

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016 AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Earl J. Kurtz III, Chairman; David Veleber, Secretary. Members: Vincent Lentini, John Kardaras, Louis Todisco. Alternates - Jeff Natale.

Absent: Sean Strollo, S. Woody Dawson, Edward Gaudio, Gil Linder; Alternates Jon Fischer and Jim Jinks.

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. NEW BUSINESS

Secretary Veleber read the call of public hearing for each application.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Special Permit Application | P.H. 9/26/16 |
| <u>Elim Park Baptist Home Inc.</u> | MAD 10/13/16 |
| 140 Cook Hill Road | |
| Construction of a new employee parking | |
| Lot, 46 spaces. | |

Town Planner Voelker read comments into the record.

- Engineering Department, dated September 29, 2016
- Cheshire Fire Department, dated September 23, 2016
- Regional Water Authority, dated September 23, 2016
- Letter from Suzanne Simone, Environmental Coordinator, dated October 6, 2016 informing the PZC that the application does not require IWW permit.

The applicant was represented by Henry Thomas, ASLA, LRC Group, Cromwell CT, and Ronald Dischinger, President, Elim Park Baptist Home Inc.

Mr. Thomas displayed plans for the proposed employee parking lot, 46 spaces, and pointed out neighboring streets of Fawn Drive, Cook Hill Road, and Forest Lane. The parking lot would be in the northwest corner of the property, and is needed to facilitate

staff parking. There is a storage/maintenance garage existing on the site which is accessed by a turn off and paved area off the main loop drive. The site has a large detention basin on the north property line. The area for the parking lot has mixed woods, large evergreen trees, and thicker green areas. Screening material is planned. Topographically, part of the area pitches south to north, and drains off the property, with a divide between the homes and the detention basin.

The proposed plan has two ways into the parking lot. One is by way of a drive going by the existing building, and the second is a new curb cut (near the pool). The driveway slopes down to the parking area, continues to slope south to north, and is a single drive out of the parking area on either side.

From a storm water standpoint this is a net zero project; the applicant worked with the slope; everything pitches in one direction (pointed out on the plans); there is porous asphalt acting as a drive; this acts as a storm drain inlet for everything. The large rectangle is double the size of the asphalt area; there is a gravel section designed to store water and infiltrate water. In a 2/5/10 year storm all storm water will end up in the storage area and infiltrate...this results in a net reduction of storm water runoff. In a 100 year storm there is a trickle of water, 1.3 cu.ft.; there is a perforated drain at the top of the storage section; if the gravel fills up the water goes into a structure (shown on the plans); and it discharges into the pond. Beyond the impervious pavement that structure has a grate on top, and most of the time that structure will not be taking in any water. If the applicant ran into a fail safe or situation where there is a sheet of ice there is curbing along the edge for water to go into the basin. Mr. Thomas said ice does not usually form on pervious pavement.

Landscaping - there is landscaping planned; there will be trees in the middle, heavily planted evergreen trees and shrubs, mixed shrubs, multiple layers of screening to minimize effect on adjacent neighbors. The plans show a 6 foot fence on top of a shallow berm to gain extra height...but the applicant wants to have an 8 foot fence on the neighbor's side to soften the effect.

The applicant was informed by Mr. Voelker that an 8 foot fence requires a building permit under the code. The landscaping plans include a variety of materials. He asked if the applicant would object to having all the landscaping installed by June 1, 2017.

Mr. Thomas replied that the applicant would be agreeable to this installation date.

Lighting - the proposed lighting is the same as the Riverbend building. It is faux lanterns, full cut off fixtures, with the light in the lid. With LED technology, Mr. Thomas stated this is more efficient lighting without being loud and bright. The fixtures are facing around the perimeter, some on the inside facing the lot. There is zero in terms of foot candles out at the property line. LED lights are dimmable without complications, and they can be connected to a motion sensing system. The fixtures will be set up so the lights can be ramped down 50% or more, and adjust the sensitivity.

Mr. Voelker pointed out that the 46 parking spaces are only for employees.

Mr. Veleber talked about holding runoff to the north into the Fawn Drive neighbors. Between landscaping and water retention the amount of water will be somewhat reduced.

That is correct, and Mr. Thomas said the neighbors will not see an increased amount of water. What they are attenuating is the effect of the imperviousness of the majority of the parking lot.

Regarding the pond, Mr. Veleber asked if the water is redirected up and into the pond, if there is capacity for this.

Mr. Thomas said "yes", and Engineering staff did not require an analysis of the pond, and the 100 year storm did not seem to be of concern.

Mr. Todisco explained that he was formerly with the law firm of Murtha Cullina which also represents Elim Park...and he would recuse himself from their applications. However, he is no longer with the firm and can participate in the Elim Park application.

Mr. Todisco questioned the fencing as a visual barrier to the parking lot with plantings on the outside of the fence. The lighting will be on and off depending on activity in the parking lot and he asked for location of the lights.

According to Mr. Thomas the lights will not be all the way off...they can go from 40% capacity to 100% very quickly. The lighting is measured by the foot candles on the ground, and there is data for calculating for the partial lighting. Fixtures are 13 feet to the top, and the lens is at 12.6 feet; 4 will be on the outside, 3 on the inside lighting inside the parking lot; this is all dictated by the pattern of the LED lights.

A question was posed by Mr. Todisco about there being lighting thrown onto the street.

There is a glare and Mr. Thomas said the light sources themselves would not be seen.

Chairman Kurtz commented on the 8 foot fence on the west side, and asked why it is not on the north side.

This is Elim Park property and Mr. Thomas said there is no objection.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

William Thomas, 135 Fawn Drive, said he looks to the corner where the parking lot will be located. He noted Elim Park is in a residential area, with open space, and residences in the front, side and back, and the property impacts the neighborhood. People see lights from Elim Park, buildings, hear noises, etc. and with a parking lot at the proposed site it will impact neighbors all around by seeing cars and lights. Berms, plantings and fence should be continued beyond the hill in the Fawn Drive area. At his

house he looks out and will see cars and lights, and Mr. Thomas asked how to reduce the lights...put them in the center of the parking lot and cut lighting in half.

Alan Jones, 18 Fawn Drive, pointed out his house on the plans, and the house at 10 Fawn Drive owned by Elim Park. With lights pointed in towards the parking lot, they will be pointed away from Forest Lane residents. Across from the other side of the parking lot you can see lights away from Forest Lane but they will be visible to Fawn Drive at a height of 13 feet. This lighting is similar to another circumstance with Elim Park. Another issue is the trickle of water, which is enough for ducks to swim in his back yard. With the plans Elim Park is taking away much of the absorption property; the area is lower; and overflows will go into the Fawn Drive area. The paving is permeable asphalt and he expects overflow problems in this area and he will be affected by this issue. The pond is deep, gets very high, and they will be more overflow into the pond. The level of this pond was lowered and dirt dumped on top, overflow was blocked, and there have been chemicals going into this pond. With an overflow it will go directly into the Mill River, and right now there is nothing keeping this pond from going up and up. Other than the lighting and overflow issues, Mr. Jones has no problems with an employee parking lot. He did ask about staffing shifts in and out of this parking lot in the early morning hours with employees noise which now will be in his back yard. Mr. Jones also asked about continuing the berm and fence to minimize intrusion to adjacent properties. He noted Elim Park has been a good neighbor but now there are serious concerns.

John Homer, 108 Forest Lane, pointed out his house on the plans as the closest one to the new parking lot. He has never had water in his basement, and his flow concerns have been addressed. He asked about snow plowing, what happens, where will the snow be placed, and if snow would be in an area 42 feet away from his house and melting on his property. Regarding the lighting he asked that shields be put on the lights so his property does not have the glow.

Jim Vebert, Cook Hill Road, said his house is surrounded by Elim Park and he has concerns about the size of the facility. He asked Commissioners to request Elim Park to submit a future expansion plans as they just bought houses on Fawn Drive. He questioned the 46 parking spaces as the large lot built near his home is never full. In his experience with Elim Park, Mr. Vebert said they are not doing what they stated as it is getting bigger, and he is not sure they are a good neighbor.

Jim Chatam, 261 Cook Hill Road, said this is obviously more than a parking lot as Elim Park is in the business to expand, developing more homes all around the parking, purchasing 238 Cook Hill Road. He questioned if Elim Park Corporation is in the real estate or expansion business, and asked if the corporation goes on the tax rolls. Mr. Chatam talked about the large drainage ditch on his home, and the expansion of buildings and parking lots at Elim Park creating a surge in the Mill River when the retention pond fills up. He said the entire eco plans of the neighborhood have been changed; another parking lot is being added; and he questions the future expansion

plans of more parking lots and more buildings. According to Mr. Chatam drainage is a problem along with more parking lots and buildings.

Mr. Thomas cited the following: the glow is not looking at the light bulb but seeing the light in the parking lot; LEDs are adjustable; it is easier to have forward focused lighting; the lighting on the perimeter of the parking lot throws it to the other side of the lot; the calculations do not show the lighting being thrown to adjacent properties; the fixtures tend to create a more uniform quality of lighting. Tests will be run on something lower to make the difference in terms of height, and Mr. Thomas said these lights are effective getting light where you want it.

In terms of storm drainage, Mr. Thomas explained that right now the storm drainage comes from this site and other areas, and he pointed them out on the plans. Elim Park is compensating with the impervious asphalt in the parking lot which catches the runoff, and there is no adding to any peak situations at any of the three points. The trickle he talked about was with a 100 year storm, a big storm, and in that case the system would be filled up and then there might be a trickle coming out of that overflow pipe to the pond.

For snow plowing/removal/storage, Mr. Thomas expects more will be in the northern direction where Elim Park has more real estate, with some of the shoulder taking the snow. Anything running on the berm is collected at the bottom of the berm and will take up water and gets it back into the normal drainage course. There is a curb stop in terms of surface runoff and other 12 inches of berm. It would be possible to increase the berm and the fence could be retained.

Mr. Thomas commented on the lighting, and not wanting to do lighting from the inside going out because the amount of light would be hard to control and make the light source more visible.

Ron Dischinger, President, Elim Park Inc. addressed the Commission, and gave a brief history of Elim Park. The facility came to Cheshire in 1959, had 52 beds for aged people, and has grown throughout the years. It currently serves 500 residents and has 400 employees on the site, independent living homes, with parking spaces for residents and staff, without parking spaces covering the entire site. With an increase in post-acute care, there is an increase in visitors on a daily basis, requiring more parking. The proposed parking is for employees, overflow of cars, providing visitor parking closer to the buildings. The proposed parking lot is for 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. shift workers, the heaviest use of parking, and it is not expected to be used for 2nd and 3rd shifts. The Riverbend parking spaces are not always filled. There are ongoing programs, shift changes and accommodation for larger numbers of people. Sometimes there is parking on the perimeter road or grass areas, and the proposed lot will help accommodate cars on the site.

Regarding future expansion, Mr. Dischinger said Elim Park Inc. has a strategic plan to continue to grow but there are no final plans, but the Board looks at meeting the needs of their mission.

The Riverbend building was put up after the Town code changed from covering 35% impervious surface to 15% building perimeter. This allowed adding the final building Riverbend (in 2013). This site was not maxed out and the Board decided to max this site with 40 more apartments. Elim Park continues to look at the needs of the residents who have contracts with the facility, improving future services, and a skilled nursing facility must be updated in the near future.

According to Mr. Dischinger, Elim Park will continue to be a growing entity and an asset to the community. The facility has tried to be a good neighbor to surrounding residents, is a major employer in the Town, and helps serve the needs of people in the community. As homes become available, Elim Park has purchased them, and uses them as rental houses for staff, and this is a way of buffering the property needed and making improvements to these houses.

Mr. Dischinger is anxious to work with the neighbors on suggestions that have come within reasonable costs. Elim Park has tried to have minimum impact on the neighbors, and will continue to work with people.

The snow plowing concern was reiterated by Mr. Veleber who asked if there is a plan in place.

Nothing is documented and Mr. Thomas said the expectation is it will be south to north, not pushed against the fence, and this plan will be pursued.

Chairman Kurtz asked about the property to the west being higher.

It was stated by Mr. Thomas that they sort of flow together but there is a little bit of flow in another direction (pointed out on the plans). There was berm put in but he said they do not want to trap water, so this is why there is a swale on the edge.

The fencing on the north side being a definite was questioned by Mr. Kurtz.

Mr. Thomas said that is the owner's decision...but this change could occur.

Mr. Dischinger said this is the first time it has been considered, and it is not a "yes" at this point. He would want to look at the impact on the house; Elim Park owns the first adjacent property; and he would want to know what the fence would do.

Chairman Kurtz stated this application would not have a Commission vote tonight, and would be continued for further review to October 24, 2016.

Diane Chatam, 261 Cook Hill Road, commented on the fence at 10 Fawn Drive, property owned by Elim Park. She asked about consideration of a 2nd access road due to generation of more traffic. She commented on Elim Park being a growing entity, how many more houses will be purchased, and if the facility would go from non-profit to the tax rolls...as this is equal to about \$10 million.

Chairman Kurtz stated the Commission cannot consider these issues as part of the subject application, as they are not within the decision making purview of the Commission.

Mr. Jones asked about the runoff again and on the plans pointed out the swale to be along the Forest Lane side of the property, keeping snow melt, etc. away from this property. This would be towards the north; with the swale in there everything that melts on the parking lot will have some draining on other properties, including his house at 18 Fawn Drive. Mr. Jones asked for an alternate plan to address these issues. He now has water in his back yard plus oil, anti-freeze, gasoline, etc. coming off the lot into his yard. This must be taken into consideration with revision of the plans.

Mr. Homer commented on the 13 foot tall lighting, and asked consideration of bollard lighting, 4 to 5 feet high with lower lighting level, which would be totally behind the fence and vegetation.

William Thomas noted that in looking at the flood plain map it goes all the way to a Fawn Drive back yard and Route 10. The water would drain from the Homer house into the flood plain...and enter into the parking lot.

Mr. Thomas explained the order of things...we have a curb line, short berm and swale adjacent to the property line...and absence of anything that property and water will drain and discharge into the north edge. The swale allows for continuation to evacuate that water around the parking lot and into the open space, making sure water is not backing in...and not make any new problems.

The creation of the berm on the west side of the lot was reviewed by Mr. Dischinger. He said they are looking at a berm on the north side which would protect or cover this area of parking.

William Thomas wants the berm to hide the parking lot from the street.

Mr. Veleber commented that the residents are looking at the berm and fence designed not to increase runoff and manage runoff coming from the subject area.

It was explained by Town Planner Voelker that the residents are looking to have a berm and fence designed not to increase anyone's runoff and management of the runoff coming from the lot area.

Chairman Kurtz stated that there will be revised plans to satisfy the needs of the homeowners in the area.

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CONTINUED TO OCTOBER 24, 2016.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Lentini; seconded by Mr. Natale.

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

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk