

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Town Planner

Memorandum

To: Town Plan and Zoning Commission
From: Town Planner Craig Minor, AICP
Date: October 6, 2020
Subject: Petition #26-18: Site Plan Approval at 550 Cedar Street (“Cedar Pointe”) in accordance with C.G.S. Sec. 8-30g. Dakota Partners Inc., applicant; Stop & Shop Supermarket Company LLC, owner; Timothy S. Hollister, One Constitution Plaza, Hartford CT, contact.

As I reported several months ago, Judge William Mottolese’s decision on the Dakota Partners appeal of TPZ’s denial of their affordable housing site plan ordered Dakota Partners to:

“promptly engage in a good faith effort with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to seek approval for construction of a sidewalk along or within the Route 135 right-of-way from the Cedar Pointe driveway to the closest practicable point in proximity to the Fastrak bus facility.”

Judge Mottolese prefaced this order by stating that TPZ “shall delay issuance of final site plan approval until completion of the following” efforts; i.e. TPZ not sign off on the site plans until Dakota either succeeds or fails to obtain DOT approval for a sidewalk. Dakota Partners has succeeded, and they made an informal presentation of the sidewalk plans to Town staff and officials on September 15, 2020.

However, after examining the sidewalk plans and walking along Cedar Street with TPZ Chairman Pane, Town Manager Keith Chapman determined that the proposed sidewalk was not acceptable. The design provides little or no separation between pedestrians and Cedar Street westbound traffic, and it only barely complies with ADA requirements.

The Town Manager also noted that there is a CTtransit bus for CCSU students and staff that runs between the East Street CTfastrak station in New Britain and the Myra Cohen Way CTfastrak station in Newington. This route could be adjusted to serve the residents of Cedar Pointe. That would address TPZ concerns about the safety of Cedar Pointe residents walking to the CTfastrak station on Myra Cohen Way. Chairman Pane reported on this during “Commissioners Comments” at the TPZ meeting on September 23, 2020.

Chairman Pane also mentioned that the proposed sidewalk to Myra Cohen Way will not help Cedar Pointe residents get to the shops and restaurants east of Cedar Point, nor will it help residents walk safely to Newington High School nor to the VA Center on Willard Avenue. Chairman Pane brought up the possibility of a pathway from the back of Cedar Pointe to Alumni Drive, across the rear of the parcels at 512 Cedar Street and 33 Alumni Drive. This was also suggested by Commissioner Woods during the public hearing on August 22, 2018. This pathway would require the cooperation of those neighboring property owners.

In light of the Town Manager's safety concerns, and the possibility of providing for pedestrian safety without the sidewalk, I recommend TPZ direct Dakota Partners to:

1. Contact CTtransit and CCSU about changing the existing CTtransit bus route, and
2. Contact the owners of 512 Cedar Street and 33 Alumni Drive about an easement across the back of those properties for a walkway from Cedar Pointe to Alumni Drive, to be constructed and maintained by Dakota Partners.

If those conversations are successful, TPZ could then drop the sidewalk which Judge Mottolese had supported in his decision. This would be in the best interest of all parties.

cc:
Dakota Partners
file