

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 20, 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, Kenneth L. McClary, Joseph Merritt (in at 6:36 p.m.), India Rodgers, Clerk of Council, Justin LaFountain, Director of Building and Land Use, Jon Colman, Assistant Director of Building and Land Use and Jonathan Thiesse, Town Engineer

Virtual Attendance: Councilor Rickford Kirton

Absent was: Councilors C.F. Politis

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion regarding the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Committee

Mr. LaFountain commented on the requirement to develop a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Committee with potential TIF applications. The TIF Advisory Committee is comprised of 7 members, 3 members must be landowners in each district. (Tobey Road, Blue Hills, Town Center).

The committee members inquired about the term of office for this committee, as well as expressing concerns about soliciting members for each of the 3 TIF districts. No TIF applications have been received thus far. Mr. LaFountain noted that the Development Authority was passed by Council in early 2023. In addition, there have been some significant personnel changes since 2021; that may have impacted on the consistent workflow in establishing this committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider and Take Possible Action regarding Proposed Realignment of Jolley Drive Right of Way

Mr. Jonathan Thiesse, Town Engineer, gave a brief summary of the proposed realignment of Jolley Drive at its cul-de-sac. The proposed realignment involves the Town discontinuing the right of way at the existing cul-de-sac, thereby shortening the street by about 100 feet, and the creation of a new cul-de-sac at the end of the shortened street. The developer of the apartments at 65 Jolley Drive (at the end of the street) has constructed the new cul-de-sac to Town standards.

In association with the discontinuation of the existing cul-de-sac and acceptance of the necessary portions of the new cul-de-sac, the Town will be conveying the land under the discontinued right of way to the adjacent property owner (the apartment complex) and the adjacent property owner will be conveying to the Town under the newly accepted right of way, as is typical practice.

It was moved by Councilor McClary, seconded by Councilor Kirton and voted unanimously to recommend to the full Council the adoption of the resolution (see attached).

Councilor McClary inquired about potential parking issues and asked how our Complete Streets program tie into building new sidewalks around the apartment complex in the cul-de-sac. He also mentioned the need for a town wide traffic study, with increased apartment construction projects all around Town, the potential for more traffic and pedestrian flow.

Mr. Thiesse noted that most traffic studies historically have looked at is the capacity of the roadways and the roadway network. From a capacity standpoint, most of the streets in Town have many issues.

STAFF REPORTS

Development Inquiries and Project Updates

Mr. LaFountain provided a detailed report of the current town initiatives in Building and Land Use.

- Community Investment Fund applications will be completed by the end of the month, June 30, 2023.
- Economic Development Committee/Development Authority members are reviewing the draft tax abatement policy. The committee would like to add more required criteria to list certain business categories that will be encouraged for tax abatement policies. One caveat noting that any other business type that the Council feels would be beneficial for Economic Development.
- 65 Jolley Drive Apartments – received their partial Certificate of Occupancy, 25% occupied either in-person or by lease agreement. The same developer is looking to build another apartment building at a different parcel on the same street. The text amendment and zoning regulations have been approved.
- At Phoenix Crossing, Pioneer Aerospace is a new business interested in opening a new location in Bloomfield. They are working with Goman & York to outline some financial issues.
- New Smoothie Shop will be opening at 697 Park Avenue.
- Strict Zoning regulations is under review with TPZ for Bloomfield Center District. It was noted that nearly every business that wants to open requires a special permit, which is a public hearing process.

Councilor McClary inquired about construction issues at Wintonbury Mall with roof repairs. He also asked about the status of the Affordable Housing Plan, potential new restaurants and activities.

In regard to Affordable Housing, per state statute, if you have more than a 10% affordable housing in a town you are exempt from any affordable housing challenges by developers. The Town of Bloomfield is currently at 11.8% per the last annual state report.

Councilor Kirton asked about a status update regarding Wintonbury Mall, new construction developments in Town with apartment activity, linking the correlation between renters, homeowners and property taxes.

Mr. LaFountain briefly updated the committee on the status of the Plan of Conservation & Development related to affordable housing and the need to grow Economic Development in Town. This strategy would allow more tax revenues. It was noted that single family housing creates more of a tax burden in terms of services that are required, compared to the amount of taxes that the properties pay apartments, on the other hand, are taxed positive.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Harrington inquired about aby information regarding the old hardware store in the Town Center, potential tenant interest?

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor McClary and voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of May 16, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor McClary and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Proposed Town Council Motion

Realignment of Jolley Drive Cul-de-sac:

Moved:

That the Town Council hereby discontinues the existing cul-de-sac of Jolley Drive as shown on the map entitled "Compilation Plan - Reconfigured Cul-de-sac - Prepared for Jolley 2, LLC - Jolley Drive - Bloomfield, Connecticut", Prepared by Todd S. Hesketh, LS 17945, dated 4/26/2023, said map to be filed on the Land Records of the Town of Bloomfield, as a Town right of way and highway; and,

That the Town Council hereby accepts the additional right of way for a new cul-de-sac for Jolley Drive as shown on the map entitled "Compilation Plan - Reconfigured Cul-de-sac - Prepared for Jolley 2, LLC - Jolley Drive - Bloomfield, Connecticut", Prepared by Todd S. Hesketh, LS 17945, dated 4/26/2023, said map to be filed on the Land Records of the Town of Bloomfield, including the public improvements constructed thereon, as a Town highway; and,

That the Town Council hereby accepts on behalf of the Town the land under said accepted additional right of way upon recording of the executed deed from Jolley 2, LLC to the Town of Bloomfield for said land on the Land Records of the Town of Bloomfield; and,

That the Town Council hereby authorizes Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Interim Town Manager to execute a quitclaim deed, reserving appropriate rights to drain for the Town onto said land, transferring the land under said discontinued existing cul-de-sac from the Town of Bloomfield to Jolley 2, LLC, and to arrange for the recording of such quitclaim deed on the Land Records of the Town of Bloomfield; and,

That the Town Council hereby authorizes Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Interim Town Manager to accept on behalf of the Town an executed warranty letter from Jolley 2, LLC, warranting the quality of materials and workmanship of the public improvements for the new cul-de-sac on Jolley Drive for a period of one year.