

**CITY OF WEST HAVEN, CT**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF THE WORKING MEETING HELD ON**  
**Tuesday, June 27, 2023**

The West Haven Planning and Zoning Commission held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, June 27, 2023, in the Harriet North Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, Connecticut at 6:00 p.m.

**Call to Order: 6:00**

**Roll Call:**

Christopher Suggs, Chairman	Absent
John Biancur, Commissioner	Present
Gregory Milano, Secretary	Present @6:05
Gene F. Sullivan, Commissioner	Present
Michael Todd Taylor, Commissioner	Present
Joseph Vecellio, Alternate	Present
Sammy Rivera, Alternate	Absent
Alternate Commissioner	Vacant
Ron Quagliani, Liason to Council	Absent
Catherine Conniff, Assistant City Planner	Present
Stephen Hotchkiss, Zoning Enforcement Officer	Present
Brian Miller, Planning Consultant	Present @6:03
Tom Cusa, Associate Corp. Counsel, Sussman, Duffy & Segaloff	Present

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Sullivan makes a motion to accept the minutes from the June 13th, 2023 meeting and Alternate Commissioner Vecellio seconded it.

**Public Hearing:**

**487 Sawmill Road:** An Application for a Special Permit and Site Plan review to demolish and construct a 2,700 square foot drive-thru restaurant with outside dining and front yard parking on the Commercial Design District (CD), in pursuit of sections 10, 20, 30, 60, 75, 82, 85 and 92 of the City of West Haven Zoning Regulations.

**Applicant/Owner: Endurance West Haven, LLC**

**File #SP 23-181 and #SR 23-182**

Vincent Amendola, 11 Wagner Place is speaking on behalf of Edurance West Haven, LLC here to request a special permit for the parcel where Denny's Restaurant was on Sawmill Road. They want to construct a restaurant with only drive-thru and curbside pick-up. There will be six tables for outdoor dining and there will be a locked public restroom available upon request. To effectively manage the traffic likely generated by the occupant there will be a double lane along the perimeter of the parcel to include a bypass all for ordering and pick-up. Two canopies will be in place for walk up ordering and picking up to keep customers from the elements. Parking for 40 is planned in addition to two ADA parking stalls.

Kevin Hixson, BL Companies, 355 Research Parkway, Meriden, Connecticut said they plan to reduce impervious surfaces by 5%. This will aid with drainage. There will be a four foot deep sump pump and trenches as well. A filtration system will be in place so the water released in to the domestic system is cleaner. Ten to fifteen employees per shift is expected and the restaurant will be open from 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. six days per week. In the back of the building there will be a retaining wall with a fence on top of that and arborvitae shrubs behind the wall to create a buffer between the restaurant and the apartment building behind them. There is not a signed lease yet for this property.

Brian Dempsey, Traffic Engineer, DTS Provident Design Engineering, One North Broadway, White Plains, New York spoke on the double lane queue and how it will keep all the traffic off Sawmill Road. It is expected that the restaurant will receive orders from the ap. They could drive-thru or walk up to order and pick up. There will be curb side delivery as well. The site will have its own signal phase which will help in keeping the traffic flowing.

Attorney Amendola spoke again on how this Application is compliance with the West Haven Plan of Conservation Development (POCD). He said it fits in nicely with the other business in the area; safety standards are provided and this type of development sends a positive message. It generates jobs and could enhance further development. It is a catalyst like Texas Roadhouse was some years back. He also added that bike racks are planned near the seating area.

Assistant City Planner, Cathy Conniff said there were no comments from our City Engineer. All the mailings were done to the neighboring properties and Roger Sicote from the Fire Department reminds to submit demo permits and emergency vehicle access.

Commissioner Sullivan is concerned that there is no signed tenant as of yet. He asks if the building will change. Mr. Amendola said if it does, they will come back to the Commission. Sullivan asks if the tenant generates a lot of business is there enough room. Amendola said it may be busy around the Grand Opening but it is expected to subside. He said the traffic consultant has planned it out well.

Commissioner Biancur recognizes that there is obviously a specific tenant, Attorney Amendola said there are many interested parties. Biancur asks if it is all outside dining and ordering. Yes all outside under canopies. He asks if the seating will be permanent, all year round. The Applicant was unsure and will seek the answer. Biancur asks if the grease separator pumps out and avoids the use of a dumpster for that purpose, yes it does.

Commissioner Taylor asks about the hours of operation and if there is enough parking for employees and patrons. The peak shifts will employ fifteen people. Uber Eats will be in and out as well. Since there is no indoor dining the parking will be sufficient said Mr. Dempsey.

Alternate Commissioner Vecellio asks if the restaurant will be owner operated. There is no lease signed yet. He asks if there is any sewer or utility line running through the property from the apartments behind. No there is not said Mr. Hixson. There is a pump station now and they may switch it out to a dual pump system. They will come back to the Commission if so. Vecellio asks if there are any other restaurants like the interested party that are on a small parcel like 487 Sawmill Road. Mr. Hixson said yes, even smaller. He said the depth of the property and the dual drive-thru will work well for the Application. Commissioner Vecellio said there is no better parcel along I-95 than this one, as it is right across from the exit/entrance, it is a natural.

Secretary Milano likes the buffer behind the building. He explains that there will likely be a desire path created by pedestrians who want to get to the restaurant by means of a short cut. He wants there to be an accessible foot path between this new restaurant and the existing Korean restaurant. He thinks the Application should welcome foot traffic and asks if there will be a cross walk.

Commissioner Biancur calls three times to the Public for input. No response.

Commissioner Taylor makes a motion to close the Public Hearing and Secretary Milano seconded it.

Commissioner Taylor makes a motion to approve, with conditions, File #SP #23-181 and SR #23-182 and Alternate Commissioner Vecellio seconded it. Approved unanimously.

**Conditions: Signage; Landscape plans; and pedestrian walk ways to be overseen and managed by the staff.**

**1091-1099 Boston Post Road:** Application for a Special Permit, Site Plan Review and Certificate of Automotive Location to sell quality used cars in the Regional Business District (RB) under sections 44, 75, 85 and 92 of the City of West Haven Zoning Regulations.

**Applicant: CARdrive Auto Group 2 LLC**

**Owner: DHI Enterprises**

**File #SP 23-185; #SR 23-186 and #CAL 23-187**

Chris Brenner, 1091-1099 Orange Avenue is applying for a special permit to rehab the existing 60 year old building for a high quality used car satellite location. They have already and plan to continue to improve the property by adding lighting and landscaping and new fencing. There will be two employees on site and approximately 15 cars. They have a larger site in New Haven, just over the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge. At that location they have more cars and they do repairs and general maintenance there. At this site, on Orange Avenue, there will be no repairs or cleaning, just a spot for people in this area to obtain quality cars with relaxed financing available.

Assistant City Planner Conniff said the mailings to the neighboring properties were done. The Fire Department is in favor of this Application and Frank Gladwin, Building Official reminds that permits must be taken for door replacement and parking spaces. He said lighting must comply.

Alternate Commissioner Vecellio asks how many cars on the lot, approximately 15. He asks how they can sustain the business. The can because there are online sales that lead to appointments that can be held at this satellite location.

Commissioner Taylor said he likes the concept. He asks what type of traffic this will generate, flatbeds or wreckers? There will be no flatbeds or wreckers as they are not interested in cars that will need repair like that. Customers will come to the lot hopefully a few per day.

Secretary Milano asks where the cars come from. They come from auctions online and they are shipped to the New Haven location. Milano asks if the buffer will be maintained. Yes.

Commissioner Sullivan asks if they own or lease the property and if the landlord is helping with the rehab. They will be leasing and rehabilitating the property with their own funds. No help from the land owner.

Commissioner Biancur calls three times to the Public for input. No response.

Commissioner Sullivan makes a motion to close the Public Hearing and Commissioner Taylor seconded it.

Commissioner Sullivan makes a motion to approve, with conditions, File #SP 23-185; #SR 23-186 and CAL 23-187 and Commissioner Taylor seconded it. Approved unanimously.

**Condition: Lighting and landscaping to be overseen and managed by staff.**

#### **Staff Reports:**

Assistant City Planner Conniff said that 98 Orange Avenue will be on the Agenda for July 11<sup>th</sup> as well as the zone map change and the zone text change for the Beach Street area.

Commissioner Biancur and Secretary Milano met with the Sandy Point Community to address their concerns and hear their opinions. Overall the group understood the change and supported it. They were mostly concerned about the height of future development and the uses for the top and bottom floors of these potential buildings

#### **Other Business:**

None at this time

Commissioner Taylor makes a motion to adjourn and Commissioner Sullivan seconded it.

**Adjournment: 8:43**