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Michele R. Grande, Redding Town Clerk  
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**Redding Zoning Commission  
Public Hearings and Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 26, 2023 – 7:30p.m.  
Town Hall Hearing Room  
100 Hill Road, Redding CT  
In Person Only**

**Commissioners Present for Both the Public Hearing and Regular Meeting:** Matthew Lecher, Chair; Amy L. Atamian, Secretary; Pamela Marsh; William J. Miller; William H. Whitehead, Jr.; Alternates: Nicole Bricker.

**Also Present for the Public Hearings and Regular Meeting:** Aimee Pardee, Zoning Officer; Janet August, Recording Secretary; members of the public.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS MINUTES**

Zoning Commission Chair Matt Lecher called the Public Hearing to order at 7:29pm. noting that all regular members of the commission were seated.

**1. Application #23-02Z – 280 Ethan Allen Highway (Assessor’s Map and Lot 35 – 93): Owner Arianit Krasniqi – Agent Wade Rose.** Request for Site Plan Amendment to construct warehouse. *Received March 22, 2023: Public Hearing April 26, 2023.*

Commissioner Amy Atamian read aloud the Legal Notice of the Hearing.

**MOTION:** A motion to accept the notice was made by William Miller and seconded by William Whitehead Jr. Motion approved unanimously.

Wade Roese, Agent for the owner, gave background information on the project. He noted that it has been scaled down significantly from an earlier project scope. The property currently has two small houses. Under the current plan, one house would be removed and replaced with a warehouse. The warehouse would have a ½ bath only which would be connected to the existing septic system on the property. Existing parking is to be repaved and new paving would be completed at the warehouse area and loading area. Drainage is addressed.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Lecher proposed closing the public hearing for Application #23-02Z.

**MOTION:** Amy Atamian moved to close the public hearing for Application #23-02Z, seconded by Mr. Miller. Unanimously approved. The public hearing for the application was closed at 7:37pm.

**2. Application #23 -03Z – 70 Turney Road (Assessor’s Map and Lot #32 - 7) – Joel Barlow High School. Mike D’Agostino, Chairman, Region 9 Board of Education (Applicant) – Request for Site Plan Amendment for conversion of an existing field to a turf-surfaced field, and for expansion of stadium parking lot. Received March 22, 2023: Public Hearing April 26, 2023**

Commissioner Atamian read aloud the Legal Notice of Hearing.

**MOTION:** A motion to accept the notice was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Whitehead. Motion approved unanimously.

Mike D’Agostino, Chairman of the Region 9 Board of Education, presented the project. He explained the need for additional fields for practice and game play at Joel Barlow High School and the parking situation during a heavily attended game. He introduced Design Engineer Chris Holt from FieldTurf to discuss the plan. Mr. Holt provided an aerial view showing the existing school and field locations and parking areas. He provided a view with proposed changes, showing the existing grass field that will be changed to turf, and the location of a new parking area near the stadium. He discussed the need for additional field space due to increased usage, and the need for a safer and more efficient parking plan. Currently, attendees park in the upper lot and are shuttled one-third mile down to the fields. The roadway to the fields is narrow and it is a safety hazard when attendees walk the roadway in the dark. Due to field shortages and “wet” fields, sports teams are scheduled for field times and sometimes practice until after 9:30pm. More field availability would help alleviate the problem.

Mr. Lecher read a letter received by the commission from Shirley Melnyk of 2 Cricklewood Road. The letter expressed opposition to the enhancements being discussed. She listed concerns with lights, increased congestion in the area, and noise. Mr. Holt addressed the points in the letter.

Mr. Lecher noted that the Planning Commission provided a positive referral for the project but they recommended a traffic study to see the impact on Turney Road, a pervious surface be used to pave the parking areas, and that stormwater management swales include plantings. The commission discussed the suggestions and whether each could be required by the Zoning Commission.

School Resource Officer Trahan discussed problems with the current parking and how the new plan would improve parking issues. Under the current method, attendees park in the upper lot and either take the shuttle down to the fields or walk down/up. Attendees and athletes/students walking on the narrow roadway after dark creates a safety problem. He noted that from a public safety perspective, the plan provides better flows for pedestrians, vehicles, and ADA needs. If attendees park in the new proposed parking area, there will be no need for shuttle buses. Mr. Trahan did not know if the increased and current parking down by the stadium would hold all attendees.

