

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2015, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.**

**Present**

Earl J. Kurtz, Chairman; Sean Strollo, Vice Chairman; Edward Gaudio, Secretary; Members: S. Woody Dawson, Gil Linder, Vincent Lentini, John Kardaras, Louis Todisco, David Veleber.

Alternates - Diane Visconti

Absent: Alternates Fischer and Marinaro

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Kurtz called the public hearing to order at 7:31 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

The clerk called the roll.

**III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Following roll call a quorum was determined to be present.

**IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**V. BUSINESS**

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| <p>1. <b>Special Permit Application</b><br/><b><u>CK East Johnson North LLC</u></b><br/><b>16 and 456 East Johnson Avenue</b><br/><b>Earth Regrading for Agricultural Use</b></p>  | <p><b>PH 11/09/15</b><br/><b>PH 11/23/15</b><br/><b>MAD 01/27/16</b></p> |
| <p>2. <b>Earth Removal, Filling or Regrading Permit</b><br/><b><u>CK East Johnson North LLC</u></b><br/><b>16 and 456 East Johnson Avenue</b><br/><b>And Waiver Request of Subsection 3.9</b><br/><b>And 11 under Section 25.5</b></p> | <p><b>PH 11/09/15</b><br/><b>PH 11/23/15</b><br/><b>MAD 01/27/16</b></p> |

Attorney Anthony Fazzone represented the applicant. Mr. Fazzone stated evidence and comments came into the record at the last public hearing, and noted the public hearing was left open pending IWW approval. The applicant received IWW approval on November 17, 2015, and the minutes of the IWW meeting were made part of the record of the subject application.

There were no further comments or questions.

**THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED.**

3. **Special Permit Application**  
**Rushford Center**  
**680 South Main Street, Suite 204**  
**Behavioral Health Services and**  
**Supportive Services**

PH 11/23/15  
MAD 01/27/16

Patricia Rehmer, Sr. V.P. Hartford Health Care (HHC), represented the applicant, Rushford Center. Ms. Rehmer stated that HHC is responsible for oversight of Rushford Center. This center will provide mental health and behavioral health services within the Town of Cheshire. There are many community referrals and the center wants to be in the community and provide the substance abuse and mental health services for Cheshire and surrounding towns. This is out-patient care. The center will have flexible hours; will be open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; provide individual and group counseling and medications as appropriate. HHC has similar Connecticut locations in Glastonbury, Meriden, Middletown and Durham. People come to the center by self referral or doctor referral. The treatment plan is therapy services and medically associated treatment. There will be no one living at the center; it is an out-patient program; there are two kitchens which will be used for staff coffee room and lunch room.

The site is 680 South Main Street, the Ricci Building, and the center will be on the second floor in Suite 204.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Mike Mitchell, 83 Piedmont St. Meriden CT stated his support of the Rushford Center. He explained he was part of their out-patient program, and without this program he would not be where he is today. Mr. Mitchell commented on this center and its programs as necessary for Cheshire and surrounding areas.

Heather Kumenski, 162 Bradford Drive, addressed the Commission on her personal family services provided by Rushford Center, and supports the center in Cheshire by 100%. Ms. Kumenski commented on the drug abuse in our towns, schools, neighbors, friends, and the great need for the programs provided at the center. With Rushford Center in Cheshire, she said people will get better services and the education needed.

Ron Maurice, 206 North Rolling Acres, stated he is a registered nurse, works at Rushford Center, and Cheshire needs this center now. The programs change lives. He said there are drugs in town; we must face up to this; and step up to help ourselves and our neighbors.

Commissioner Veleber commented on Cheshire having the perception that such a center is not needed, but there is a need. He asked if the center will be big enough to handle its patients, or expect to grow.

Ms. Rehmer stated the center space will be sufficient, and HHC is opening up these types of sites throughout the State, as 1 in 5 people have substance abuse.

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED.

2. **Special Permit Application**  
**Gina Vice-Hlavacek**  
**50 Wyndemere**  
**In Home Office**  
**POSTPONED UNTIL 12/14/15**  
**PH 11.23.15**  
**MAD 01/27/16**
  
5. **Special Permit Application**  
**Bower's Health Care Facilities Inc.**  
**d/b/a Marbridge Retirement Center**  
**665 West Main Street, 655 West Main & 29**  
**Carter Lane**  
**Expansion to the Assisted Living, Convalescent**  
**Home Per Section 30, Schedule A, Item 7.4**  
**PH 11/23/15**  
**MAD 01/27/16**

Town Planner Voelker informed the Commission that they received copies of the January 2014 approved plans. The applicant has also purchased the property at 29 Carter Lane, and held a meeting with neighbors about expanded plans for the facility.

