



CITY OF HARTFORD
Planning & Zoning Commission
260 Constitution Plaza – Hartford, CT

DRAFT MINUTES

August 9, 2022

The Planning & Zoning Commission held a Virtual Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 9, 2022.

Attendance

Present: Chair Josye Utick, Commissioners Gary Bazzano, Jonathan Harding, David McKinley, and Alternate Commissioners Juliana Garcia-Uribe, and Guy Neumann.

Absent: Commissioners Aaron Gill, Andres Jimenez-Franck, and Alternate Commissioner Raul Irizarry.

Staff Present: Aimee Chambers, Attorney Rich Vassallo, and Paige Berschet.

Regular Meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Josye Utick called the meeting to order at 6:02pm and seated Commissioners Juliana Garcia-Uribe and Guy Neumann.

II. APPROVAL OF

a. Agenda for August 9, 2022

Commissioner Gary Bazzano made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the agenda as presented, **SECONDED** by Commissioner David McKinley. The agenda was approved by a vote of **6-0**.

b. Minutes for July 26, 2022 – **APPROVED** with amendments to reference Section 3.3.2.A.(3)(c) in the text amendment resolution.

III. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Indicates the official Date of Receipt for an application and start of the Public Hearing Timeline. Preliminary Application Documents are available at: <https://www.meetinginfo.org/groups/30>

a. **196 Trumbull St** – Request for a Special Permit for a Drinking Place in the DT-3 Zoning District, per Section 3.3.5.I of Hartford’s Zoning Regulations. Owner: SGS 196

Trumbull Street Holdings, LLC; Applicant: Lifecare Design Inc. c/o Natalie Sweeney.
Anticipated Public Hearing Date: September 13, 2022.

IV. APPLICATIONS CARRIED FORWARD

*Indicates that an application was received in a prior meeting and that the public hearing timeline has begun. Preliminary Application Documents are available on meetinginfo.org in the meeting associated with the "Application Received Date" below.

- a. **145 Newfield Ave** – Request for a Special Permit for a proposed Accessory Outdoor Café associated with a Drinking Place per Section 3.5.2.D and Section 1.3.4 of Hartford’s Zoning Regulations. Owner & Applicant: 133-145 Newfield Avenue LLC c/o Jerry Farrell Jr. Application Received Date: July 12, 2022. Open Hearing Deadline: September 15, 2022.
- b. **722 Wethersfield Ave** – Request for Special Permit for an Adult Use Cannabis Microcultivator in the MS-3 Zoning District, per Section 3.3.10. Owner: 722 Wethersfield Av, LLC; Applicant: Southend Harvest House, LLC c/o Rita Castrucci. Application Received Date: July 26, 2022. Open Hearing Deadline: September 29, 2022.
- c. **Text Amendment** – Proposed Changes to Figure 3.2-A of the Zoning Regulations regarding Methadone or Substance Use Rehabilitation Clinics as a new service use to be allowed in the MX-1 district with a Special Permit. Applicant: The Hartford Dispensary d/b/a Root Center for Advanced Recovery c/o Andrea Gomes. Application Received Date: July 26, 2022. Open Hearing Deadline: September 29, 2022.
- d. **330 New Park Ave** – Request for Special Permit for an Entertainment Assembly Use. Owner: DP 103, LLC; Applicant: District Social Hartford, LLC c/o Hillel Goldman. Application Received Date: July 26, 2022. Open Hearing Deadline: September 29, 2022.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. **1 Gold St** – Request for a Special Permit for proposed signage at 1 Gold Street, zoned DT-1 Downtown district, pursuant to Section 8.1.3.E and Section 1.3.4 of Hartford’s Zoning Regulations. Owner: RDC One Gold Street, LLC; Applicant: Tony DelBuono. Open Hearing Deadline: September 29, 2022.

Director Aimee Chambers presented the staff report and answered Commissioner’s questions.

Ms. Diane Ahern was present on behalf of the applicant, and noted they were proposing a deviation from the height to allow for more visibility of the address and to mimic the architecture of the building.

Commissioner David McKinley stated that he believed the sign was taller than it needed to be for the location.

Public comment was opened and there were no comments or testimony from the public.

88 Commissioner Gary Bazzano made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the request as
89 recommended by staff, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Juliana Garcia-Urbe. The
90 motion passed by a vote of **6-0**.
91

92 **CITY OF HARTFORD**
93 **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION**
94 **1 GOLD STREET**

95 **SPECIAL PERMIT FOR DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE PURSUANT TO SECTION 8.1.3(E)**
96

97 **Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission has reviewed an application
98 for a Special Permit for Downtown signage at 1 Gold Street (parcel ID 246-363-902)
99 pursuant to Section 1.3.4 and Section 8.1.3(E) of the Hartford Zoning Regulations;
100 and

101
102 **Whereas,** The subject property is located in the DT-1, Downtown district; and

103
104 **Whereas,** The subject property is listed on the State Historic Register; and

105
106 **Whereas,** The application was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission on July 20,
107 2022 (refer to P&Z-COMM-2022-0663); and

108
109 **Whereas,** Two signs are currently installed on the subject property: one 24-sf ped-scale
110 mounted sign located on the plaza at the corner of Main St and Gold St that
111 advertises for Bushnell Tower & Plaza (considered a nonconforming sign), and one
112 50-sf wall sign installed on the east side of the driveway entrance on Gold Street that
113 advertises for the Bushnell on the Park building; and

114
115 **Whereas,** The abutting parcel to the west of the subject property is the site of Bushnell Tower;
116 these two parcels have the same address (1 Gold Street) and have inter-related uses
117 and design elements (shared parking, shared driveway) and essentially function in a
118 campus-like way, even though they are listed as separate parcels for tax purposes
119 (parcel ID of subject property is 246-363-902; parcel ID of abutting property to the
120 west: 246-363-900); and

121
122 **Whereas,** Section 8.1.3(E) of the Zoning Regulations specifies that the Planning and Zoning
123 Commission may independently review whether signage proposed in Downtown
124 Districts is acceptable pursuant to special permit review; and

125
126 **Whereas,** The proposed sign would be an 8-foot tall monument sign measuring 15 square feet
127 per sign face and measuring 1.5 feet wide; the sign would be installed in the front
128 yard, directly west of the driveway entrance on Gold Street, 15 feet from the side
129 property line, 20 feet from the driveway curb, and 10 feet from the front property
130 line; the sign would not obstruct the sight triangle extending from the intersection of
131 the driveway and the street; and

132
133 **Whereas,** The proposed sign would read “Bushnell Tower – 1 Gold Street” on each primary
134 face; the lettering would be internally illuminated with LED lighting; the nonprimary
135 faces would also have a dimly-lit recessed vertical center channel; and
136

137 **Whereas,** The proposed sign would be made of aluminum with stencil cut lettering backed
138 with acrylic and would have a concrete foundation; and
139

140 **Whereas,** The proposed sign deviates from Section 8 of the Zoning Regulations with regards
141 to: (1) allowable sign type; (2) sign height; (3) permitted types of illumination; and
142 (4) with regards to installing new signs while nonconforming signs exist on a
143 property; and
144

145 **Whereas,** The proposed sign otherwise complies with Section 8 of the Regulations in terms of
146 sign area, location, quantity, materials, and required setbacks from property lines and
147 driveways.; and
148

149 **Whereas,** While the proposed sign would be advertising for a facility located on the abutting
150 parcel to the west (Bushnell Tower), the sign is not considered off-site
151 advertisement, which is prohibited pursuant to Section 8.15.2.F, given that these two
152 parcels have the same address and essentially function in a campus-like way; and
153

154 **Whereas,** The proposed sign is consistent with the Grow400 section of POCD, regarding
155 supporting entrepreneurship and businesses located in Hartford, and with the
156 Move400 section, regarding improving wayfinding throughout the city.
157

158 Now therefore Be It
159

160 **Resolved,** The City of Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission hereby approves/~~denies~~ the
161 request for a special permit for Downtown signage at 1 Gold Street (parcel ID 246-
162 363-902) pursuant to Section 1.3.4 and Section 8.1.3(E) of the Hartford Zoning
163 Regulations, for the proposed installation of an 8-foot tall monument sign, with 15
164 square feet per face, in the front yard of the subject property, with the specifications
165 shown in the plans prepared by Adams Ahern Sign Solutions, Inc. dated July 28,
166 2022.
167

168 Be It Further,
169

170 **Resolved,** This 9th day of August, 2022.
171

172 b. **1680 Albany Ave** – Request for a Special Permit and Site Plan Review for a deviation
173 from the Zoning Regulations’ fence requirements, pursuant to Section 1.3.4 and Section
174 6.13.5, for the installation of an 8-foot fence in the front, corner side, rear, and side
175 yards, where only 4 feet is permitted in the front and corner side yards and only 6 feet is

176 permitted in the side and rear yards, per Section 6.13.2. Owner: The Village for Families
177 & Children; Applicant: Joseph Williams. Open Hearing Deadline: August 20, 2022.
178

179 Commissioner Guy Neumann recused himself from the discussion noting he voted to
180 support the request when the applicant presented at a WECA meeting.
181

182 Director Aimee Chambers presented the staff report and noted the existing fence would
183 be removed if the request was approved.
184

185 Mr. Phil Barlow, Mr. Joseph Williams, Mr. Galo Rodriguez, and Mr. Hector Glynn were
186 present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Galo Rodriguez stated that there was a high need
187 for their services, and that there were a number of calls to 911 before the temporary
188 fence was installed. He shared photos of the children climbing the temporary fence
189 which he noted was dangerous for both the children and staff.
190

191 Mr. Phil Barlow stated that they were proposing 9' brick piers and that the shepherd's
192 hook was needed to prevent the children from climbing the fence.
193

194 Mr. Joseph Williams asked for approval of the proposal and that the request was
195 supported by two NRZs and the Historic Preservation Alliance.
196

197 Chair Josye Utick stated there was a need to strike a balance between creating a balance
198 between creating a therapeutic space internally, and visibly presentable externally.
199

200 Commissioners asked about the current outdoor space used by the children. Mr. Galo
201 Rodriguez noted that they currently used the basketball court and courtyard, but wanted
202 to provide more space on the property for the children to recreate.
203

204 Public comment was opened and there were no comments or testimony from the public.
205

206 Commissioner Gary Bazzano made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the resolution as
207 amended to strike condition 1, and to change 8 feet to 9 feet on condition 2,
208 **SECONDED** by Commissioner Juliana Garcia-Uribe. The motion passed by a vote of
209 **5-0**.
210

211 **CITY OF HARTFORD**
212 **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION**
213 **1680 ALBANY AVENUE**
214 **SPECIAL PERMIT AND SITE PLAN FOR A FENCE THAT DEVIATES FROM THE**
215 **ZONING REGULATIONS' FENCE REQUIREMENTS**
216

217 **Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application for a
218 special permit and site plan review at 1680 Albany Avenue (parcel ID: 128-001-003)
219 for the installation of a fence that deviates from the Zoning Regulations, per Section

220 1.3.4 and Section 6.13.5 of Hartford’s Zoning Regulations; and
221
222 **Whereas,** The subject property is zoned NX-1, Neighborhood Mix district, with the Campus
223 Overlay; and
224
225 **Whereas,** The subject property is a 31-acre corner lot at the intersection of Albany Avenue and
226 Bloomfield Avenue; and
227
228 **Whereas,** The subject property is listed on the National Historic Register as the Children’s
229 Village of the Hartford Orphan Asylum; and
230
231 **Whereas,** The proposed fence was approved by Hartford’s Historic Preservation Commission
232 on July 20, 2022 (refer to P&Z-COMM-2022-0598); and
233
234 **Whereas,** The subject property is the primary location of The Village for Families & Children,
235 a mental and behavioral health service provider serving children aged 6-12. On-site
236 facilities include a psychiatric residential treatment facility with 28 beds and clinical
237 after-school programs serving about 45 children; and
238
239 **Whereas,** The site consists of eight buildings clustered around a central green space with
240 pedestrian walkways; these buildings are surrounded by an oval drive-aisle as well
241 as extensive, sloped open green space; and
242
243 **Whereas,** The proposed work includes the installation of a security fence all around the
244 property; the fence would consist of an 8-ft steel picket fence with 10-ft brick piers
245 every 34 feet along Albany and Bloomfield Avenues; the portion of the fence in the
246 side and rear yards would consist only of the steel picket design; all steel portions of
247 the fence would have a “shepherd’s hook”, i.e. interior-curved pickets at the top of
248 the fence to prevent climbing; vehicular and pedestrian locked gates (also 8-ft tall)
249 are proposed at key; and
250
251 **Whereas,** The applicant has also proposed to plant eight new trees along the street-facing
252 portions of the fence; and
253
254 **Whereas,** All proposed work would be outside the inland/wetland area; and
255
256 **Whereas,** The proposed fence complies with the Zoning Regulations in terms of materials
257 (metal and masonry are permitted), opacity (up to 50% is permitted in NX-1), and
258 setbacks (minimum 1-ft setback from property lines); however, the requested fence
259 height – 8 ft for the metal fence and 10 ft for the brick piers – significantly exceeds
260 the permitted maximums in the front and corner side (4 ft maximum) as well as in
261 the side and rear yards (6 ft maximum); and
262

263 **Whereas,** Goals of the Campus Overlay include “maintaining the interior focus of the campus”
264 while also “creating a welcoming public face to the streets surrounding the campus”.
265 The fence’s height and interior-curve could be seen as a contrary to maintaining a
266 welcoming public face to the street; and
267

268 **Whereas,** The Village for Families & Children’s justification for the requested fence deviation
269 is to secure the site with a perimeter fence that the children cannot scale, specifically
270 to prevent children from running away into ongoing traffic, while also maintaining a
271 therapeutic environment where children can run and play in the site’s open spaces;
272 and
273

274 **Whereas,** The Regulations allow deviations from the fence requirements of Section 6.13 upon
275 approval of a special permit as part of an overall site plan, pursuant to Section
276 6.13.5; and
277

278 **Whereas,** Letters of support were received from the following organizations: the Blue Hills
279 Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ), the West End Civic Association (the
280 West End NRZ), the Unitarian Society (which is the abutting parcel to the north of
281 the subject property), and the Hartford Preservation Alliance; and
282

283 **Whereas,** Albany Avenue is a major regional corridor and gateway to the City of Hartford
284 from neighboring towns such as West Hartford and Avon; Bloomfield Avenue is
285 also a significant thoroughfare and connects Hartford to the Town of Bloomfield;
286 and
287

288 **Whereas,** The subject property is located directly to the west of the Albany Avenue Gateway,
289 one of the ten transformative project areas listed in the POCD, described as “a new
290 western gateway on the city’s third-most trafficked corridor, including commercial
291 development at Westbrook Village and Homestead Avenue, expanding on existing
292 streetscape improvements”; and
293

294 **Whereas,** The requested special permit is consistent with some of the POCD’s goals, such as
295 improving physical and mental health outcomes, especially in underserved
296 communities, and eliminating road-related fatalities (Vision Zero); however, some of
297 the fence’s design elements are not consistent with the POCD: namely, the fence’s
298 height and interior-curve give the site a closed-off, confined appearance and
299 experience, which does not contribute to the vision of a western gateway to the city;
300 and
301

302 Now therefore Be It
303

304 **Resolved,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby ~~denies~~/approves the
305 request for a special permit and site plan at 1680 Albany Avenue (parcel ID: 128-
306 001-003) for the installation of a fence that deviates from the Zoning Regulations,

307 per Section 1.3.4 and Section 6.13.5 of Hartford’s Zoning Regulations, with the
308 following conditions:

- 309 1. ~~The interior curved hook of the fence shall be replaced with an alternative,~~
- 310 ~~non-curved in design.~~
- 311 2. The height of the brick piers shall be reduced to ~~8~~ 9 feet.
- 312 3. The City Forester shall provide final sign-off on the applicant’s landscaping
- 313 plan.

314
315 Be It Further,

316
317 **Resolved,** This 9th day of August, 2022.

- 318
- 319 c. **1390 Park St** – Request for Special Permits and a Site Plan for Entertainment
320 Assembly (Sec.3.3.5.K) with a Drinking Place/Bar (3.3.5.I), and an Outdoor Café
321 associated with a Drinking Place (Sec.3.5.2.D(1)(c)) on a mixed-use property located
322 in the CX-2 district with the Transit Oriented Development overlay per Section 1.3.4.
323 Owner: 1390-1400 Park Street, LLC; Applicant: Lifecare Design Inc. c/o Natalie
324 Sweeney. Open Hearing Deadline: August 18, 2022.

325
326 Director Aimee Chambers presented the staff report. She noted a new traffic study was
327 submitted, but levels of service were not addressed, and DPW was not able to review
328 and comment.

329
330 The applicant, Ms. Natalie Sweeney, was present and noted that they consented to a
331 continuation of the public hearing to the August 23rd PZC Meeting and would provide an
332 update to the traffic study in advance of the meeting.

- 333
- 334 d. **POSTPONED to 08/23/2022 - 1420 Park St** - Request for a Special Permit for an
335 Outdoor Café associated with a Drinking Place per Sec.3.5.2.D(1)(c) and a site plan
336 per Sec.1.3.3 establishing a Craftsman Industrial use. Owner: 1420 Park Street, LLC;
337 Applicant: Lifecare Design Inc. c/o Natalie Sweeney. Open Hearing Deadline:
338 September 15, 2022.

339
340 **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

341 a. Director’s Report

342 i. Complete Streets Update

343 Junior Planner, Grace Yi, provided a Complete Streets Update. She noted
344 that the Upper Albany, Frog Hollow, Northeast, and Southwest/Behind the
345 Rocks Neighborhood Planning Process was ongoing, DominGO! Hartford
346 Park Street event was rescheduled for September 25th, and Bike Walk CT
347 was hosting two events in August and September.

348
349 She shared they would send an email to identify interested members of the
350 public to discuss the Complete Streets Fund and draft text. Chair Josye Utick

351 stated she would reach out to Commissioners Aaron Gill and Raul Irizarry to
352 create a subcommittee to discuss.
353

354 ii. Head Shops Discussion

355 Director Aimee Chambers noted that they had received numerous recent
356 requests for retail stores that sell smoking accessories, but that the Zoning
357 Regulations made no distinction and allowed them as neighborhood retail
358 uses. She asked the Commission to consider a moratorium on these kind of
359 retail shops until proposed amendments could be discussed to ensure public
360 health concerns were met, and to differentiate them from typical retail.
361

362 Commissioners agreed some level of regulation may be warranted.

363 Commissioner Jonathan Harding stated he was unsure about proposing a
364 moratorium on a use without a specific definition.
365

366 Commissioners agreed that they wanted to propose new regulations for the
367 proposed use, but to allow some time before the public hearing was held.
368

369 b. Chair's Report

370 No report.
371

372 c. Other New Business

373 Commissioner Guy Neumann asked how they should handle any questions from the
374 news. Chair Josye Utick stated any questions should be directed to herself or Director
375 Aimee Chambers.
376

377 Commissioner David McKinley stated he was unsure if Commissioner Guy Neumann
378 should have to recuse himself on all West End items. Commissioner Gary Bazzano
379 stated if he actively discussed and voted on the item during the WECA Meeting, he
380 believed a recusal was appropriate. Chair Josye Utick stated that there could be some
381 potential conflicts, but could be treated on a case by case basis.
382

383 **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

384 Commissioner Gary Bazzano made a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, **SECONDED** by
385 Commissioner Guy Neumann and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30p.m.
386

387 **Respectfully Submitted by:**

388 **Paige Berschet, Administrative Assistant**