Minutes not yet approved
Approval and any edits to be made in succeeding minutes

Bloomfield Town Plan & Zoning Commission – August 28, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

There was a meeting for the Town of Bloomfield's Town Plan & Zoning Commission held on August 27, 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 7:02pm.

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

A quorum was established with 6 regular members, and 2 alternate members present. Chair Lester seated Commissioner Medwinter 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; and Rebecca Jones, Recording Secretary.

3. **Approval of Minutes**
   a. **July 23, 2026**

It was moved by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy approve the July 23, 2026 Regular Meeting minutes.

Commissioner O'Brien stated that the minutes do not accurately reflect the discussion as it relates to 95 Granby Street. He was directed to send his edits to the Recording Secretary. Commissioner Gough noted a grammatical change from 'w' to 'sq. ft.' on Page 2.

It was moved by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and seconded by Commissioner James to table the approval of the July 23, 2026 Regular Meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

4. **Public Hearings**
   a. Continued: Special Permit and Site Plan Application - 92 Granby Street, I-1 Zone District– for a proposed gas station with a convenience store and a freestanding electronic gas price. Applicant: Nadeem Khalid, Property Owner: 86 Granby Street LLC

Commissioner James read the legal notice into the record. Mr. James DiMeo and Nadeem Khalid were present for discussion. Mr. Dimeo explained changes made to the application since the last meeting, which included plans to remove and replace screening trees, add snow stockpile areas, and address ADA requirements. The Town Engineer provided minor feedback on catch basins, sidewalks, and pipe sizing calculations that need to be incorporated into the Engineering report. Site plans and renderings were reviewed. Mr. Colman read excerpts from the staff report. He noted that his office did not receive design and elevations until this meeting. Signage approval will be done after this approval. Mr. Colman also reviewed the proposed Conditions of Approval.

Questions from the Public
There were no questions from the public.

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Questions from the Commission
Commissioner Millette confirmed that setback variances had been granted for the site and asked about the canopy height. Commissioner Peters expressed concern about missing information, including canopy details and building elevations, which Mr. Dimeo maintained had been submitted. Commissioner O'Brien noted that the architectural drawings lacked sufficient detail, scales, and specifications. He also raised unresolved questions from prior meetings regarding the parking layout and tree-removal plan.

Commissioner O'Brien confirmed that the photometric plan had been revised. Mr. Dimeo explained that lighting levels were adjusted in response to prior concerns. Although some areas would be slightly brighter, the revised plan would provide adequate illumination, prevent light trespass, and account for the adjacent wetlands. Commissioner James requested additional details on the planting plan. Seventeen new arborvitaes are proposed for screening, and she asked whether existing mature trees could be preserved and how the plan might affect neighboring properties. She also asked about the location of the free-air station, which was not shown on the plans. Mr. Khalid confirmed that it would be installed as required by Connecticut law. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy asked clarifying questions about the electric-vehicle charging stations.

Commissioner Gough asked about the building materials, canopy details, and signage. He clarified that the tree identified in the staff report as a Japanese maple is actually a crimson maple. Commissioner Gough also emphasized preserving the site's healthy existing trees rather than replacing them with arborvitaes. At Chair Lester's request, Ms. Laureano read additional comments submitted by the Town Engineer on August 25, 2026. Chair Lester questioned whether the application was ready for a vote while items remained outstanding. The Commission confirmed that the Fire Marshal had not yet commented, although sign-off would be required as a condition of approval.

Comments from the Public
None.

Comments from the Commission
Commissioner Medwinter stated that the Fire Marshal sign-off can be included as Condition of Approval and is comfortable voting on this application. Commissioner James recommended a condition be added prioritizing the preservation of existing trees. She thanked Mr. Khalid for bringing business to Bloomfield. Commissioner O'Brien made comments related to the foot candles noting that it is less than the minimum. Commissioner Peters expressed concern regarding the lack of information and opined that the renovations seem much more significant than previously presented. At his request, Mr. Dimeo provided more information related to trash removal. Commissioner Millete stated that more detailed information is needed regarding the proposed canopy structure.

Mr. Dimeo shared final comments and confirmed that the applicant is comfortable with the proposed conditions. Mr. Colman recommended that a condition be added stating that any rooftop mechanicals are to be properly screened. He also recommended that the Commission review renderings and architectural plans of the canopy when the applicant returns for the sign permit.

It was moved by Commissioner Gough and seconded by Commissioner James to close the public hearing. The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

It was moved by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Millette to approve the special permit and site plan application for 92 Granby Street subject to the following conditions as noted in the updated Staff Memorandum Addendum No. 1 dated August 27, 2026 with conditions as discussed by the Commission and Director Jonathan Colman at this meeting. Further discussion ensued. Commissioner Gough requested that a condition be added stating that the crimson maple tree shall be protected and the applicant will make every effort to keep the trees understanding there may be damage during construction. The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

b. Re-subdivision Application - 1151 Blue Hills Avenue, DDZ-II Zone – to allow a 40.49 acres parcel to be resubdivided into two (2) parcels. Applicant: Community Development Properties Bloomfield, Inc. Property Owner: First Baptist Church of Hartford.

Frank Vacca, David Markowitz, Susan O'Dell, Geoff Person, and LeRoy Bailey III were present on behalf of the applicant. Pastor Bailey explained that, through his work at First Cathedral, he frequently hears from residents about the urgent need for affordable in Bloomfield. Mr. Vacca requested that the presentations for the re-subdivision and the site plan be combined. Chair Lester noted that they are separate applications and require separate votes.

Mr. Vacca provided a brief overview of the existing site and noted that the project had received approval from the Bloomfield Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission earlier in the year. The applicant presented a map showing the proposed lot lines, wetlands boundaries, and other areas of interest. At the IWWC's recommendation, the applicant's team also prepared and presented a detailed existing conditions map to be reviewed at this meeting. Proposed erosion and sediment control measures include straw wattles, coconut coir logs, and inlet-protection sacks in the catch basins.

At this time, the Chair directed the Commission to focus and act on the re-subdivision application. Mr. Colman read excerpts from the staff memo and reviewed Conditions of Approval.

Questions from the Public
None.

Questions from the Commission
Commissioners Medwinter and Gough asked about the purpose of the re-subdivision and its effect on the DDZ-II zoning. Mr. Vacca explained that the zoning would continue to apply to the 25-acre parcel, which is planned for other uses, including church storage and an empowerment center. At Commissioner Marshall-Nealy's request, he also explained that newer biodegradable silt-fence alternatives may protect wetlands more effectively than traditional plastic fencing. Commissioner O'Brien confirmed that the map presented at the meeting, revised August 27, 2026, was the version before the Commission for action and recommended changing its title to "Re-Subdivision."

Comments from the Public
Stephanie Calhoun, 383 Park Avenue, asked how close the coconut coir logs will be to the wetlands. Mr. Vacca confirmed that they will be 18 to 20 feet from the wetlands.

Comments from the Commission
Commissioner Medwinter thanked the applicant for increasing Bloomfield's tax base.

It was moved by Commissioners James and seconded by Commissioner Gough to close the public hearing. The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

It was moved by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy to approve the re-subdivision application for 1151 Blue Hills Avenue, DDZ-II Zone – to allow a 40.49 acres parcel to be re-subdivided into two (2) parcels subject to the following conditions as noted in the staff report dated August 27, 2026 as discussed at this meeting. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Medwinter confirmed that the comments made by Commissioner O'Brien regarding map date clarifications are included in this approval. The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

c. **Site Plan Application** – 1151 Blue Hills Avenue, DDZ-II Zone – to allow a proposed affordable housing multi-family development (Phase 1) composed of two (2) five-story apartment buildings. Applicant: Community Development Properties Bloomfield, Inc. Property Owner: First Baptist Church of Hartford

Commissioner James read the legal notice into the record. Frank Vacca, David Markowitz, Susan O'Dell, Geoff Person, and LeRoy Bailey were present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Colman summarized the staff report, noting that revised plans were submitted on the day of the meeting after the staff memorandum was prepared. He reviewed the Conditions of Approval and stated that the remaining items could be addressed administratively following approval.

Mr. Vacca presented updated plans for a 92-unit development comprising two four-story buildings with a variety of unit types. Proposed amenities include a stone-dust walking path, electric-vehicle charging infrastructure, a playground, a patio, and a loading and drop-off area at the front of the building. The development will use Low Impact Development stormwater-management measures, including bioretention areas and Rain Guardian Turret systems, to meet the updated 2024 stormwater-quality requirements.

Mr. Vacca presented the project's stormwater management system, architectural features, landscaping, lighting, and parking plans. The stormwater design remains under review with the Town Engineer, and the lighting plan complies with dark-sky standards. The applicant requested that sidewalk installation be deferred to Phase II because the Phase I parcel already has a sidewalk and the delay would allow coordination with grant funding. The applicant also requested a modification to reduce the church's overall parking requirement, noting that 40 temporary spaces could be provided on the field if needed.

Architect Susan O'Dell reviewed the architectural plans. Both buildings will be approximately 50 feet tall, with 48 units in Building A and 44 units in Building B. Each building will include a laundry room, trash-collection rooms on every floor, and bicycle storage. The furnaces and heat pumps will meet Energy Star standards. Ms. O'Dell also described the building security measures and noted that the façades will feature brick and fiber-cement panels with precast concrete trim.

Geoffrey Person of Grow America discussed the application's affordable housing component. The development will serve 92 households with annual incomes ranging from $48,000 to $82,000, consistent with HUD's annually published income schedules. All units will be income-restricted to households earning 50% to 70% of the Area Median Income. A Land Use Restriction Agreement will preserve affordability for at least 40 years. The proposed monthly rent structure was also presented.

