

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
January 12 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Commission Members Present: Peggy Sayers, Tamie Quagliaroli, Ricardo Rachele, Michael Christianson, David Weigert (Seated)

Commission Member Absent: Alan Gannuscio, Julia Terra (Alternate), Roger Susaya (Alternate)

Town Staff In Attendance: Justin LaFountain (Town Planner), Mr. Steele (Town Engineer)

I. Call to Order

Chairwoman Sayers called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

II. Roll Call

Chairwoman Sayers seated Mr. Weigert for Mr. Gannuscio.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. December 8 2025 Special Meeting

It was MOVED (Christianson) and SECONDED (Rachele) and PASSED (4-0) to APPROVE the December 8 2025 Special Meeting minutes. Mr. Weigert abstained.

IV. Receive New Application(s)

2 new applications were received. The site plan modification application for 555 Old County Road would be discussed at the current meeting. The special use permit application for 80 Ella Grasso Turnpike was received and then schedule for the February meeting.

It was MOVED (Rachele) and SECONDED (Christianson) and PASSED (5-0) to SCHEDULE the public hearing for the special use permit for 80 Ella Grasso Turnpike for the February 9 2026 meeting.

V. Public Hearings

a. Proposed text amendments to Section 418 -- Main Street Overlay Zone of the Zoning Regulations

Chairwoman Sayers shared the legal advertisement was read in December when the public hearing was opened. Mr. Rachele read the rules for conducting a public hearing.

Attorney Smith addressed the commission along with the owner of 60 Main Street, Arsalan Altov. Attorney Smith noted that the Commission had previously opened the public hearing at its last meeting and that this presentation was a continuation of that discussion. He referenced the property at 60 Main Street, specifically the ground floor units. He noted that a map of the area had been provided as part of the record. He continued on to explain the applicant has experienced ongoing difficulty leasing the 1st floor units for commercial purposes such as office or retail uses. As a result, the applicant proposed a text amendment to allow conversion to residential units under adaptive reuse. The updated proposed text amendment was drafted with a 60% allowance, but Attorney Smith emphasized that the Commission could determine a different percentage if desired. He noted they selected 60% as the property is currently experiencing approximately a 60% vacancy rate, and this threshold would allow the applicant to address the vacancy in a functional manner.

An excerpt from a marketing study prepared by Goman and York, was submitted to the record. Attorney Smith stated that one of the study's recommendations, on page 18, was for the

Commission to consider removing the prohibition on residential use on the 1st floor. He emphasized that this recommendation came from consultants retained to study downtown conditions and argued that it supported the applicant's request.

Attorney Smith shared the applicant was open to working with whatever percentage the Commission found appropriate. He further stated that if the change proved insufficient to address the vacancy issues and the space continued to struggle, the applicant might return in the future to seek additional relief. He acknowledged that Main Street is a sensitive and important area of town and expressed the applicant's desire for a solution that is both practical and respectful of downtown's character.

To conclude, Attorney Smith shared the ground floor commercial space at 60 Main Street has long struggled. He explained that while the space once functioned more successfully as office use, demand for such space has declined. He explained that the property lacks the same level of accessibility as other nearby commercial areas that benefit from multiple street connections, and that the closure of Church Street has further compounded the challenges. Attorney Smith offered to answer any questions from the Commission.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions.

Ms. Quagliaroli inquired on how many residential units would be created.

Mr. Altov shared he is looking to retain as much commercial space as possible, likely 6 residential unit and 4 commercial units but he would not know until he looked into development plans as well as code compliance. Overall, his goal is to address the ongoing vacancies.

Mr. LaFountain shared that while the applicant's intentions had been clearly articulated and were appreciated, the Commission could not evaluate the proposed text amendment based solely on the circumstances of the applicant's particular building. It was noted that the amendment, if adopted, would apply to any number of buildings within the zone, and therefore the broader implications and consistency with other recommendations would need to be considered, not just the conditions at this site. He further clarified that even if the text amendment were approved, the applicant would still be required to apply for and obtain a special permit specific to his property at a later time. Granting the amendment would not automatically authorize the proposed change in use but would instead allow the applicant to move forward with a subsequent application. Finally, Mr. LaFountain suggested that the limitation in the proposed text amendment be based on a percentage of square footage rather than a percentage of units, noting that units can be configured in various ways.

