

**MINUTES**  
**ZONING COMMISSION**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at 7:00 P.M.**  
**FSPL Room at Simsbury Public Library**  
**725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070**

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Elliott called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Present:** Town Planner, George McGregor; Assistant Town Planner, Brittany MacGilpin; Zoning Commission Chair, Bruce Elliott; Zoning Commission Vice Chair, Tony Braz; Zoning Commission Members: Kate Beal, Shannon Leary, Diane Madigan, and Tucker Salls; and Zoning Commission Alternate Members: Jackie Battos, and Joshua Michelson, and David Moore.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**December 4, 2023, Regular Meeting**

**December 6, 2023, Regular Meeting**

**December 18, 2023, Regular Meeting**

Vice Chairman Braz stated:

- Line 50 “develop” does not need to be there.
- Line 88 “in” should be in between “result” and “less”.
- Line 185 “open” should be before “space”.
- Line 244 “significant” should read “significantly”.
- Line 297 “small” should read “smaller”.

**December 21, 2023, Special Meeting**

Commissioner Moore stated:

- Line 14 “Braz” should read “Salls”.
- Line 15 “Salls” should read “Braz”.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Madigan made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairman Braz, to approve any amendments and accept the Minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously. Vice Chairman Braz abstained from any approvals for the December 6, 2023, and December 21, 2023, meetings. (5-0-1).

47       **III.     APPOINTMENTS**

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49       The Republican Town Committee nominated Andrew Tarpill, a licensed architect in  
50       CT and an affiliate of an architectural firm in Farmington, to fill the vacancy on the  
51       Design Review Board.

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53       **MOTION:** Commissioner Beal made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Leary, to  
54       appoint Andrew Tarpill to the Design Review Board. The motion carried unanimously.  
55       (6-0-0).

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57       **IV.     PUBLIC HEARINGS**

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59       **Application ZC #23-38** of SL Simsbury LLC, Owner, Holden Sabato, Applicant, for  
60       a Type 4 Master Site Development Plan (MSDP) pursuant to Section 5.0.B.4 of the  
61       Hartford-Simsbury Form-Based Code (HSFBC) for the construction of a 580-unit  
62       residential development at 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford Insurance  
63       property-south) (Assessor's Map F17, Block 154, Lot 009-2) Simsbury, CT 06070.  
64       Zone HS-FBC.

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66       Mr. McGregor stated:

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  - The applicant has submitted a fiscal impact study.
  - Staff has received additional public comments since the December 18<sup>th</sup>  
69       meeting.
  - The Zoning Commission has referred the application to the Planning  
70       Commission for POCD conformance and will be analyzed at the next meeting,  
71       January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
  - He has revised the Staff Report.
  - The public hearing needs to be closed at the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - The applicant has asked for ten standard changes regarding:  
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    - 73       1. Neighborhood Transition
    - 74       2. Residential Building Façade
    - 75       3. Ground Floor Elevation
    - 76       4. Type "A" Frontage Streets
    - 77       5. Surface Parking Lot
    - 78       6. Garages
    - 79       7. Size of Neighborhood in relation to the Hartford South Site
    - 80       8. Multi-Use Trail
    - 81       9. Setback From Wetlands
    - 82       10. Development Standards Table (Neighborhood Transition Building  
83       Height, Maximum Block Perimeter, Residential Streets, Type A &  
84       B Streets, and Tree Wells or Planters).

