



TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 Garfield Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Town Planner

Paul Dickson
Town Planner

Memorandum

To: TPZ Commission
From: Planning Staff
Date: March 22, 2024 (updated)
Re: **Petition 04-24:** Site Plan for Modifications at 67 Pane Rd in the PD Zone (Planned Development Zone). Applicant: BSC Group Inc., Owner: Pane Road 67 LLC, Contact: Frank Vacca.



Phone: (860) 665-8575 Fax: (860) 665-8577
townplanner@newingtonct.gov
www.newingtonct.gov

Staff Report:

The applicant is seeking a Site Plan Modification for a change of use from a retail and commercial service landscape center to a Contractors' Equipment Sales and Service use, under section 3.14.1 of the Newington Zoning Regulations. The previous site plan was approved in 1993 for the conversion of the former Auto Auction building to a retail and commercial service landscape center. The property is the former Frink's Nursery, at 67 Pane Road, and is located in the PD (Planned Development) zone. As located, this property is situated on the southerly side of Pane Road and abuts PD-zoned properties on all sides. The existing lot is approximately 3 acres. The property is encumbered with regulated wetland areas along the south and east lines of the property.

The applicant has an open wetland application. Staff has received additional information regarding the stormwater system required for the Wetland Approval. That information will be reviewed by the Wetland Agent for approval of the Wetland Application. Additional review of this material may likely result in the granting of the administrative wetland approval prior to TPZ meeting date. Staff will provide an update to the Commission at the meeting regarding the status of the wetland approval.

As proposed, this project will be making adjustments to the existing lot including changes to site parking and the westerly site driveway. The greenhouse and maintenance building, behind the primary structure, were recently demolished.

Site Plan:

The applicant submitted a series of site plan and responses to staff comments. The most recent response to staff comments was received on 3/21/24. The Town Planner has reviewed the comments and will coordinate with the Town Engineer regarding the plan updates and submitted backup information to address staff comments.

Parking and storage: The parking will be reconfigured to accommodate more storage area for equipment and less overall parking spaces. The proposal for the rear portion of the site is bituminous pavement for roughly half of the back storage area and pervious stone paving for the remainder of the storage area. The proposal also includes additional site lighting to be installed on the building and in the storage area. Staff received a response regarding the parking; however, the requirement was noted in the zoning table but was not calculated. The parking requirement allows for two different scenarios of parking for the site. The computation used by the applicant, allowed by the zoning regulations, provides 15 parking spaces (10 employee and 5 for customers). Based on the more stringent requirement, the required number of spaces could be as much as 35 parking spaces (30 for employees and 5 for customers). Staff is OK with the applicant's proposal to base the number of parking spaces off of the largest shift of employees. The nature of the business should not generate a significant requirement for parking due to its specialized nature. If, in the future, the site use changes, there is ample paved surface to move the cantilever gate to provide more parking spaces, or provide additional employee parking behind the gated area.

Site Access: The site currently has two access points on the east and west sides of the building. The property has an existing mutual driveway agreement at the westerly entrance. There are no proposed changes to the easterly entrance. The applicant's proposal includes widening the westerly entrance to accommodate fire truck and delivery access as well as to facilitate reconfiguration of the parking lot. Staff has commented on the widening, noting that the town requirement for a maximum driveway width is 28' for commercial properties.

The Fire Marshall has reviewed the site access and has no issues with the proposed plan.

There are currently no sidewalks along the property frontage nor adjacent lots and there is no stated requirement in the PD zone for sidewalks to be installed along the frontage of the property.

Landscaping: The property owner removed the existing landscaping from the front and side of the site. The applicant is proposing additional plantings for screening and three street trees along the property's frontage. The plan also provides additional upland plantings within the regulated areas and the stormwater quality swale. The applicant has addressed the staff comments regarding additional landscaping.

Stormwater: The applicant is proposing to utilize the existing drainage system and to install a water quality swale in the rear of the property. Runoff will be directed to the water quality swale through diversion swales. A stormwater quality structure is proposed to be installed at the outfall from the existing catch basin at the western edge of the currently paved area to address the currently untreated runoff. Additional information regarding the stormwater system, including its inspection, has been provided and staff will have an update after its review.

Staff has reviewed the initial inspection of the stormwater system and noted an area of the pipe with 50% root blockage. The applicant has responded with the following:

"The site developer procured the services of a contractor on 3/20/2024. At that time, the contractor investigated and cleaned the main outlet point from the drainage easement area, which also includes tributary catch basins from areas of 93 and 77 Pane road. Additionally, the Developer further contracted with DiCioccio Contractors to procure a piping root saw specifically designed to remove root growths from cylindrical piping. The contract is planning to perform the clearing of the root blockage over the next 3 business days. Following the completion of the root clearing and hydrojet cleaning of the remaining piping, the developer is planning to inspect the remaining piping from the 77 Pane road catch basin to the 93 pane road catch basin and the final run out to the flared end outlet. This documentation will be provided to town staff upon receipt." Frank Vacca, P.E.

Site Lighting: The applicant has updated their plans to incorporate an additional wall light with full cutoff shields in an area noted by staff. The applicant is waiting on an updated photometric plan. In regards to the site lighting and the Commissions comment regarding motion sensor lighting, the applicant responded with the following:

“For security reasons, motion sensors are currently not proposed on the rear storage area lighting. However, the cutoff shield will be installed to block the luminaire from being seen by the residences to the north. Note: there are no front facing wall packs nor is there any candlepower bleed over the north street line. Also, the site is lower in elevation than the apartment complex to the north, further assisting light impacts to the north.” Frank Vacca, P.E.

Staff Recommendation:

The proposed site plan was authorized by the Conservation Commission to be administratively approved. Staff will have an update for the Commission regarding the status of Wetlands approval at the meeting.

If the Commission is inclined to approve the site plan application, and the wetlands approval has been granted, staff recommends the following condition and may have additional conditions at the time of the meeting:

1. MDC approval is required prior to the issuance of building permits.
2. The applicant shall submit the final stormwater system inspection and maintenance report, to be approved subject to comments from the Town Engineer.
3. Subject to final review and approval of the Stormwater Management Report by the Town Engineer.
4. The site plan shall be modified in the following manner:
 - a. Show terminus and invert of 10” CPP on north side of property.
 - b. Update photometric plan (to be approved by the Town Planner).
 - c. Include tracking pad detail.

Commission:

In reviewing this application, the Commission should consider the criteria for all site plans in section 5.3.3, which are attached for your review.

5.3.3 Commission Review

In reviewing site plans, the Commission shall consider the following, as well as the conditions and standards herein. Applicants should also refer to Section 7.4, Design Standard and Site Plan Checklist.

1. The existing and planned future character of the adjacent property.
2. Traffic circulation within the site; amount, location and access to parking; traffic generated and possible traffic hazard or circulation problems on existing or proposed drives or streets.
3. Availability and adequacy of public utilities serving the site and the adequacy of the existing and proposed stormwater system to accommodate any increased drainage. (Effective 12/01/2001)
4. The location of signage, lighting and natural or landscape features.

5. Safeguards to protect adjacent property and the neighborhood in general from detriment or depreciation.

6. The suitability of the building design to its site.

7. Safeguards to promote the convenience of travel and the orderly use of land through the safe location of driveways, the number, size and access points to a site in relationship to adjacent properties and the public roadway. (Effective 12/01/2001)

The application is also subject to **Section 7.4 Design Standards, Site Plan Check List.**