Mr. Altov shared he is aiming for the highest & best use by demand. He noted the site circulation is not conducive to retail but would work for ADA apartments. He highlighted the grade of the property, that the entrances have no steps, and he emphasized the need for ADA in Windsor Locks.

There was a brief discussion around other buildings on Main Street that could be eligible for adaptive reuse if the text amendment was approved.

Mr. Weigert inquired with the applicant if an alternative exit to the property would help. He shared it not feasible and likely would not be allowed being so close to the intersection with the railroad.

Mr. Christianson echoed Mr. LaFountain's reminder that discussion needed to stay focused on the proposed text amendment rather than the property owned by the applicant.

Attorney Smith reiterated the suggestion of the study, to remove the prohibition a of residential units on the 1st floor facing Main Street. Mr. Altov felt the regulations need to be modernized.

The TOD district was briefly discussed as well as increasing density around the train station. Mr. Christianson questioned changing plans already in place when ground has not yet been broken. Chairwoman Sayers mentioned increased foot traffic could have an impact as well and she also noted the review of the application needed to stay focused on the text amendment.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions or thoughts on the proposed percentage included in the draft.

Mr. Rachele shared moving from nothing to 60/40 would be a big step, he suggested 50% of available space as a starting point.

Mr. Weigert inquired on when the overlay zone began. It was confirmed 2013 and it was noted that while the applicant had suggested the regulations were outdated, the 2013 adoption date was not particularly old.

It was noted the Main Street Overlay District addressed several issues at the time, including parking and density for example.

Mr. LaFountain disclosed he is employed by Goman & York.

It was noted that the purpose of the study was not to suggest that the 2013 regulations were wrong, but rather that they represented an initial step in revitalizing Main Street. The more recent study was described as a follow up analysis to offer recommendations to improve and build upon what was already in place in order to encourage investment and productive use of properties.

Mr. LaFountain referenced prior approvals such as the projects on Elm Street and the Ahlstrom offices, where the Commission required some element of 1st floor commercial use.

It was acknowledged that there has been a shift in thinking regarding mandatory 1st floor commercial space, largely due to economic feasibility challenges. It was noted that developers often specialize in either residential or commercial projects, and combining uses within the same building can create practical complications, including building and fire code requirements and quality of life considerations such as noise and odors from commercial uses adjacent to residential units.

Mr. LaFountain shared they were comfortable with a 50/50 split of 1st floor square footage as a reasonable approach to test the concept and evaluate its effectiveness over time. It was reiterated that any property owner seeking to utilize the amended regulation would still be required to come before the Commission for a special permit, at which time site specific issues such as building configuration and parking would be reviewed.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions, comments, concerns.

Nothing additional was added.

Chairwoman Sayers asked for public comment in favor 3 times. No comments were made.

Chairwoman Sayers noted a letter in opposition was received. She read the letter from Eric Marsh, 94 South Elm Street into the record.

Mr. Marsh shared that while a specific property should not be used to justify a text amendment, the property at 60 Main Street illustrated potential negative impacts of the proposed change. He noted that the property is a key location with significant potential to support the success of the Town's Main Street redevelopment efforts. The speaker emphasized that the Main Street Overlay Zone was established with a long term vision focused on maintaining a mix of small businesses and residential uses, and expressed concern that the proposed amendment could result in the loss of storefronts in the core of Main Street. The speaker urged the Commission

not to compromise the long term planning objectives of the Overlay Zone for the immediate benefit of a single property owner.

Chairwoman Sayers asked for other public comment in opposition. No comments were made.

Mr. Weigert expressed concern for the already limited commercial space Downtown.

Mr. Altov shared owners look for the highest and best use, and retail is not desirable due to the difficult circulation of traffic. He shared he would prefer to have commercial tenants but there is a lack of demand for the spaces.

Attorney Smith shared good commercial tenants provide more income than residential but the reality is the location is not functioning well and adaptive reuse provides a solution.

It was MOVED (Christianson) and SECONDED (Quagliaroli) and PASSED (5-0) to CLOSE the public hearing for the Proposed text amendments to Section 418 -- Main Street Overlay Zone of the Zoning Regulations.

It was MOVED (Rachele) and SECONDED (Weigert) to APPROVE the Proposed text amendments to Section 418 -- Main Street Overlay Zone of the Zoning Regulations to allow 50% of available square footage to be converted to residential.

The motion was amended with an effective date and then vote was completed.

It was MOVED (Rachele) and SECONDED (Quagliaroli) and PASSED (4-1) to APPROVE the Proposed text amendments to Section 418 -- Main Street Overlay Zone of the Zoning Regulations to allow up to 50% of available square footage on first floors facing Main Street to be converted to residential under the adaptive reuse provisions of Section 407, effective February 9 2026.

Mr. Christianson was opposed.

b. 10 First Street – Subdivision application

Chairwoman Sayers shared this application was withdrawn by the applicant.

Mr. Rachele inquired on the variances and brief discussion occurred. Mr. LaFountain shared in the 1960s the lot was split in to 2 and variances were provided. He guessed the map was likely not recorded. Mark Doody shared in 1968 a survey map was completed but he thought it was not filed in the Clerk's office or filed in the wrong office. He shared the property is non-conforming and the error is trying to be fixed so a home can be sold. He noted there are 2 separate addresses.

Chairwoman Sayers asked for questions, comments, concerns. No additional comments were made.

VI. New Business

a. 555 Old County Road – Site Plan Modification

Emily Kelting from Loureiro Engineering Associated in Plainville addressed the commission on behalf of the applicant, American Honda Motor Company to provide civil and survey engineering services for a proposed 2.8 acre trailer parking lot.

She shared she would provide a review of existing site conditions followed by an overview of the proposed site improvements, including grading, drainage, utilities, soil erosion, and sedimentation controls.

Ms. Kelting described the site, a 40.37 acre parcel with a commercial property to the North, a multifamily property to the East, and Route 20 to the South. It was explained that the property is one of 11 Honda parts centers nationwide and is used for the storage and distribution of automobile parts to dealerships throughout the Northeast. She shared the building also contains office space for sales managers and a training center.

It was emphasized that there are no proposed operational changes associated with the trailer parking lot improvements.

The proposed improvements include construction of a 2.8 acre trailer parking lot adjacent to the North side of the existing building, along with new fencing, lighting, landscaping, a stormwater retention basin, and improvements to the existing driveway and parking lot. The total area of disturbance was identified as 3.98 acres, and the project was stated to meet the minimum setback requirements. New fencing would be installed around the perimeter of the proposed parking lot and would connect to existing fencing. The fencing would be black vinyl coated to match existing site conditions.

The proposed parking layout consists of 64 trailer parking spaces, each measuring 45 feet in length and 12 feet in width. A WB-62 interstate semi-trailer was used for the turning analysis to ensure compliance with layout and maneuvering requirements.

The lighting plan includes 7 double headed light poles, several single headed light poles, and 2 wall mounted lights attached to the building.

A photometric plan was included in the application, and it was stated that lighting height and illumination levels comply with Town requirements.

Ms. Kelting confirmed for Chairwoman Sayers the light poles would be 14 feet tall in total.

She next continued on to present the grading and drainage conditions. She shared stormwater runoff generally flows to an existing drainage system. The proposal includes a new drainage system consisting of catch basins and underground piping, with a small portion directed to the existing drainage system. All runoff from the new drainage system would be conveyed to a new hydrodynamic separator to provide secondary treatment, after which stormwater would discharge to a new retention basin to improve water quality. She noted during storm events overflow would discharge to the existing pond. It was highlighted the proposed stormwater treatment complies with the 2024 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual. Ms. Kelting noted a detailed stormwater memo was submitted as part of the application.

Next, the landscaping plan was briefly reviewed. Ms. Kelting noted a variety of evergreen trees were proposed along the perimeter of the new parking lot. Approximately 81 trees were included in the plan, which was prepared by a licensed landscape architect in the State of Connecticut.

Soil erosion and sedimentation controls were outlined next. All proposed controls were stated to comply with Connecticut guidelines. Measures include an anti-tracking pad at the construction entrance, temporary construction fencing, and a designated soil stockpile area protected by silt fencing. It was noted in locations where slopes exceed 3:1, erosion control blankets would be installed.

Ms. Kelting concluded by thanking the Commission.

Mr. Rachele began a brief discussion around a failed storm water system occurrence about 10 years ago, he was curious if it was this location, he thought it was a cracked culvert.

Mr. Steele entered the meeting at 7:06 pm.

The details of Mr. Rachele's concern were not identified.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for comments, questions, concerns.

Mr. Rachele requested Mr. Steele present his report.

Mr. Steele addressed the Commission and stated for the record that he had prepared a report dated January 9, 2026, regarding the American Honda parking expansion at 555 Old County Road. He stated that the plans were reasonably complete, but identified a number of items that would need to be addressed through additional documentation and as conditions of approval. He 1st noted that the layout plan required additional dimensions to be shown and that the applicant was already in the process of correcting a typographical issue. He also stated that the grading plan required a professional stamp. He discussed the stormwater maintenance program and wanted to ensure that the stormwater system would be properly maintained over time. He explained that certain maintenance items should be revised to better align with Connecticut stormwater quality design guidelines. He explained that the basin should be inspected several days after a storm to confirm that it has drained as intended. He also referenced standard maintenance practices, such as avoiding activities that could compact soils within the basin and reduce its effectiveness.

Next, Mr. Steele noted a discrepancy in the lighting pole details, explaining that while the applicant described the lighting configuration and indicated that the poles were approximately 14 feet in height and that there was inconsistency in the plans. He noted the plans should be clarified for consistency.

Regarding the proposed stormwater pretreatment unit, Mr. Steele noted it was generally acceptable, but the narrative conflicted with the design calculations regarding flow rates.

Mr. Steele questioned the fencing details, noting that a security overhead feature was referenced in the plans but not shown in the details, and requested clarification to ensure consistency. He also noted that the gravel strip shown along the fence line lacked specifications for dimensions of depth and material. Mr. Steele then briefly outlined needed revisions to the stormwater report.

Mr. Steele concluded by summarizing standard post approval requirements, including submission of final revised plans, provision of mylars, posting of an erosion and sedimentation control bond, confirmation of subsurface soil conditions during excavation, and submission of an as built plan prior to use of the parking area, noting that no certificate of occupancy would be issued for the project.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions, comments, concerns.

Mr. Rachele inquired on the specifics of the security fencing. Ms. Kelting shared it is angled on top and would update the details on the plan.

Mr. Steele briefly discussed the idea of a landscaping bond.

Chairwoman Sayers asked for questions or comments.

There was a brief discussion around the lighting heights.

It was confirmed for Mr. Weigert the 14 foot lights are made up of 12 foot poles and 2 foot tall bases.

Chairwoman Sayers asked the commission for questions, comments.

No additional comments were made.

It was MOVED (Christianson) and SECONDED (Rachele) and PASSED (5-0) to APPROVE the 555 Old County Road – Site Plan Modification with 11 conditions from Mr. Steele's report.

The conditions are as follows:

1. Update Layout Plan to include:
 - a. Dimensions. Striping detail references plan for dimensions but no dimensions are shown.
 - b. Correct legend symbols overlapping the layout plan notes.
2. Provide LS stamp on the Grading Plan per section 1102.A similar to the stamp on the Layout Plan.
3. Modify the Stormwater Maintenance Program notes on the Grading Plan to include:
 - a. Removing sediment from catch basin sumps when sediment is within 2' of the outlet pipe rather than 6" and adjust frequency as needed to maintain minimum 50% sump capacity.
 - b. Procedure for removing clogged soils if stormwater basin does not drain within 48-hours after end of a storm event.
 - c. Procedure for mowing basin to avoid compaction and rutting when wet.
4. Confirm height of light poles and exposed light pole base. Lighting Plan indicates a 12' pole and 2' base while the detail calls for only a 4" exposed base. A 2' base is preferred to protect the poles from damage.
5. Confirm pre-treatment water quality unit is properly sized to remove 50% of Total Suspended Solids (TSS). The drainage narrative indicates the CS-4 unit is sized for only 1.0 cfs, while the Water Quality Flow (WQF) is calculated to be 1.9 cfs.
6. Update Detail Sheets to include:
 - a. Stormwater basin outlet structure including a trash rack for the inlet orifice.
 - b. Modify the spillway level spreader to include a concrete or earthen berm to prevent water from flowing through the voids of the stone below the spillway elevation of 149.0.
 - c. Modify flared end detail for HDPE pipe rather than RCP (or remove detail).
 - d. Riprap apron outlet protection.
 - e. Clarify whether chain link fence will include a "security overhang" as noted on the Layout Plan.
 - f. Gravel surface along fence perimeter.
7. Revise the Stormwater Report to include the following:
 - a. Type D rainfall distribution rather than Type III.
 - b. Show the Tc flow paths on the pre-development watershed map and provide watershed node reports showing input data for Tc calculations.
 - c. Provide node report for the retention basin showing input data for the volume and orifice modeling, including any assumed infiltration rate
 - d. Provide drawdown calculation to confirm basin will drain within 48 hours after a storm event.
 - e. Provide referenced DOT sizing for the riprap apron outlet protection.
8. Prior to start of construction, submit 2 complete sets of plans addressing conditions of approval and Mylars of sheets V-001, V-002, C-3 and C-4 for signature by the Commission prior to filing in the Clerk's office.
9. Prior to start of construction, submit an Erosion Control Bond estimate to the Town Engineer for review and an E&S Bond to the Town Treasure in an amount acceptable to the Town Engineer.
10. Prior to construction of the stormwater basin, provide confirmation from the Design Engineer that the soils are consistent with design assumptions and underdrains are not required as noted in the Stormwater Report.
11. Prior to parking trucks on the new lot, submit an as-built survey in accordance with section 1102.G.

VII. Old Business

a. HB 8002 – Discussion

Mr. LaFountain explained a revised version of a previously vetoed housing bill was adopted during a special legislative session. He noted most items would not directly affect local operations, several sections require clarification, for example regarding parking requirements for

developments with 16 units. He also noted that affordable housing plans have been replaced with municipal housing and growth plans, which will be developed by the Council of Governments, with towns having the option to adopt their own plans after the regional plan is completed. He shared that many aspects of the new law remain unclear and will require further interpretation, and that additional information would be available following an upcoming training seminar.

He continued on to share the ongoing review of the Town's zoning regulations has identified multiple internal inconsistencies and unclear provisions that will need to be brought before the Commission for consideration. Examples included unclear standards for accessory structures, lot coverage definitions, and conflicting fee calculations for site plan modifications. It was explained that these issues often arise through enforcement actions and appeals

To conclude Mr. LaFountain shared that they are compiling a list of necessary revisions and intend to present them to the Commission in organized groups to ensure the regulations are clarified and corrected in a consistent and coordinated manner.

VIII. Public Input

Chairwoman Sayers noted there were 2 members of the public.

Gary Merigan addressed the commission on HB 8002 describing it as confusing and difficult to interpret, noting that many professionals are struggling to understand its full implications. He felt some good will come once the dust settles. He encouraged the Town to reexamine its subdivision and residential development regulations. He suggested that current minimum lot size requirements no longer reflect existing development patterns or market realities and may be preventing viable residential development. He emphasized that zoning regulations are intended to be living documents and encouraged the Commission to consider whether revisions toward smaller, more practical lot sizes are warranted in order to better align with historic patterns and current needs.

IX. Communications and Bills

Chairwoman Sayers shared the Planning and Zoning budget will be presented to the Board of Finance on February 11th. It was explained that most application fees go into the general fund and do not cover Planning and Zoning office costs. It was noted that the education fund has not been used and members can submit expenses for reimbursement if desired.

Chairwoman Sayers asked for questions, comments, concerns.

Mr. LaFountain shared a virtual informational session was scheduled for next Thursday at 6 pm regarding a CIF grant request of \$250,000 for a feasibility study on the former safety complex. The study will determine the best use of the building, which has suffered from decades of lacking maintenance. The building was described as having multiple structural and interior issues, including roof leaks, deteriorated ceilings, damaged floors, and outdated or unsafe components. The session is intended to assist decision makers from the state and provide an opportunity for the public, including the fire department, to attend. Access to the building's lower level will remain restricted until the feasibility report is completed.

X. Adjournment

It was MOVED (Rachele) and SECONDED (Christianson) and PASSED (5-0) to adjourn meeting at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ashley Malec, Recording Secretary
Windsor Locks Planning & Zoning Commission*