

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, January 17, 2023 via hybrid meeting format with Zoom Webinar virtual platform. The in-person location in Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

In-Person Attendance: Councilors Anthony C. Harrington, Chair, C.F. Politis, and Kenneth L. McClary and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Virtual Attendance: Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager and Justin LaFountain, Interim Director of Building and Land Use

Absent was: Councilor Rickford Kirton and Joseph Merritt

Guest were: Michael Goman, Denise Robidoux and Bradley Senft – Goman & York Consultants

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion and Status Update on the Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulation

Mr. Justin LaFountain, Interim Director of Building and Land Use gave a status update regarding the Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulation.

On December 20, 2022, the Bloomfield Town Council voted to opt-out of the Accessory Dwelling Unit statutory requirements, as presented in Public Act 21-29. At that meeting, the Council noted that they wanted to see prompt progress in moving a Zoning Regulation Amendment through the approval process. Included with this memo is a draft regulation that will be presented to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission at their January 26, 2023 meeting.

Mr. LaFountain will be looking for input from the TPZ for any changes that they would like to make to the draft prior to bringing the amendment to a public hearing. If no significant changes are proposed, the amendment will likely move to a public hearing on March 23, 2023 (it cannot be placed on the February agenda due to notice requirement timing issues). Staff believes that this draft will simplify the process of approval for Accessory Dwelling Units in Bloomfield, and allows for flexibility that currently does not exist.

Discussion and Status Update regarding the Development Agency

Councilor Harrington gave a brief status update regarding the Development Agency. The Council is awaiting updates on appointee nominations for recommendation of 7 members maximum to be appointed by the Town Manager.

There was a brief discussion regarding the current status of Wintonbury Mall and future plans for the Town Center.

The next steps after Development Agency appointments are completed, there are plans to apply for Community Investment Funds for the 3rd round of funding to pursue discussion with a Commercial Real Estate Property firm for the Town Center.

Mr. Michael Goman of Goman & York Economic Development Consultants gave a brief overview of the current status of tenant discussions at Wintonbury Mall. He noted that tenants can be reassured of no immediate plans of change in the near future. If the Town were to obtain this property, the Town would consider all redevelopment opportunities. Currently, there are good faith negotiations occurring with the current property owner.

Mr. Goman outlined the process for a potential Eminent Domain action, if necessary. This process can be very lengthy and would take at least 3 years to finalize. The committee members inquired about the financial cost for this process. It was noted that approximately \$120,000 is required for the necessary property appraisals to develop a Municipal Master Plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion regarding the Community Visioning/Plan of Conservation and Development

Mr. LaFountain gave a brief status update on the Community Visioning and Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). FHI Studios was selected as the consultant for the Community Visioning and Plan of Conservation and Development. They are currently on a Community wide survey, in which the visioning portion of the survey will form the process for the overall POCD.

The estimated timeframe for the POCD completion is year-end 2023. The current POCD expired in August 2022 and not having an active POCD is impacting the Town's ability to apply for grants, requiring waivers for applications.

The committee discussed several suggestions and methods used by FHI Studios to collect diverse voices, youth, seniors and others to contribute vital information in developing the POCD.

Discussion regarding Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

Mr. Goman gave a brief overview of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts. The Town of Bloomfield initiative to approve 3 TIF districts began in the fall of 2019. The Council adopted all 3 TIF districts to include the Town Center, Granby/Tobey Road and Lower Blue Hills Avenue.

The immediate issue at this time is to create and develop an application process, which would be under the purview of the Development Authority. There is active real estate development being contemplated for Town Center. The committee inquired about the process and financial cost to create a 4th TIF district. The Town would need to consider an ordinance and language change, create boundaries and perform data collection.

STAFF REPORTS

Development Inquiries and Project Updates

Mr. LaFountain gave a brief overview of the latest Development Inquiries and Project updates.

On January 26, 2023, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission will meet to discuss four applications for Special Permits: Prosser Library, Cannabis Proposal, Off Premise sign and Package store on Blue Hills Avenue.

He also gave a report of a listing of vacant businesses and locations.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor McClary inquired about any upcoming plans to attract more restaurants to Bloomfield.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Politis, seconded by Councilor McClary and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of November 15, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Politis, seconded by Councilor McClary and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.