17 school age students generating from the 100 units described in February has been reduced to 14.21 school age students coming from the 98 one and two bedroom units proposed. Multipliers were compared to existing conditions and the Evergreen Walk Tempo apartments and South Windsor Woods. Fiscal impacts compared total revenues of up to \$680,000 in commercial, residential and motor vehicle and property taxes against enrollment costs and 27% allocated towards general governmental services to equal \$446,000 in revenue costs creating a fiscal positive of \$235,000. Specifics were described.

Commissioner Dexter voiced her support for the project stating something needs to be done at the plaza and the POCD specifically identifies this site for mixed use. Tempo Apartments are 98% filled. The schools can accommodate 14-15 more students. Condos and single family homes are the real issue generating numbers.

Commissioner Bonzani asked if the number of two bedroom units could be reduced.

Chairman Pacekonis encouraged one bedroom and studio apartments to be developed.

Commissioner Flagg asked about the first floor retail in the residential buildings. Mr. DeMallie described the clay soil types that were found in their testing which would require significant cuts and retaining walls for commercial to go forward. The residential buildings would be at grade and 3 stories. No elevators are proposed. Mr. Arcari stated the walk up designs are market driven but co-joining two buildings with one of the buildings offering elevator service can be explored. One third of all units will be at ground level. Mr. DeMallie noted the design is meant to be attractive to professionals and students to seniors and stated fewer bedrooms means fewer people which is less attractive to the supermarket and other commercial tenants.

Commissioner Bernstein made a motion to extend the meeting past 9:30 p.m.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Dexter

Motion passed 6 in favor and 1 against. Roll Call Vote taken: Commissioners Bernstein, Bonzani, Foley, Greer, Dexter and Flagg, voting for and Chairman Pacekonis voting against.

Alternate Commissioner LeBlanc asked for further explanation why 1st floor retail was being removed from the residential. Mr. DeMallie stated the topography was not available when the original concept was proposed but is now being used and explained the details of the change with Mr. Arcuri's input.

Chairman Pacekonis asked about the building in the northwest corner which Mr. DeMallie described as being a gas station / service station over the years but they are not addressing it presently. He confirmed there are not underground tanks on site.

Commissioner Flagg asked if Geisslers will be expanded. Mr. DeMallie noted they will expand into the 1,200 square feet of the package store and confirmed for the Commissioner Flagg it is planned to be their flagship store. Commissioner Bonzani asked about the square footage of Geisslers' which is 26,000 square feet to be increased by 1,200. The plaza's totals just over 50,000 square feet of retail.

Commissioner Dexter brought up phasing of the project stating the Commission would not want to see the housing to take priority over the plaza and the parking and asked if the applicant is willing to start improvements to the Plaza while working on the residential. Mr. DeMallie stated their objective is for development to take place concurrently but will be dependent on the State of CT for the State Traffic Commission permit.

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Commissioner Bernstein voiced his support for the project enthusiastically stating where you have people, you have money being spent, and where you have money being spent, commerce will follow.

Vice Chairman Foley voiced support for the project going forward if both residential and commercial elements are developed concurrently with a preference for more one-bedroom and studio apartments. Mr. Webber noted that at the February discussion their plan included 60% - 65% two-bedroom units which has been reduced in this concept plan. They just completed a project that is fully leased in Wethersfield with 64 units, 2/3's of which are two-bedrooms and 1/3 one- bedrooms and there is one child living there.

Chairman Pacekonis referred to the POCD which encourages all kinds of housing and noted the lack of one bedroom apartment in South Windsor. He stated he is not against an application but would rather see one-bedroom and studio apartments which are needed in South Windsor.

Vice Chairman Foley asked about any other interest from tenants for the rest of the plaza. Mr. DeMallie stated there is significant interest from businesses compatible with Geisslers and the residential. It was noted there is interest from a health and fitness studio and they are looking for high quality uses generating synergy with the apartments such as a good quality restaurant, nail salon, hair cutter, dry cleaner or coffee house.

The Chairman adjourned the Regular Meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren L. Zarambo
Recording Secretary