

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT

Page 1 of 14
April 9, 1975

Ralph H. Shaw, II, Chairman, Eric G. Lowry, Vice-Chairman,
Cos Giuffrida, Secy., Sebastian J. Passanesi, Betty Matteo,
Sebastian J. Garafalo. Alternates: George L. Augustine,
David A. Bengtson, Gerald J. Lentini.

COMMISSION
MEMBERS
PRESENT

Edward J. Kalita, Kent M. Scully.

MEMBERS ABSENT

George A. Reif, Dir., Catherine V. Raczka, Asst. Dir.,
Althea Rinaldi, Recording Secretary

STAFF MEMBERS

Philip Bauer, Engineer-Public Works Dept., D'Vera Cohn-
Reporter, Middletown Press, 10 members of the public
at large.

OTHERS

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

We will call to order the public portion of the meeting
of the Planning and Zoning Commission. I will ask Secy.
Giuffrida to read the call.

SEC'Y. GIUFFRIDA:

THE MIDDLETOWN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION WILL HOLD
A PUBLIC HEARING APRIL 9, 1975, STARTING AT 7:30 P.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, DE KOVEN
DRIVE, MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT, to consider proposals
for the following:

LEGAL NOTICE

1. Request for a Special Exception to permit a drive-in
banking facility for the Hartford National Bank and
Trust at the site of the Phillips 66 gas station on
the south side of Washington Street, Route 66, by
applicant Robert E. Coughlin, Jr., Trustee.

SPECIAL
EXCEPTION
FOR DRIVE-IN
BANK FACILITY
WASHINGTON ST.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

This notice appeared in the Middletown Press twice -
March 29th and April 5th - in accordance with the legal
statutes and it is a legal notice of this meeting.
Bob - Will you please come forward.

ROBERT E. COUGHLIN, JR., TRUSTEE

Thank you Mr. Chairman - members of the Planning and
Zoning Commission. I'm Robert E. Coughlin, Jr., Trustee
for the property located on Washington Street at the
location of Phillips 66 gas station. I will be using a
screen showing the site plan.
(Mechanical problems - only a short footage missing on
recorder)

which is beyond the intersection up in this area here
will allow free access and egress from that particular
entrance to the site. If I may, I would like to comment

on the traffic pattern as we anticipate it. The traffic which will be traveling in a westerly direction from downtown Middletown towards the site would have the ability to both entrance and exit from this location here, while the traffic that travels in an easterly direction towards downtown Middletown would have the ability to enter from this drive-in position here. The advantage to that is, as there is traffic coming to the site travelling in an easterly direction, they would have the opportunity to get into the site without causing any congestion to the stop area here - in the same way that traffic travelling in a western direction would have the ability of a controlled intersection to come in to the site. One of the suggestions that you made at the last meeting was that we change the angle of direction of these parking stalls here, and I very much appreciate that because it is obvious that it does pick up the ability for this pattern coming here to use these facilities and we also picked up an extra parking stall on the site and two in the front of the building and I think, perhaps as I develop this, you'll see the importance of that addition. We have in this building what I'm going to refer to as a full-service facility and that is in comparison to simply a drive-in facility, and the major difference there is that as people entering into this -- ah, to use this facility they will have the ability to park and walk in. There will be inside here, as demonstrated on the sketch on the easel which has also been submitted to you, an interior of a bank with teller counters, desks for officers, a conference room and a bank facility, in addition to the two drive-in windows which are proposed. I realize there was a question at the last meeting about the ability of this site to have cars wait in line for an entrance to the drive-in, so we had prepared an overlay which would demonstrate to you that, within the pattern which you see here, ah - that there are - can't read it clearly, but there are 20 cars that could be stacked in a waiting pattern for the use of the drive-in facility without obstructing any of the interior traffic flow and clearly without disturbing the Washington Street traffic pattern itself. Now, when I combine the twenty cars in the stacking pattern or waiting pattern for the drive-in windows, for the fact that we have sixteen parking facilities - parking stalls on the site - I realize that some of these, obviously, would be used by employee personnel - but we would have somewhere between thirty to thirty-five parking or waiting facilities for customers coming to the bank. Now, that is interesting, I think perhaps, in comparison to other banking patterns this may be even more interesting. We

did an observation of the use of the adjacent commercial bank that's directly at the other end of the parking facility, and we observed that in that site when the traffic backed up - this was on a Friday afternoon - on a Friday evening whenever there was any more than two cars in the waiting pattern, the number of cars parked adjacent to the building increased almost in direct proportion. For instance, there were - as it went - two cars in the waiting pattern and there might be ten cars parked where people got out and walked in. As it went up to four, the number of cars parking went up to fourteen; as it got to six, the number of cars parking got up to sixteen, and I will give you a copy of that study - if that's of any interest to you. Now, I think that that's of interest in that this demonstrates the different kind of usage that the other facility which we have on South Main Street where the only choice that the customer has is to drive in and wait in line. For your interest, that facility can have approximately eighteen to twenty cars, depending on how big they are. Wait in a waiting line for the drive-in on Church Street - so I think, if I can show you here, I believe that we are more than accommodating for the facility of the site to adequately take care of customers who come to the site. I think another thing that's interesting is that, with the ability for people to walk in, I find it hard to imagine that they would wait in line beyond a certain number because of the simple pattern which we all demonstrate of not liking to take more than any time that's necessary to get to where we're going to go to. I might like to mention that one of the reasons that the bank was very interested in this location is that in our downtown office we have no adjacent parking, so that there is no facility for a customer on a Friday evening, which is really the only time in which there is a real parking problem, for a customer to come right directly to the bank. Now, the drive-in facility on South Green - on Church Street presently has been taking all of that service facility. We don't, by any imagination, expect that we will draw all of those customers out to this Washington Street site, but I think that this will, in fact, provide direct relief to that location - and I think that this ability for a customer to park and walk in will be greatly facilitated and ease the pattern here. Is there any question that you might like to ask me at this time?

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

I think there probably are several questions, Bob. First, I'm curious - that exit location which I am a little uneasy with because you have got people entering right where people are exiting. It looks a little hairy to me, but it will probably work out. Where is the light in relation to that? For instance, is it possible to come out of there with the green light?

COMM. PASSANESI:

Let's talk in terms of the green light. The green light being an east-west green light.

No. I'm talking as if it were a north-south green light. Can you come out when there is a -- is there a light on that side-- is there even a --

MR. COUGHLIN:

The light - can you all see this? This is a diagram prepared by Mr. Reif's office which shows that the light is right out in here. Now - almost directly opposite this telephone pole. Therefore, when the light is green this way, the traffic can exit or entrance beyond this. Well, let's say it's coming towards Middletown - it's going to take a right turn, it can take a green with no problem. If it's going to turn left, it can also take a left turn with this traffic stopped well back of the entrance.

COMM. LOWRY:

That's the wrong traffic light. That's the wrong intersection.

MR. REIF:

That's where the shopping center is.

MR. COUGHLIN:

The shopping center entrance is down here. No, no, no. I beg your pardon. I had it upside down.

Is there a green lens on that side of the--

MR. COUGHLIN:

There is not. The green lens is here at - directly opposite here - but as that light is green and, incidentally, these two lights are coordinated. Lt. Genovese of the Middletown Police Traffic Department said that this light and this light are in concert and they are activated in either of three places and, as they are turned green, the length that they stay green depends upon the number of cars that trip it, but that would allow the -- facilitate the exit out of here.

COMM. MATTEO:

But no light faces that driveway?

MR. COUGHLIN:

That is correct.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

OK. I don't know whether technically it is proper to enter a road against the light like that - I'm not going to worry

about that - but I was curious. If there was a green light, it obviously would facilitate your coming out of there. Without it some people are going to be there wondering whether they should or they shouldn't go out against, so I think most people will just charge ahead.

COMM. LOWRY:

Did you ask that guy whether the -- about that problem? this particular problem.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Yes, as a matter of fact he has given me a copy of their engineering design for both this and this in which they anticipate -- as they installed this light and engineered it - I am being a little repetitious, but they put the stop pattern back here against the - away from the opening of that entrance to facilitate that exit and entrance.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

You talk about the parking pattern at CBT office. You're talking about many more parking places being used there than you have. You've only got a -- what across the front - nine or ten spaces?

COMM. MATTEO:

He's got sixteen in all.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

Yes, all right. The eight up on the side if you get lines in there are going to be tough to use. If you put your cars stacked in there - if they really end up being stacked in there - I realize they may not be and they won't be a great deal of the time. It would be very tough for anybody to back up. But the ones in front, the eight in front, are the ones that people are going to go to first if they are available; and I presume that the employees will be asked to use the ones up on the side. That would be the natural way to do it, but you talked about when you had six cars in line at CBT, you had sixteen cars parked there - and you have only sixteen spaces there without any employee parking.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Yes, but let's presume that these were all filled, which is the question you are addressing. Instead of six, we can take twenty in that stacking pattern.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

I realize that. I realize that that's what you have said. Stacking double when you can't see what's happening on

the other end is a little tricky but its --

MR. COUGHLIN:

It only will stack double beginning at the drive-in windows and backing out to here.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

Right - but if you know on South Green as you come in, well they stack double all the way in. Nine times out of ten you are in the wrong lane. If you get into one of them, you're always in the wrong lane.

COMM. MATTEO:

People jockey a lot for the windows.
The question is - which lane will get me out fastest?

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

Absolutely, and you know people do a lot of th's - trying to figure out what it is - well I just - you know you're talking about more parking than you've got there as being potentially used. Another thing - Dave can probably answer this better than you. Dave, are the cars you've drawn approximately right in size??

MR. DAVID MYLCHREEST:

I believe they are 8½ by 17 or 18, something in that order.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Which is a full-sized American car.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

Would you swing those down around in the front where it says Boundary Survey-Site Development - I want to see how much room you've got down in there. Put a car down in there. I don't care which car it is - any car. Put it in front of the building. Park it in one of the spaces. Now, turn it side-ways as if it were in the parking place. I mean - in the driveway, driving through. I just want to get --there you go. O.K. Now, I am picturing now a car who wants to go back to Middletown and one coming in from Middletown who wants to go around the building again. Just trying to see what the space is like.

MR. COUGHLIN:

There is sufficient space for someone to back out of this stall and have these cars come across here without interference.

COMM. PASSANESI:

What is that distance - just out of curiosity? From the curb to the inner side of that island?

MR. MYLCHREEST:
Scale of 32 feet.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:
32 feet?

MR. MYLCHREEST:
Scale.

COMM. MATTEO:
That's controlled?

CHAIRMAN SHAW:
The only thing - you can put the cars back in stacking pattern. Even if you don't have twenty cars, you have six cars - the cars that are parked can not get around that building.

MR. COUGHLIN:
Well, let me discuss this again. Let me see if I understand your question. If there were six people or if these eight spaces were filled, is that what you are referring to?

CHAIRMAN SHAW:
Well, put a car up in the site - it doesn't make any difference whether the spaces are filled or not.

MR. COUGHLIN:
Is that what you're talking about.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:
I am just talking about if you had six cars at the drive-in at a double window. You get around that corner and the car is parked at the side - at the right hand side. It has to go around with the traffic pattern; he cannot get by. You would have to go out through the traffic pattern.

COMM. PASSANESI:
Except when he gets down to here - there's a bypass which he can bypass that and go out.

COMM. GAPAFALO:
I just wonder if you thought of extending a bypass lane. He gets held up for about five automobiles -

MR. COUGHLIN:
Yes, frankly, I really don't think that other than perhaps at the peak times that this is going to present a problem, because again I submit that this will allow for twenty-eight people at one given instance to be at that bank site and while, perhaps now this last Friday and Saturday might not

be exactly typical of every Friday and Saturday, that was in excess of what was demonstrated next door.

COMM. MATTEO:

What was the peak amount of cars you get on Church Street?

MR. COUGHLIN:

On Church Street the most that we had at any time on this last Saturday there were twenty-two cars which out two of the cars out in the street. There were twenty within the site and two outside of it.

COMM. GARAFALO:

That's strictly drive-in. That still doesn't say that those people parked out in front don't want to wait and get in line at the loop, pull out, and start going out an entryway.

COMM. LOWPY:

While you touched most of what I was going to ask, I can see a two-way traffic right in front of it. Somebody wants to go back to Middletown - somebody is coming in from Middletown - and you have the six parking spots there. It seems to be awfully tight for any maneuvering. Suppose you want to go back to Middletown, you have to go all around.

MR. COUGHLIN:

No. You would not have to do that. Let's say you were parked here. One car comes in from Middletown - one car comes from the west - if this guy wants to get out all at the same time, the traffic light changes to green for - I don't know what - 20 seconds - The problem that would occur would not be a problem only if, let's say these stalls were not filled, and the man coming from the west - this direction here - coming in to here would have a selection of spaces. I suppose we'd have to pick which one the man that was already there was coming out of. It's possible, for instance, if we were in here and the man coming in from downtown Middletown wanted to come in he might, in fact, have to wait or pick one of these other spots to go into.

COMM. LOWPY:

Who'd want to go out? One comes from the light and wants to go out - one comes from the parking lot and wants to go out. Do you have an opening there for?--

MR. COUGHLIN:

No. This space here.

COMM. LOWRY:

I think that the entrance and exit should be really separated instead of having it all in one spot.

COMM. MATTEO:

You can only enter at one side and exit at the other.

COMM. LOWRY:

Somebody is going to try to get out at the other side anyway.

COMM. GARAFALO:

I think you are going to get people going against what you've got planned anyway.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Again, the only time that that's a problem is if there were an excess of twenty - some twenty-two people - on the site. Those people who were back up in here would have to go through the pattern to get out. If there weren't any people here, I would presume they might attempt to turn around and go the other way. But again, it's nearly the waiting pattern of going through the light - line.

Bob, what about that piece that goes up the small driveway that goes to the west side on to the adjacent property?

MR. COUGHLIN:

That's what we're referring to -- that -

Yes, what is that?

MR. COUGHLIN:

That's a road between two parcels.

Is there any right of way up through there?

MR. COUGHLIN:

No legal right of way but, in fact, we - the intent of the bank is to keep that open; and it obviously has been the intent of the shopping center owner to do the same thing, and that would facilitate two things - people who are in this site who wish to go into the shopping center would have an access to get there and people in the shopping center could do it without going back onto Washington Street.

COMM. LOWRY:

Complicate things, too. In practice, it is not good to cut through there anyhow.

COMM. PASSANESI:

That piece belongs to the old parcel - is that right?

MR. COUGHLIN:

No, that's not so. You'll see a line here which is about halfway through that drive. So therefore, half of it is on this side and half of it is on the adjacent side.

COMM. PASSANESI:

No, I didn't mean that. Westerly of that boundary line that you just pointed to, is that land all part and parcel of the entire one-piece parcel?

MR. COUGHLIN:

This parcel here?

COMM. PASSANESI:

Yes.

MR. COUGHLIN:

That's part of the shopping center.

COMM. PASSANESI:

All one parcel?

MR. COUGHLIN:

That is correct.

COMM. PASSANESI:

You are not trespassing in the sense that you are going over --

MR. COUGHLIN:

We are not.

COMM. PASSANESI:

Some small piece there that is owned by someone separate from the shopping center.

MR. COUGHLIN:

No, that is correct. Do you have a question?

COMM. MATTEO:

Just wonder, you know, if you expect th's facility to generate more traffic than is already there or to accommodate the traffic that is already there. I am not sure who it's serving. On a Friday night, there are just hundreds of cars out in that area. Are these the cars that it's going to serve, or is it going to bring 100 more?

MR. COUGHLIN:

We expect that the people who are already living in that area will use that facility, as opposed to the bank's customers who are in the south end of town or the downtown area. I can't imagine the people from downtown trying to come out Washington Street on a Friday night.

COMM. MATTEO:

You would have to be pretty desperate.

Will you have a lot of walk-ins?

MR. COUGHLIN:

We think we might get them from people who park in the shopping center and walk over to the bank.

COMM. PASSANESI:

How about the apartment houses? Don't you think you're going to generate some business walking.

MR. COUGHLIN:

I am not sure how many Americans walk anymore - what distance -- that is a possibility.

COMM. LOWRY:

I don't know what arrangements CBT has on the other side. Has any thought been given at all to make the entrance and exit entirely from the parking lot - from the shopping center? - any entrance from Washington Street.

MR. COUGHLIN:

That parcel is owned by another land owner.

COMM. LOWRY:

I don't know how CBT operates. I don't know if they are entirely inside in the parking lot.

MR. COUGHLIN:

They are within entirely and on the site of --

COMM. LOWRY:

Has any thought been given to making any arrangements with the owners to use this parking on the other side?

MR. COUGHLIN:

You mean within the parking -

COMM. LOWRY:

Right. No exit or entrance entirely from Washington Street at all.

MR. COUGHLIN:

No. I think if that restriction were out on the site, the bank probably wouldn't exist there.

COMM. PASSANESI:

The CBT works very nicely on the other hand.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Yes, but they have a little different facility within that site. They are further back within the property, and it's slightly different.

COMM. LOWRY:

So no thought has been given to that at all.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Well, we expect that there will be people who shop in the shopping center.

COMM. LOWRY:

Wouldn't it be to your own interests to have an entrance and exit -- a much easier way to come from the park--from the shopping center--than from the street?

MR. COUGHLIN:

Frankly, I think this will relieve some of the congestion at that other light. At the light that is up the street further opposite the two shopping centers - the fact that some of these people will come here to do their banking and leave or come here to go shopping, will take some of the pressure off of that light. I realize that's not the question you are addressing here tonight.

COMM. LOWRY:

No, no.

COMM. MATTEO:

That situation would eliminate any stacking in the road though; they would all be stacked in the lot.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Another interesting thing is that the light is green going east-west, and if there was an inability for someone to get into this site, they have a very short distance to go to go up to the next light to enter into here - if there is a traffic congestion.

COMM. MATTEO:

And how do they get in? They get in the right of way?

MR. COUGHLIN:
That is correct.

COMM. LOWFY:
From all across Middletown - for the worst traffic situation in the whole city, there is no other spot in town than exactly this one. South Main is getting there. But this is about the worst spot on any night and Saturday, and I can't really see why you have to have the entrance and exit exactly at the worst spot possible.

COMM. GARAFALO:
I think the exit isn't bad though, Eric.

COMM. MATTEO:
I don't worry about the exit.

COMM. GARAFALO:
No, I'm talking about the entrance. I think that it's more ideal down there than it would be up at the other place.

COMM. LOWFY:
I would like to see it completely shut off from Washington Street with entrance and exit from the parking -- from the shopping center - no problem.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:
Any other questions? Comments? George, do you have any comments from departments?

MR. REIF:
Yes, every department has commented - but in most cases, there's nothing of any significance other than, of course, from the Public Works Department that was concerned about the traffic pattern. The Police Department says that Route 66 is a State highway and final approval must be obtained from the State Department of Transportation. That's it.

COMM. MATTEO:
Who is the supervisor?

MR. REIF:
The chief and the traffic lieutenant.

COMM. MATTEO:
Lieutenant Genovese?

MR. REIF:
Genovese and Eugene Rame.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Lt. Genovese went to the site with me and examined the plan and discussed the traffic pattern and commented on the parking realignment as you have it here which was also this committee's suggestion - and we accommodated that.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

Bob, do you have anyone else that you want to - to speak for you?

MR. COUGHLIN:

No.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

I wondered if anyone else wanted to speak for you. If not, I'll ask other people from the public.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Fine.

CHAIRMAN SHAW:

Is there anyone from the public who wishes to speak in favor of this proposal? Anyone at all? Is there anyone who wishes to speak in opposition? Anyone at all? No further comments from the Commission? This evening, in the absence of Comm. Kalita - Comm. Bengtson will be sitting in his place. I want that in the record before we close the public hearing. That's the only item on the public hearing for tonight and, therefore, we close the public hearing portion of our meeting. Thank you very much, Bob.

MR. COUGHLIN:

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Rogers
Transcribing Secretary

Ralph H. Shaw, II, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission