



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
Town of Winchester Town Hall 338 Main Street - 2nd Floor – P. Francis Hicks  
September 13, 2021 – 7:00PM  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**1. ROLL CALL:**

Chairman George Closson called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Mr. Closson noted that the following individuals were present: John Cooney, Peter Marchand, Willard Platt, and Alternate Troy LaMere. Mr. LaMere was seated for Mr. Sanden.

Craig Sanden and Alternate Charlene LaVoie were absent excused. Alternate Feliks Viner was absent.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**3. AGENDA REVIEW:**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**4. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. Executive Session – Discussion with Attorney Kevin Nelligan Regarding Ongoing Litigation.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Marchand, Mr. Platt second, to enter into Executive Session with Attorney Kevin Nelligan to discuss ongoing litigation and to invite staff member Pam Colombie into that session; unanimously approved.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 7:03PM and came out at 7:15PM, with no action being taken.

**5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**A. PZC#21-06 – Special Permit Location: 175 Main Street Applicant: Winsted Central, LLC Owner: Alam Mohammad and Mohsin Raza Proposal: Convert Mixed-Use Building to Multi-Family Building.**

Mohsin Raza appeared before the Commission regarding this application. Mr. Raza reported the subject building having four residential units and one 1700-square-foot commercial vacancy on the first floor. He explained that he and his business partner had owned the property for almost a year and due to the pandemic, they have found it hard to fill the commercial vacancy. Mr. Raza noted that they had received inquiry for the space for residential use.

Mr. Closson questioned whether there was any on-site parking. Mr. Raza indicated that there was not. Mr. Marchand questioned how disposal of trash was currently being handled. Mr. Raza noted that there were totes between the building and the adjacent gas station.

Staff reported the legal ad as having been published the requisite two times, September 2, 2021 and September 7, 2021, in the Republican American. Additionally, the certificate(s) of notice, serving as evidence that the adjacent property owners had been provided with notice of this public hearing.

The hearing was open to the public.

Linda Groppo, of 18 Cherry Street, noting that her opinions were her own and not representative of any other board of commission she may serve on, shared her concerns and reasons why she opposed the proposal. She urged the Commission to reference the Plan of Conservation and Development in considering this application. Ms. Groppo reminded the Commission that there is a shortage of parking.

It was noted that a letter regarding this type of conversion from mixed-use to a residential use in the downtown area had been received from the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Cooney noted that the Commission typically receives a site plan as part of an application. Regarding interior renovations, Mr. Raza explained it would merely include adding a shower to one of the current bathrooms and adding drywall in the space to separate the two units on the first floor. Mr. Raza indicated that the first floor would either be two units or two studios and a one-bedroom apartment. Mr. Closson explained that typically the Commission would be interested in reviewing a proposed floor plan and entrance/exit points for the units.

Mr. Marchand noted that little information had been provided and shared his concerns with a lack of parking in the downtown area. Mr. Closson questioned how many units were above the first floor. Mr. Raza indicated that there were four. Mr. Closson noted that during the snowy weather events of winter, those residents have to find alternative parking arrangements during parking bans.

Mr. Platt questioned where the tenants currently park. Mr. Raza noted that they park on the street. Mr. Platt questioned whether the number of trash receptacles would increase and how many were there currently. Mr. Raza indicated that there were already five or six totes that get emptied by American Recycling that come on a weekly basis. He noted that he was amenable to increasing the number of receptacles.

Before pursuing a site plan, Mr. Raza sought guidance on whether the lack of parking would be that much of an obstacle. Mr. Closson explained that the Commission understands that the site cannot support parking. He did however urge Mr. Raza to provide more information on the floor plan and to consult with the Building Department regarding requirements on exits for each unit.

Mr. LaMere questioned whether the applicant planned to occupy one of the units. Mr. Raza indicated that they would not be. Mr. LaMere shared his concerns with parking for this building especially during the winter.

Mr. Marchand recommended the applicants also consult with the Fire Marshal to determine whether the building would need a sprinkler system.

**MOTION:** Mr. Marchand, Mr. Cooney second, to continue the public hearing in the matter of PZC#21-06 – Special Permit Location: 175 Main Street Applicant: Winsted Central, LLC Owner: Alam Mohammad and Mohsin Raza Proposal: Convert Mixed-Use Building to Multi-Family Building to the next regular meeting scheduled for September 26, 2021 at 7PM; unanimously approved.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. PZC#21-06 – Special Permit Location: 175 Main Street Applicant: Winsted Central, LLC Owner: Alam Mohammad and Mohsin Raza Proposal: Convert Mixed-Use Building to Multi-Family Building.**

No business discussed.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. PZC#21-07 – Excavation Renewal Location: 167-179 Colebrook River Road Applicant: Mountaintop Trucking Owner: AJK, LLC Proposal: Renewal of Excavation Permit.**

Mr. Closson noted that an updated site plan had been received, with the one submitted dated April, 2021. Mr. Closson questioned whether there had been any complaints received about this property. Staff confirmed that there had not.

**MOTION:** Mr. Marchand, Mr. Cooney second, to approve the application in the matter of PZC#21-07 – Excavation Renewal Location: 167-179 Colebrook River Road Applicant: Mountaintop Trucking Owner: AJK, LLC Proposal: Renewal of Excavation Permit subject to the following:

1. In evaluating this application, the Planning and Zoning Commission has relied upon information provided by the applicant and, if such information subsequently proves to be false, deceptive, incomplete, and/or inaccurate, this permit shall be modified suspended or revoked.
2. This application is consistent with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.
3. This application meets the criteria and standards of *III.J. Common Regulations: Special Permits/Special Exceptions*.
4. Approval is granted based on the following submitted plans and drawings:
  - Compilation Plan prepared by Timothy Wylie, Jr. Land Surveyor dated April 20, 2021
5. Approval expires two years from this date;

*Motion approved with Mr. Closson, Mr. Cooney, Mr. Marchand, and Mr. Platt voting aye while Mr. LaMere abstained.*

Just prior to the vote on the preceding motion, Mr. LaMere noted that he does business with this company and would therefore abstain from the vote.

**8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 23, 2021**

**MOTION:** Mr. Marchand, Mr. Platt second, to approve the August 23, 2021 Minutes; unanimously approved.

**9. COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**10. STAFF REPORT:**

The commission reviewed a summary provided by staff noting the most recent zoning enforcement in town. Staff reported an upcoming meeting being held via ZOOM by the Northwest Hills Council of Governments as part of their 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday series on how Planning and Zoning can protect lakes, rivers, and water quality.

Mr. Closson questioned whether cars parking on the lawn at that parcel on Woodland Avenue is being addressed. Staff noted that it would be relayed to the new Zoning Enforcement Officer. Mr. Closson requested that this type of thing be regularly enforced.

Mr. Closson queried the Commission about possibly initiating a Zone Change by the Commission of several Highland Lake Business District properties. The subject properties are in the area of the marina, along the waterfront.

**11. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. Discussion with Lenard Engineering RE Accessory Buildings at 100 Battistoni Drive.**

Professional Engineer Rob Colabella of Lenard Engineering appeared before the Commission to discuss two proposed storage buildings at the Northwest Regional District #7 School campus. He explained that due to the pandemic, storage of desks has become necessary. The consensus of the commission was that the sheds appear to be minor enough to warrant a modification of a special permit.

**12. ADJOURNMENT.**

**MOTION:** Mr. LaMere, Mr. Cooney second, to adjourn; unanimously approved. The Commission adjourned at 8:35PM.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela A. Colombie  
Recording Clerk**