Mr. Voelker read the letter from Attorney Jeffrey Cugno into the record.

Mr. Voelker read Engineering Department and Fire Department comments into the record.

Louis Bower, 665 West Main Street, Owner of Marbridge Retirement Center, reviewed the planned expansion of the facility footprint from the original January 2014 approval. Mr. Bower stated he acquired an adjacent property for the expansion. The Bower Family has been in the retirement home business since 1971; they own three residential care facilities in Connecticut; and they have done business with Rushford Center which is a top provider of mental health services.

According to Mr. Bower the expanded footprint will increase the quality of the product provided and continue with the same capacity of 50 residents. The expansion will include some parking expansion; provide better suitability of the project and quality of people's lives; rooms will be larger; common areas and hallways will be more spacious; and operation of the overall facility will be smooth and more efficient. With the expansion there is less intrusion to the neighbors; there will be shielded parking, a first floor kitchen; deliveries will be made off the main parking lot rather than side entrance; trash and rubbish removal will be off the main driveway system. The site will have enhanced screening, more parking, grassy paver area for parking overflow and emergency/fire access. The addition/structure will preserve the historical character of the building; it will have quality finishes, landscaping, and a more controlled setting for residents.

Matt Williams, Architect, 897 Boston Post Road, Madison CT represented the applicant and displayed the plans for the expanded facility. He explained the prior rooms were about 250 sq. ft. and the rooms will now be 325 to 340 sq. ft. including bathrooms. The prior total square footage of the building was 28,150, and the expanded facility will be 41,229 sq. ft. including finished basement space. Mr. Williams walked through each of the plans displayed, noting the site is now 2 acres with the acquisition of 29 Carter Lane. On the plans he pointed out the addition of one more "barn" style to the structure, and the red color on the plans indicates the additional footprint. With the additional property there will be more parking spaces, more buffers to the neighborhood, and concentration of activities in the heart of the site.

The grading was reviewed by Mr. Williams, who said it is 12 to 14 feet from the main floor to the lower area on Jocelyn. The building sits up high; berm area will be maintained; the building turns inward a little on the side; parking area will be graded into the existing grade; and there will be creation of a natural berm. Landscaping will be expanded; Spruce trees will be added; fencing will be added around the property; 2 large Maple trees will be left along with other specimen trees around the site; some new shade trees will be added.

The architectural rendering of the proposed facility with the added "barn" style unit was displayed for the Commission, with smaller copies distributed to Commissioners by Mr. Williams.

Mr. Linder commented on the view of the property from Jocelyn Lane, and stated it is an imposing structure for Jocelyn residents.

The plans with 9 elevations, additional barn, grade on the site, elevation of the street, proposed plantings on the site was displayed by Mr. Williams. He said you will see a whole building from the Jocelyn side; the building height is just under 40 feet; grade goes down to 97-98 at the low point; the first floor is at 101.5 feet. Mr. Williams pointed out areas where there will be more tree expansion, and grassy paver area blocks per CFD request.

With the addition of the "barn" Mr. Todisco asked how much longer this makes the building.

Mr. Williams stated the "barn" is 40 x 60 feet, so it is another 85 feet from the prior structure. He noted the structure is reminiscent of an older house with an attached barn.

Mr. Gaudio asked how far the building is from Carter Lane.

Mr. Williams said it is about 70 feet from the street.

The Commission was told by Mr. Bowers that he hosted a neighborhood meeting; received positive comments; reviewed the project with his neighbors; there was no

opposition; and the project is sensitive to what is being accomplished to the overall site. The interior of the addition will be resident rooms, a kitchen on the 1st floor with storage, additional square footage for hallways and common areas, and 2 elevators. Mr. Bowers commented on the new enlarged facility enhancing the life of clients. The capacity is 50 beds, and there is no request to increase this capacity.

There are two levels of care at the facility -- residential care (regulated and licensed by the Dept. of Health) and assisted living. Some of the rooms will be shared by a couple; there will be 25 residential care rooms and 25 assisted living service rooms.

If the applicant wants to add more rooms, Mr. Voelker stated they would have to return to the Commission for approval and explain how they would be accommodated.