Gina Martini, AICP- Senior Project Manager at VHB, presented a Demographic and Fiscal Impact Study that stated:

- Information was collected from bona fide sources including:
  - 2023-2024 Town of Simsbury Municipal Budget (with 2023-2024 Mill Rates)
  - 2020 Simsbury Parks and Open Space Master Plan
  - 2023-2024 Simsbury Public School District Budget
  - 2023 Simsbury Public School District Enrollment Report
  - US Census Bureau – Decennial Census and the American Community Survey
  - Consumer Expenditure Survey via the Esri Business Analyst
- The proposed project includes 580 rental residential units, including 58 affordable units, (a mix of 68 single family homes, 12 duplexes, 4 three-story apartment buildings, and 8 four-story apartment buildings).
- It will generate between 1,101 and 1,159 new residents (a 4% in the town's population), with 30% -33% being under 18 or over 65. There will be between 96 and 115 new public-school students (a 2.8% increase in enrollments), with 27% -29% being enrolled in K-2.
- The residents would spend a cumulative \$11 to \$13 million annually on household spending, contributing to 6.35% in revenue of sales tax.
- It will generate an annual real property tax levy/income of between \$2,991,227 and \$3,218,115, with \$94,005 - \$104,416 directed towards the Simsbury Fire District, and \$2,897,222 - \$3,218,115 to funding the municipality's operating budget.
- It will generate \$148,450 - \$492,493 from property taxes on motor vehicles.
- Roughly \$153,495 will be paid in building permit fees.
- The impact on Municipal Services:
  - Police: 1 or 2 police officers will be needed, but the expense would be offset.
  - Fire: possibility of 33.5 more incidents, with 1- 4 more volunteers needed.
  - Ambulance: 1.37 additional ambulance calls, but possibility of more volunteer recruits.
  - Social Services: 10 – 14 new riders for the Dial-A-Rode program, and will be receiving between \$17, 673 and \$19,631.
  - Public Works: on-site streets will be privately maintained, and residents will be generating \$217,500 in Sewer Use Fees.
  - Open Space & Recreation: another park maintenance worker costing \$53,000 in annual salary expense, but there will be 5-acres of open space (including multi-use trail).
  - School District: Simsbury Public Schools will receive between \$540,853 and \$987,602, and the existing capacity will accommodate the increase in students.

Paul Vitaliano, Civil Engineer at VHB, stated:

- The buildings are perpendicular to the road and there is open space in front with an almost 200-ft setback.
- There is an interest in having retail if it would generate money, despite the town's desire to have a mixed-use site.

## PUBLIC AUDIENCE

**Pat Weisbrich, 3 Lenora Drive, West Simsbury**, talked about people being involved in the community has a lot to do with home ownership, and that these rent prices are not affordable and would not make it possible for anyone wanting to save money to eventually be able to buy a home. The rental income is going to developers out of state. Small homes on smaller lots have proven to be successful in stabilizing a community. She would be interested in retrospective studies showing what happens after a development is made compared to the projective studies. She urged the commission to not prioritize the tax revenue.

**Joan Coe, 26 Whitcomb Drive, Simsbury**, believes there should be more impact studies conducted, such as an environmental impact study focusing on chemicals and water safety. She advocated for a list of chemicals used on the property by maintenance to be given to the Town, as well as. Aquarion Water Company's approval for water capacity. She was concerned about the influx of students at Latimer Lane School.

**Tim Paine, 35 Cooper Avenue, Weatogue**, stated that he lives in the north section of the development and that the proposed two-bedroom rent is 40% less than what he is currently paying. He stated that after three years of living there the paving and landscaping will finally be finished. He is concerned of the quality of the construction, the width of the roads, the safety sight lines, and the visual impact from the people who live in the North and from the road.

**Marsha Frankel, 1 West Street, Simsbury**, stated that development would negatively impact the character of the town.

**Phillip Rittner, 313 Hopmeadow Street, Weatogue**, is concerned about the impact of the neighborhood surrounding the development, including the view of the mountain, and traffic, which is already an obstacle. He is worried that this will eventually lower the value of his home. He was attracted to Simsbury because he thought that the Town cared about quality of life and aesthetics.

**Anita Kershner, 7 Browngate Lane, Simsbury**, stated that she has been in town since 1972 and bought her condo at Talcott Acres because of the view of the mountain. She has lived in her current condo for thirty years. The development is changing the town. She is concerned about all of the lights that will be needed, the water treatment and spill-offs, traffic, and the tax burden of the current residents.