JBHS Junior and Athlete Jackson Hrebin spoke in support of the proposed plan. He is on the track team and has been on other teams as well. He noted that some teams are losing athletes. He believes it is because of inadequate facilities to meet the demand. He supports the proposed plan and believes that the new turf field would get more students involved in athletics, which is a positive outcome.

Shirley Melnyk of Cricklewood Road spoke regarding current problems and how she believes the proposed plan would intensify problems. Cricklewood Road is a residential road and neighborhood very close to JBHS and the fields. She believes residents of Cricklewood are terribly impacted by expanding use of the fields and stadium. She raised concerns that traffic would be intensified, and the impact that intensification might have in an emergency. The noise from the existing stadium is loud and light spillover is still a problem. Loudspeakers during games are very loud. Mrs. Melnyk noted that the Zoning Regulations require the fields to close at 9pm, but often it is as late as 10:30pm. She raised concerns regarding future plans for a building with locker rooms and bathrooms which is outside the scope of this public hearing. Mrs. Melnyk noted that she has had a problem trying to get information from the Region 9 Board of Education regarding this proposal and other issues.

JBHS Junior and Athlete Dylan Taylor noted that football games are packed. He stated that the dark navigation to and from the upper parking lot is a problem. Games and practices have people parking up top and walking in the dark. Vehicles come and go as games and practices start/end. Additional parking near the stadium would be safer and more convenient for attendees.

JBHS Junior and Athlete Helena Zima spoke of the positive impact of sports and the high value that should be attributed to them. She stated that many teams are vying for the practice fields. Field Hockey and football are better on turf than grass, and turf does not present a "wet" field problem. She added that the late evening hours for practices are problematic.

Joe Durash of Cricklewood Road stated that he wants his children to play JBHS sports when they are old enough. He understood the need for more fields but suggested adding a field in the upper area along Barlow Drive would be a better choice.

Todd Wait of Cricklewood Road stated that he did not think this proposal was in everyone's best interest. He stated that some events at the school make it problematic for local residents to get in/out of Cricklewood due to the intensity of traffic.

Seana Bedard of Winding Brook Lane supports the proposed plan. She stated that she is a real estate appraiser and that enhancing the facilities at JBHS will improve the town and values.

Susanne Krivit of Black Rock Turnpike lives close to JBHS and has coached sports there. She recalled field hockey practice ending at 8pm with the soccer team taking the field after. Ms. Krivit believes the extra turf field will help with the need for more practice fields and late practices would be reduced. She added that the noise generated by living across from the school does not bother her.

Michael Melynk of Cricklewood Road stated that many times there is sports equipment on the field but no players. Also, lights are often "on" at the field with no students/athletes on the field. Mr. Melynk stated that Region 9 Board of Education Chair Mike D'Agostino has not been able to give residents

copies and information on the proposed plan. Mr. Melnyk agrees that a traffic study on Turney Road should be completed. He states that no one has talked to the Cricklewood Road residents even though it has been stated that they have.

Commissioner Atamian asked Mike D'Agostino for background information on the other fields mentioned in this hearing. Mr. D'Agostino stated that the school's sewer plant is located near the tennis courts, with leaching fields installed in the upper field. He states that they did look at different options. This option changes an existing grass field to turf and maintains the field within the existing fencing. It also provides additional parking that he believes will make attendance safer for students, athletes (ours and opposing teams) and attendees. The parking lot has down lighting and we will upgrade the lighting. Mr. D'Agostino states that this proposal is in the best interests of our students and the community.

Commissioner Atamian asked if the proposal will eliminate the problem of competing for fields. Mr. D'Agostino states the proposal will help with the field shortage problem and athletes will not have to go as late in the evenings. The upper field with the leaching fields is bumpy. The field on the other side is next to wetlands and has problems with drying.

Chris Holt spoke of the current and proposed lighting. The lights would be controlled by an app and would allow the user to turn on/off and set lighting intensity from High to Low. He believes the new traffic pattern would be more efficient and safer. Mr. Holt stated that topsoil from the excavated areas will not be hauled off but used elsewhere on campus. Re-using the soil reduces the number of truck hauling trips to off campus and reduce costs. Answering Commissioner Marsh's question, Mr. Holt stated that sites near wetlands are more problematic and require more work.

Shirley Melnyk noted that despite wet conditions on the upper field, teams are using the field. She reiterates her support for fixing the upper field. Commission Chair Lecher reiterated that the commission is here to approve or disapprove the application as presented and not to ask the applicant to do something different from proposed.

Alternate Commissioner Nicole Bricker asked if the current walkway would be maintained and the number of handicap spaces in the proposed new parking area. Mr. D'Agostino reported that the walkway will be maintained. Regarding handicap spaces, the building department and town regulations will determine the correct number of handicap spaces needed, and he will follow that determination.

Hearing no further comments, Matt Lecher proposed closing the public hearing for Application #23-03Z.

**MOTION:** Amy Atamian moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by William Whitehead. Unanimously approved. The public hearing for Application #230-03Z closed at 9:19pm.

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Zoning Commission Chair Matt Lecher called the Regular Meeting of the Zoning Commission to order at 9:20pm.

### **1. Approval of Public Hearing & Regular Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2023.**

**MOTION:** On the motion of Amy Atamian and the second of Pamela Marsh, the commission voted by majority to accept the minutes as written and approve the public hearing.

**MOTION:** Amy Atamian moved to change the agenda by moving Items 4 and 5 up on the agenda, before items 2 and 3. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

**4. Application #23 – 04Z – Stephen Santa, 171 Redding Road. Request to amend Section 4.6.5 of the Redding Zoning Regulations:** to reduce the front yard setback in the R-1 Zone from 50’ to 45’. To receive: set public hearing date.

Commissioners discussed that a public hearing date needs to be scheduled for this Application.

**MOTION:** Amy Atamian moved to schedule a public hearing for Application #23-04Z for June 14, 2023. Seconded by Pamela Marsh. Unanimously approved.

**5. Application #23-01Z – Proposal to amend Section 5.6.2 and 5.12 as they relate to Accessory Residential Apartments. *Public hearings closed/discussion continued/action.***

Chairman Lecher stated that a public hearing on the Application was held at their last meeting on April 12, 2023. The commission waited to vote on this until the full commission was in attendance and could participate in the commission’s discussion of the matter.

Amy Atamian confirmed with Zoning Officer Pardee that 2BR units would only be allowed in R2 zones. Mr. Lecher stated his initial concerns over expanding from 1 to 2 bedrooms was the potential increase in occupants, and the impact it may have on a neighborhood.

Mr. Miller discussed the number of parking spaces. Ms. Atamian noted that one of the two units on the property must be owner occupied. Mr. Miller asked how to monitor the owner-occupied issue. Ms. Pardee states that they can monitor by watching cars and knowing people, and that it has not been a problem. Units will have kitchens and one full bath.

**MOTION:** Ms. Atamian moved to approve the zoning amendments in Application #23-01Z as written. Seconded by Pamela Marsh. Approved unanimously.

**2. Application #23-02Z – 280 Ethan Allen Highway (Assessor’s Map and Lot 35 – 93): Owner Arianit Krasniqi – Agent Wade Rose.** Request for Site Plan Amendment to construct warehouse. *If public hearing closed/discussion/action.*

Commissioners discussed the application. Ms. Atamian noted that the current application is downscaled from the prior application on this property.

**MOTION:** Ms. Atamian moved to approve Application #23-02Z. Seconded by Mr. Whitehead. Unanimously approved.

**3. Application #23 - 03Z – 70 Turney Road (Assessor’s Map and Lot #32 - 7) – Joel Barlow High School. Mike D’Agostino, Chairman, Region 9 Board of Education (Applicant) – Request for Site Plan Amendment for conversion of an existing field to a turf-surfaced field, and for expansion of stadium parking lot.** *If public hearing closed/discussion/action.*

Commissioners discussed the application. Ms. Pardee reiterates that this commission can approve or disapprove the plan as presented to them. The commission cannot alter the plan. Commissioners discussed whether a traffic study on Turney Road is necessary. Discussed how the new turf field would be used while a football game is playing and peak times of use.

Ms. Atamian discussed factors considered including the work that would be needed for the upper field and the presence of piping in place in the lower field. She suggests this would help to get students out of practices earlier and help to avoid late nights and darkness. She does not believe a traffic study is necessary.

Mr. D’Agostino stated that if the project is approved at referendum, then work on the field and parking lot would begin after graduation and be completed in the fall.

**MOTION:** Mr. Whitehead moved to approve Application #23-03Z. Seconded by Mr. Miller. Approved unanimously.

**6. Discussion**

No additional discussion.

**7. Future agenda Items:**

None noted.

**8. Communication**

Nothing noted.

**9. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** On the motion of Mr. Miller and the second of Ms. Atamian, the commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Submitted by:

Janet August