



CITY OF DANBURY
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DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

ZONING COMMISSION
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MINUTES
JANUARY 25, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Melillo at 7:30 PM.

Present were Anthony DiCaprio, Theodore Haddad Jr., Richard P. Jowdy, Alan Kovacs, Robert Melillo, Terry Tierney and Alternates Elmer Palma and Patrick Venuti. Also present was Planning Director Dennis Elpern.

Absent were Ted Farah, Walter Hoo, Gary Renz and Alternate Thomas Spegnolo.

Chairman Melillo asked Mr. Palma to take Mr. Farah's place and Mr. Venuti to take Mr. Hoo's place for the items on tonight's agenda.

Mr. Kovacs led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING:

7:30 PM – Petition of Viejo Ventures LLC d/b/a Meson Restaurant, 50-56 Mill Plain Rd. (#D15008) for a Special Permit for Restaurant Liquor License.

Chairman Melillo read the legal notice. He said the restaurant received site plan approval in May 2009 and then again in August 2010 for the addition of the outside patio.

Attorney Gregg Brauneisen is representing the applicants, the Reyes family, who has operated "Amigo's" deli on West Street for over 20 years. At that location, they serve breakfast, lunch and dinner and also hold a grocery beer permit. They also have the Churrascaria barbecue on Osborne St. They serve three meals a day there too. This new restaurant will be a more formal environment with table service and menus at the tables. They are the only ones in Danbury that offer this kind of food. Mr. Reyes will work the front of the house and his brother will be the kitchen manager. Mr. Reyes has an MBA and grew up working in the business. His brother also has experience in the restaurant business, most

recently managing a Cheesecake Factory location. The father will help out when he can. They plan to serve lunch and dinner daily. They will be open from 11 AM to 10 PM during the week and until midnight on the weekends. Attorney Brauneisen said they are looking for the dinner business, not a bar business.

Chairman Melillo asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition to this petition and there was no one.

Chairman Melillo asked Mr. Elpern for staff comments. Mr. Elpern said this meets the general and specific requirements for this kind of permit as listed in Sec. 3.F.2.

Mr. Jowdy made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Palma seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Mr. Haddad made a motion to move this matter to Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS FOR CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

Petition of Viejo Ventures LLC d/b/a Meson Restaurant, 50-56 Mill Plain Rd. (#D15008) for a Special Permit for Restaurant Liquor License.

Chairman Melillo asked for comments and/or discussion on this matter. Mr. Haddad made a motion to approve this for the following reason:

- The proximity of such premises will not have a detrimental effect on any church, school, or charitable institution. Nor will it have a detrimental effect on the immediate neighborhood concerned, due consideration having been given to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Kovacs seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously with eight AYES (from Mr. DiCaprio, Mr. Haddad, Mr. Jowdy, Mr. Kovacs, Mr. Tierney, Chairman Melillo, Mr. Palma and Mr. Venuti).

OTHER MATTERS:

Chairman Melillo said that each of the members had been sent a schedule of the regular meetings for 2011, so they should know when the meetings are. Mr. Haddad said, as Vice-Chairman, he had been paying attention to the attendance. He said the secretary is going to e-mail it the attendance record for the past year to each member, so they should look it over and make sure it agrees with their own records.

Mr. Elpern then distributed copies of the final report of the Downtown Renaissance Task Force. This report was adopted on December 8, 2010. He asked that the Commission members read it because there will be some amendments coming before them that relate to it. Some of the things being proposed are more economic development and urban design measures, historic preservation and public improvements. He added that both the Planning & Zoning Commissions as well as the City Council will play roles in the implementation of this plan. He is working with the Mayor's Office to create a commission whose primary function will be to coordinate all of actions necessary to make this a reality. He said this will be done at a reasonable pace and not to expect to see any grandiose plans right away. Mr. Haddad mentioned the article that ran in the News-Times regarding the Zoning Commission being strict about new bars in the downtown. Mr. Elpern said the article was full of errors. He explained that he had refused to talk to the press until the Task Force had adopted the report. Somehow the reporter got information from someone before the report was adopted. He said they never were considering allowing taverns and cafes in the CityCenter area. There was concern about the noise that was addressed, but he could not correct the reporter since the report had not yet been adopted. The reporter talked to the wrong person and was given the incorrect information.

At 8:20 PM, Mr. DiCaprio made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Palma seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.