**Thomas Turner, 11 Barnard Drive, Simsbury**, stated that this is incongruent with the POCD's goal of maintaining and enhancing Simsbury's livability and character. He is concerned of the traffic, aesthetics of the building, the preservation of water quality with the abundance of people they are proposing to live there. The residents appreciate sustainability and open space, which will be impacted. He disapproves of the development.

**Ann McDonald, 3 Tamarack Lane, Simsbury**, stated that small homes that people can own will be what supports the community stores. The renters will not be buying from local businesses because they will not be responsible for taking care of the land and the building.

**Alfred Weisbrich, 3 Lenora Drive, West Simsbury**, stated that the Commission has an obligation to the residents and that the residents are not in favor of the development. He is concerned about the tax burden the property owners will have to carry. He supported the idea of small starter homes.

**Corinee Giarnella, 1 Simscroft Place, Simsbury**, expressed her love of Simsbury and that development is changing the town. She feels that the out of state developers are not interested in building people affordable homes, but just collect rent. Schools will be negatively impacted because we do not know what resources and services these new students will need.

**Kelly Rothfuss-Martinez, 14 Nutmeg Court, Simsbury**, agreed that schools will be negatively impacted. She is concerned about traffic, not only from the new residents, but from the delivery drivers. She stated that the lights will impact the animals, and this will affect the wetlands. She believes renters can be long-term residents but when developers and management companies raise rent people have to leave, which does not build a community. She is pro development but the execution of it is vital.

**Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, Simsbury**, complimented Commissioner Salls' integrity and intentions when making decisions for the best interest of Simsbury, but because of his work involving high density housing developments feels this could be a conflict of interest. She advocated for the public hearing to remain open for residents how could not attend other meetings during the holiday season. She is concerned about the impact on the aesthetics and schools. A student requiring any outplaced services will cost the town hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, offsetting any fiscal benefit. She does not foresee the future residents spending a lot of money in town. The Silverman Group is a national developer and private equity firm with hundreds of projects of all kinds, they are not truly focusing on families and their homes.

**Charles Goetz, 72 East Weatogue Street, Simsbury, Simsbury**, is supportive of growth but this is dilutive growth. The average home in Simsbury pays \$12,000 in taxes per year, this is only \$7,000. Multiplied by 580 and it's about 2,500,000 in the whole of subsidized services. In thirty years, that would be \$85,000,000 of dilutive growth. The new students that would be coming will impact the school buildings and resources

necessary costing the property owners tax increases while the developers will have a free ride. He would like affordable housing at the site instead.

**Alice Seidenberg, 132 Old Canal Way, Weatogue**, stated that the view of the tower and mountain will be ruined and those that value the aesthetics of the town are going to leave which will lower property value.

**Mark Scully, 29 Notch Road, West Simsbury**, stated that as Chair of the Sustainability Committee he can attest to the Silverman Group not responding back to the invitation to meet with them. He foresees this development not being in accordance to the sustainability features in the POCD.

**Joanne Dombrosky, 4 Glen Hollow Lane, West Simsbury**, stated that there is an importance of keeping the character of Simsbury. She proposed that when Ms. Martini did the “worst case scenario” portion of the fiscal impact study that she not use a state multiplier but that she add on to that because people come to Simsbury for the high ranking education. The rent prices are below market value and foresees them going up.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Leary made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Salls, to continue the public hearing for **Application ZC #23-38** of SL Simsbury LLC, Owner, Holden Sabato, Applicant, for a Type 4 Master Site Development Plan (MSDP) pursuant to Section 5.0.B.4 of the Hartford-Simsbury Form-Based Code (HSFBC) for the construction of a 580-unit residential development at 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford Insurance property-south) (Assessor’s Map F17, Block 154, Lot 009-2) Simsbury, CT 06070. Zone HS-FBC, until the meeting on January 17, 2024. The motion carried unanimously. (6-0-0).

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Madigan made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairman Braz, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. (6-0-0).

Chairman Elliott adjourned the meeting at 9:26 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Blaze  
Commission Clerk