

ORANGE ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 6, 2023 MEETING

(Approved Minutes)

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission held a meeting on Tuesday, June 6, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., lower level, Orange Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, Connecticut.

Oscar Parente, Esq., Chairman
Judy Smith, Vice-Chairman
Paul Kaplan, Esq., Secretary
Thomas Torrenti, P.E.
Kevin Cornell, Esq., P.E.

Jack Demirjian, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Deborah Satonick, Temporary Recording Secretary

Chairman Parente called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and asked the Commissioners to introduce themselves for the record.

Review of the May 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Commission members reviewed the minutes and made corrections as needed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan and seconded by Commissioner Torrenti to accept and approve the amended minutes from the May 16, 2023 meeting. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; and Smith, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss at this time.

New Business

Commissioner Parente indicated that he would like to review the current outdoor display/storage language for a potential revision, as the wording should be "cleaned up." Changes should be made to Section 383-121, subsection A and subsection B. Commissioner Parente felt that subsection A and B were repetitive, and thus confusing.

Commissioner Parente suggested outdoor storage/display be allowed to business owners based on the square footage of their inside building space, with a fixed and/or flexible cap limit. Commissioner Cornell felt that a percentile formula might not work as well as a fixed number formula. Currently, a building between 40,000 sq. foot to 75,000 sq. foot is allowed 185 sq. ft. of outdoor space. Commissioner Parente suggested a fixed cap up to 200 sq. foot of outdoor space. Mr. Demirjian will reach out to the town attorney to review and draft the proposed new language.

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Report of the Zoning Enforcement Officer

Mr. Demirjian stated that an application will be coming soon to discuss self-storage on Salemme Lane. Also, ABF Freight is posting their bond and will be pulling building permits. The cannabis establishment has pulled the necessary permits and they have begun inside work. Lastly, Mr. Demirjian said that there were no further updates to report on the winery on Derby Avenue.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Kaplan read the legal notice in its entirety.

PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS – Submitted by DGM Partners-Rye LLC & Orange Improvements Partnership. To amend Section 383-42, 383-43, 383-45, and 383-143.9 of the Orange Zoning Regulations to allow certain light industrial uses in the C-1 Zone under specific conditions.

Attorney Sara Sharp, land use attorney located at 147 North Broad Street in Milford, spoke on behalf of the applicant regarding 80 Boston Post Road. Attorney Sharp provided an aerial view of the property and the surrounding area. Mr. Jack Rosencrans, the Vice President of Redevelopment of the DLC Management Corporation, also spoke about the property. He explained that the company owns and manages over 80 shopping centers as well as the Orange Promenade Plaza at 80 Boston Post Road. Mr. Rosencrans explained that most commercial retailers do not require a building of over 100,000 sq. ft. and pointed to many vacancies, such as LA Fitness, due to this issue.

Mr. Rosencrans suggested that if this plaza was approved for light industrial use, they might be better able to market the property and help to fill some of these vacancies. He suggested light industrial use is appropriate based on the surrounding properties of Amazon and ABF Trucking. A mix of commercial and light industrial allows for more marketing flexibility and is a viable use for the property. All potential tenants would have to go before the Commission for a Special Permit, and they would need to maintain a 280 ft. setback from the Boston Post Road.

Attorney Sharp illustrated that this unique piece of property has met all the requirements for light industrial use: Three frontages on a commercial zone that is abutting light industrial zones and has a minimum of 10 acres. This property currently has 20 acres. They are requesting a 50-foot maximum building height and are implementing parking standards to avoid overcrowding. Some Commission members expressed some concern regarding aesthetics with a potential three-story building. Mr. Rosencrans explained that the topography is sloping downhill, and this would mitigate the height appearance of the building. A second topic of concern is the bus terminal as a possible use.

Public Comments

Mr. Ron Kaye, 90 Hall Drive, expressed concern that the town meetings are not well attended by the public. The Commission members explained that the meetings are televised live on OGAT and can be viewed on YouTube as well. Mr. Demirjian advised that the agenda and the applications are also posted on the Town website. The local newspaper notifies residents of upcoming meetings and it is their decision to attend or not.

Mr. Demirjian read two letters into the record. The first letter was from the SCRCOG Regional Planning Commission. While supporting the petition, they advised that warehousing might have a negative impact to the adjacent communities in the form of carbon emissions and increased traffic flow. The second letter was from the Ms. Sliby, the Director of the Economic Development, who is in full support of the petition submitted by DGM Partners-Rye LLC & Orange Improvements Partnership.

The Commission members agreed to leave this petition open until their next meeting in two weeks. Commissioner Cornell would like to visit the property site and this petition will remain open for any further public participation.

Adjournment

Commissioner Kaplan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Torrenti. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; and Smith, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Satonick,
Temporary Recording Secretary