TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD, CT
TOWN PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY MARCH 26, 2026 – 7:00PM
ZOOM MEETING PLATFORM AND
IN- PERSON MEETING – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DRAFT

There was a meeting for the Town of Bloomfield's Town Plan & Zoning Commission held on March 26, 2026 at 7:00pm in a hybrid meeting style. The in-person location was Bloomfield Town Hall – Council Chambers, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT and the virtual location was via Zoom.

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Lester called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

2. **Roll Call**

Present were: *in-person:* Chair Byron Lester, Dwight Bolton; Kevin Gough, Renae James, Jennifer Marshall-Nealy; Stephen Millette, Roger O'Brien (Alternate) Absent were: Eunice Medwinter (Alternate); Leon Peters

A quorum was established with 6 regular members, and 1 alternate member present. Chairman Lester seated Commissioner O'Brien as a voting member.

Also present were Jonathan Colman, Director of Building and Land Use; Lynda Laureano, Assistant Director of Building and Land Use; Nicholas Gabuzda, Environmental Planner; Alexander Samalot, Zoning Enforcement Officer (via Zoom); and Rebecca Jones, Recording Secretary.

1. **Approval of Minutes**
   a. **February 19, 2026**

Commissioner O'Brien requested more detail be added to the discussion of the Plan and Conservation and Development.

Motion to table the approval of the February 19, 2026 meeting minutes made by Commissioner Gough; seconded by Commissioner Millette and approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

   b. **February 26, 2026**

Motion to approve the February 26, 2026 meeting minutes as amended made by Commissioner Gough; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and approved by a 6-0-1 vote. Commissioner Bolton abstained due to absence.

New Business

a. TPZ Zoning/Site Plan Signoff Authorization to Director and Assistant Director of Building and Land Use

This was placed on the agenda at the suggestion of Commissioner O'Brien. Should the Commission decide to modify the regulations, site plans that are received with an allowed use and no change to the zoning footprint would be approved via administrative approval. Mr. Colman and Ms. Laureano currently have the authority to sign off on certain zoning permits, but the regulations need updating to explicitly clarify this authority. The Commission agreed to affirm staff's current ability to sign off on administrative zoning permits, with plans to review and amend regulations after completing the

POCD and State Housing Act requirements. Commissioner O'Brien offered to draft language to address this issue for review at the next meeting.

Old Business

a. **Proposed Zoning Regulations Text Amendments Continued Discussion and Review**

i. Proposed New Sections for Solar Regulations

Mr. Nicholas Gabuzda, Environmental Planner, was present for discussion. He prepared a presentation summarizing revisions made to the proposed solar regulations since the last meeting and shared additional information about solar logistics. He explained different types of solar installations, including roof-mounted, ground-mounted, and carport systems, and discussed energy delivery options through Eversource. The presentation included a hosting capacity map showing areas in Bloomfield suitable for larger solar developments, particularly in the eastern part of town. Key additions to the draft regulations included a purpose section, restrictions on large-scale systems to I-1 and I-2 industrial zones, and new considerations for special permits based on state policy. The regulations also address maintenance plans, decommissioning, and changes in ownership of solar properties.

Commissioner Gough raised questions about ground-mounted solar canopies and balcony solar systems. He also asked if emerging solar technology such as balcony solar would be addressed in the initial regulations or addressed in future amendments. He also discussed potential modifications to allow solar canopies in the Bloomfield Center District. The Commission thanked Mr. Gabuzda for a thorough presentation.

Motion to hold a public hearing regarding the proposed Solar Regulations made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Bolton and approved by a 7-0-0 vote.

ii. Proposed Text Amendments to Sections 2.2 and 7.16 related to Cannabis Establishments

Mr. Alex Samalot, Zoning Enforcement Officer, was present for discussion. Mr. Colman stated that the cannabis moratorium ends soon and encouraged the Commission to move this to a public hearing. He presented revised buffering sections and visual maps showing 500-foot and 1,500-foot buffer zones around existing facilities. Commissioner Gough raised concerns about Section 716.4A and B, noting an omission in the 500-foot radius requirements which should include cannabis retail facilities alongside other sensitive uses, like daycares and schools. Commissioner O'Brien recommended adding language to address how the Commission established the idea of the 1,500-foot buffer. This should also include information from the existing and the proposed Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Samalot indicated that revisions could be made based on feedback received and that the requested changes were reasonable to complete within a short timeframe.