Mr. Bowers explained the assisted living units have microwaves, coffee makers, mini refrigerator...but the facility provides full dining room services, and no meals are prepared in client rooms.

Commissioner Stollo asked about the acquired rear property, and the living space being on three floors of the facility. He referred to the plans.

There is some elevation, but Mr. Williams said there is no hill on the area pointed out by Mr. Stollo.

Regarding the existing house, Mr. Veleber asked if it is being incorporated or renovated.

This project is phased in and Mr. Williams reported one wing will be built, the residents moved into it, and the old building torn down and a new structure built. The look will be almost the same, and he displayed a photo of the structure. There are no decks; there is an outdoor terrace facing West Main Street; and there is a resident garden area.

Mr. Voelker read the Engineering Department comments dated 11/18/15 into the record. He noted additional IWW approval is not required for this application.

Greg Festas, P.E. Mystic CT, said the setbacks for the property are the same on West Main Street, Jocelyn and Carter Lanes. The additional parking has an easier layout with 23 required spaces. The light green colored areas on the plans are the fire access with gate across the end of the parking area. Mr. Festas stated the plans were revised from things cited in the Engineering and Fire Department comments. He cited the comments from the Fire Department for the record.

Sidewalks - Mr. Voelker advised that the sidewalks are being constructed according to requirements; there is also an interior sidewalk for resident use; the West Main Street sidewalk is historically used by the public, and resident use is minimal.

Mr. Festas commented on the fact that there is a 12 foot easement already in place and the sidewalks cannot be moved. The retaining wall in front will be removed and the

grade dropped. There will be increased visibility to the south coming out of Carter Lane. These all achieve the DOT site requirements. The applicant is in agreement with all of the items stated by the Fire Department. During construction the Fire Department will check access to the front entrance of the site; the turn around has pavers which fire trucks can drive over; and the green paver design is for fire access.

With regard to Fire Department item #2, Mr. Gaudio asked about the fire hydrant on Jocelyn, and if Carter Lane will have a hydrant installed.

In response, Mr. Festas said one hydrant is proposed by the entrance at Carter and one at Jocelyn...there is one hydrant installed, and two proposed.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Sharon VanWie, Carter Lane, stated she attended the meeting with Mr. Bowers and to her the proposed plan looks better than the prior plan. She asked about this approval affecting the street and future building.

Mr. Voelker stated this is a special permit use, and it is not re-zoning the street in any way. The property is in an R20 zone, and has existed since the 1960's.

Ms. VanWie asked what happens if the applicant purchases properties on the street and rents them out.

Mr. Voelker stated anyone can rent to the general public, but the applicant turning properties into residential facilities would require further PZC approval of a special permit use. He expects there could be a question about this under the regulations.

With part of the residential care being dementia patients, Ms. VanWie asked where these patients would be located in the facility and their protection and controls in place.

Mr. Williams reported the dementia patient rooms will be on the 2nd floor and these patients are kept in one area of the facility. They have their own dining room and common area; they are not permitted to leave the building; and there is a controlled environment in terms of coming and going.

The Commission was told by Ms. VanWie that neighbors believe the new plan is better; there is more greenery; 50 beds are okay; and there are no issues with the plans.

Elevations - Mr. Williams displayed information on the street elevations from Jocelyn and other site components -- the barn style structure, lake, etc. He noted that rhododendron plants were not on the original landscape plan, and there are revised plans for the Commission. Mr. Williams will discuss his client having negotiations with the Fire Department about plantings.

Following the applicant's presentation, display of plans and beautiful rendering, and stating questions have been answered, the Commission's consensus was to close the public hearing.

Mr. Voelker said the Commission and Planning Department will want plans revised with comments from the Engineering and Fire Departments. The Commission would state in its approval that it is conditioned upon the plans including comments and recommendations from the Town departments.

Mr. Williams stated the applicant would agree to those conditions.

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Kardaras; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

MOVED to adjourn the public hearing at 8:45 p.m.

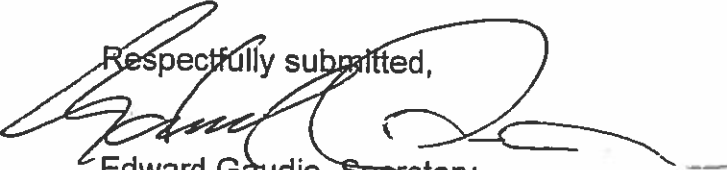
VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

  
Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk

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Respectfully submitted,

  
Edward Gaudio, Secretary  
Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission