

The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission held a public hearing on Thursday, September 8, 2016, for the following application. Those in attendance and seated were Jon Lavy, Mel Seifert, Sally Murray, Steven Merola, Jacqueline Stack, Keith Scherber, Peter Zanardi, Doreen Joslow and Pat Bisacky (seated for H. Krempel). Others present included ZCO Judith Brown, Tom Metcalf, Steve Karlson, Joe Cohen, John Schroeder, Selectwoman Carolyn Linn and Scouts Jake Peterson and Jared Heart.

Chairman Lavy opened the hearing at 7:30 PM. Secretary Murray read the Notice of Public Hearing into the record, said notice having been published in the Hartford Courant on August 26, 2016 and September 2, 2016.

Chairman Lavy explained public hearing procedures noting the public will be given an opportunity to speak either in favor or in opposition of the application.

Tom Metcalf and Steve Karlson were present representing the applicant.

Mr. Metcalf submitted two exhibits – Exhibit A – set of plans and Exhibit B – supplemental information packet. He noted they were before the Commission several months ago on a preliminary basis. This is an application for Special Exception and Coastal Site Plan Review for Chester Point Marina located at 72 Railroad Avenue. The rendering of the facility was reviewed as was an aerial view of the property.

Mr. Metcalf noted this was to replace a building damaged by winter storms several years ago. The old building was about 11,000 square feet and the proposed building is 15,000 square feet.

The overall survey of the property showing metes and bounds was reviewed. The site consists of 13 acres. The previously damaged building location as well as the footprint of the new building were reviewed. Mr. Metcalf noted the site is dead flat. The entire property is in a flood zone which is elevation 10, ground elevation on property is 7. The building needs to be at existing grade in order to facilitate access. The applicant has obtained a variance to construct the building below base flood level.

The building will have flood vents to allow water to flow through the building consistent with FEMA requirements. It will have flood resistant materials. No mechanicals, plumbing, storage of chemicals, etc. will be below flood elevation 10.

Mr. Metcalf noted the new building is in the location of the prior building. No trees will be removed. Very straight forward construction procedure. Don't anticipate any problems with erosion control. The prior building didn't have any stormwater drainage controls. The new building will have a 6' wide stone infiltration trench 2' deep retaining 1" of rainfall in the trench.

Mr. Metcalf briefly reviewed the standard notes on the plan. The Zoning Table meets all requirements – building height, setbacks, increase in coverage still compliant with regulation.

The following correspondence was received -
Email received from Lee Vito, Sanitarian, dated 5/31/16 indicating he approved proposed building.

Email received from Anna Sweeney, Wetland Compliance Officer, dated 8/8/16 indicating activity is not regulated as it is more than 100' away from their jurisdiction, no input.

Letter from Joel Severance, Harbor Management, dated July 7, 2016 stating no need for them to review as it is outside their jurisdiction.

Letter from Torrance Downes, Gateway Commission, dated 8/24/16 noting they reviewed the variance application and had no problem granting the variance. It was suggested they buffer the building, if possible, from the River. Mr. Metcalf noted by virtue of this being a utilitarian building within a marina nothing can be done landscaping wise.

Letter from DEEP OLISP, Marcy Balint, dated 8/2/16 indicating no problem with granting of variance. The proposal is consistent with the goals and policies of the Coastal Management Act.

Notice of Decision from Zoning Board of Appeals and Variance dated 7/25/16.

Letter from Jacobson & Associates dated 9/6/16 pointing out a number of things that have already been pointed out in the application – need for flood vents, no paint storage, etc., inside building should be fitted with some type of method to secure boats. A note will be placed on the plan for these items.

Letter from Kelly Starr, Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District, Inc. dated 9/6/16. She noted the infiltration trench should be enlarged to address increase in footprint size. Mr. Metcalf noted he didn't feel this was necessary as there weren't any stormwater controls previously. They are now accommodating the 15,000 square foot building according to DEEP requirements and addressing the first 1" of runoff. Kelly Starr requested a flood contingency plan during construction if there was a flood event. Something can be added to the plan. Metcalf noted they would monitor the weather forecast and if flood conditions were forecasted soil could be removed if it was a concern. Stockpiled soil could be removed. Any disturbed areas that were erosion prone could be spread and crushed stone put on it. Notes could be placed on the plan to that effect. Will place a note on the plan regarding soil stockpiling.

Letter from Richard E. Leighton dated 8/30/16. These items will be addressed in the building permitting process – placement of electrical, heating, adequate access to the building for fire protection, builder to provide access around building during construction, fire lanes to be shown on the plan. Plans and building to be certified by a licensed architect or PE.

Mr. Metcalf noted there were questions about lighting at the last meeting. It will be dark sky compliant. The existing flood light will be removed. The only lights will be over the doors just for safety purposes.

Letter from Pelletier Construction dated 9/7/16 addressing Mr. Leighton's comments.

Mr. Metcalf noted he would like to think this is a straight forward project for a marina with a utilitarian building compliant with Zoning Regulations except for the elevation which was granted a variance by the ZBA.

Steve Karlson noted the building would have light gray siding with blue trim and reviewed samples.

Mel Seifert asked about hours of operation. Mr. Karlson noted the employees work in the spring and fall from 7 AM to 5:30-6:00 PM and once in awhile on Saturday. They are very sensitive to the slip owners.

Doreen Joslow asked about timing for construction. Mr. Karlson noted they were hoping to start prior to the frost or in the spring. She asked about the restaurant building. Mr. Karlson noted this building was a priority as it provides their employees with a place to work in the winter. He reiterated it would be the same color scheme as the restaurant building.

Chairman Lavy asked if there were any questions from the public. No one spoke.

Chairman Lavy asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the application. Joe Cohen from Brooks Lane spoke in favor. He noted this generates business, encourages tourism and marine use. He urged Commission members to approve and expedite this application, and to encourage staff and all town officials to work as closely and positively with this business who is making an investment in town.

Chairman Lavy asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to the application. No one spoke.

It was noted this is also a Coastal Site Plan Review application which was submitted to DEEP and the ZBA. There are notes on the plan addressing coastal issues and Marcy Balint's letter speaks for itself.

Motion by Zanardi, second by Murray, to close the public hearing at 8:10 PM.
Unanimously Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Murray /jrb

Sally Murray, Secretary