Additional discussion ensued regarding whether the Commission should cap the number of facilities, with a proposed limit of three total establishments. Commissioner James raised concerns about

whether the combined restrictions would limit viable locations within Bloomfield. Commissioner Millette proposed that a draft be prepared that included both the 500-foot and 1,000-foot buffers, capping the total establishments at three and adding the most restrictive language. He further noted that retail establishments should be allowed by special permit only. Chair Lester agreed to the proposal. Commissioner O'Brien stated that he would like to see a new draft before the public hearing, while Commissioner Gough recommended holding the public hearing given the impending deadline for the moratorium.

Motion to hold a public hearing related to the proposed Cannabis Text amendments made by Commissioner Bolton; seconded by Commissioner Millette.
Commissioner Gough confirmed that a revised draft based on Commissioner Millette's comments would be available for review by both the Commission and the public before the public hearing. Commissioner O'Brien reminded Mr. Samalot to include language justifying each change.
The motion was approved by a 6-0-1 vote. Commissioner O'Brien voted against the motion.

iii. Proposed Text Amendments to Sections 5.5.D and 5.5.H related to Planned Elderly District (PEC)

Mr. Colman explained that the amendments were intended to clarify existing language and align them with the purpose of the regulation based on comments made by the Commission last year. Commissioner Gough questioned whether it was appropriate to consider the amendments while the Town is still involved in litigation related to the Duncaster development. Mr. Colman noted that the Town Attorney had advised that moving forward with these text amendments would be appropriate. The commissioners discussed the Judge's opinion in the Duncaster case. Commissioner Gough read an excerpt of the opinion and affirmed his position to postpone any formal discussion on this matter.

The discussion then shifted to the existing age restrictions requiring at least one resident to be 62 years old or older and all other occupants to be at least 50 years old. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy asked whether a younger spouse or other occupant would be disqualified under the current regulations, and it was confirmed that such individuals would not meet the existing requirements. Mr. Colman noted that this provision has been part of the ordinance since its inception and has not been modified. Commissioner O'Brien stated that it can be changed going forward.

Commissioner Marshall-Nealy expressed concern that the current age restriction is overly limiting and does not reflect common living arrangements, including younger spouses, caregivers, or grandchildren residing with elderly occupants. Commissioners discussed the need for flexibility to accommodate these situations, particularly in cases involving caregiving or changing life circumstances. Commissioner O'Brien proposed removing language regarding the age restriction for all occupants.

Additional discussion addressed the purpose of the PEC district as a life care community designed to accommodate residents as their needs evolve over time. Commissioner James recommended that the Commission consider broader zoning consistency, including how residential types are defined and

whether terms such as "multi-family" are being applied consistently across different zoning districts. Commissioner Milette stated that it is important that regulatory language aligns with the intended character and function of these developments.

It was moved by Commissioner O'Brien and seconded by Commissioner Millette to hold a public hearing related to the proposed text amendments to Sections 5.5.D and 5.5.H related to Planned Elderly District (PEC) and make the following change to Section 3A:
'Residences for occupants over age 62.'

Commissioner James asked if there was a reason that staff would like to move forward, given Commissioner concerns regarding Duncaster litigation. Mr. Colman stated that the Land Use Department is aiming to clean up the regulations and this has been an outstanding item for a considerable amount of time. Commissioner O'Brien stated that he sees no problem with the language change. Commissioner Millette asked how potential changes could apply to future or resubmitted applications related to Duncaster. Mr. Colman stated that applicability would depend on whether an application is considered a continuation of a prior submission or a new application under current regulations. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy reviewed the language in Section 3A.

A friendly amendment was made by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and seconded by Commissioner Bolton to make the following changes to Section 3A:
'Residences for occupants where at least one person is over age 62. Some age considerations may apply at the time of purchase.'
The friendly amendment was accepted and the original motion with the amendment was approved by a 7-0-0 vote.

<u>Adjournment</u>
Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Beaky and was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52pm.

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