Questions from the Public
None.

Questions from the Commission
Commissioner Medwinter questioned whether the proposed rents were truly affordable, noting that they appeared closer to market rates, and asked about event parking arrangements. Commissioner Gough asked about auxiliary parking and the traffic impact analysis. Mr. Vacca stated that the analysis projected fewer than 100 trips per hour, so no additional traffic study would be required beyond administrative approval by the Office of State Traffic Administration. He also explained that the sidewalk deferral was primarily due to the estimated cost of relocating the existing sidewalk into the state right-of-way. Commissioner Gough also asked about amenities, particularly the playground, and was advised that features could be added or modified as future demographic needs change. Solar panels were deemed infeasible because of limited roof space and funding requirements. Commissioner Marshall-Nealy confirmed that no artificial turf is currently proposed for the fields and asked about accessibility for residents with disabilities. Commissioner James asked about snow storage and confirmed that a stone walking path would extend throughout the property. Commissioner O'Brien asked how the proposal differed from the Master Plan, confirmed that rooftop equipment would be screened, and requested further justification for the sidewalk deferral. Commissioner Peters asked about the parking-lot median and confirmed that rubber speed bumps may be installed in future phases.

Comments from the Public
None.

Comments from the Commission
Commissioners thanked the applicant for its responsiveness throughout the review process. Commissioner O'Brien discussed Fire Marshal approval and the site's turning radius. Commissioner James thanked the applicant for bringing affordable housing to Bloomfield, while Commissioner Marshall-Nealy reiterated her accessibility concerns. Commissioner Gough questioned the sidewalk deferral given the proposed interval between phases. Chair Lester thanked the applicant team. Mr. Vacca confirmed that the Fire Marshal had provided comments and that the applicant had addressed them.

It was moved by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and seconded by Commissioner James to close the public hearing. The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

It was moved by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy to approve the Site Plan Application for 1151 Blue Hills Avenue, DDZ-II Zone - to allow a proposed affordable housing multi-family development (Phase 1) composed of two (2) four-story apartment buildings with a total of 92 affordable housing units subject to the following conditions as listed in the staff report dated August 27, 2026. Discussion ensued. Mr. Colman requested that the Commission make an amendment to the motion to address the sidewalk deferral. At Commissioner Gough's request, Mr. Colman recommended deferral to Phase III. **Commissioner Gough made an amendment to the motion to defer the sidewalks to Phase III and change Section VIII in the application comments to indicate that this is a 100% affordable housing project. The amendment to the motion was accepted by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy. The motion with the amendment was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.**

5. **New Business**
    a. **Site Plan Review**
        i. **46 and 91 Rockwell Avenue** (AKA Rockwell Park – Major Park Improvements); Applicant and Owner: Town of Bloomfield

Mr. David Melesko was present on behalf of the Town of Bloomfield, along with Ryan Deane and Ryan Scrittorale, Engineers who were present via Zoom. The project includes Phase 1 improvements funded by a $4 million State of Connecticut Community Investment Fund grant, featuring new basketball courts, community garden, restrooms, parking, and a perimeter trail connecting to the East Coast Greenway. The Commission discussed approval requirements. Commissioner Gough raised questions about what specific elements were being approved and whether synthetic turf references should be removed from the application materials. Staff recommended approval of Phase 1 in its entirety and Phase 2 conceptually, while noting that synthetic turf decisions for Phase 2 should be deferred pending further discussion amongst other Town Boards. A positive referral must also be put forth to the Town Council in accordance with Connecticut General Statute 8-24. It was confirmed that one rendering was AI-generated and that the additional buildings shown will not be constructed. Commissioner Gough noted that this is one of Mayor Wong's accomplishments. Chair Lester thanked Mr. Melesko for his work with the Town of Bloomfield.

It was moved by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Gough to approve the application for Rockwell Park renovations at 46 and 91 Rockwell Avenue as depicted on the plan set entitled Rockwell Park Renovation prepared by Benesch dated March 12, 2026 and revised July 10, 2026; subject to the following conditions as noted in the staff report prepared for the August 27, 2026 meeting. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Gough proposed a friendly amendment clarifying that Phase I is being approved at this meeting along with the Master Plan as presented with the materials of the future athletic field to be stripped out of any of the submitted drawings and a positive 8-24 referral be made to the Town Council. The friendly amendment was accepted. Commissioner O'Brien stated that the Commission should be approving the site plan not master plan. Commissioner Gough revised his friendly amendment to the following: accept the site plan without the materials for the fields and make a positive 8-24 referral to the Town Council. The revised friendly amendment was accepted by Commissioners James. The motion with the revised amendment was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

ii. **335 Cottage Grove Road** (AKA Copaco Center) – Façade Improvements part of a Multiphase Major Improvements

Mr. Dustin Hicks was present on behalf of the applicant. Façade improvements are proposed on two buildings with other plans including removing outdated signage, and creating new storefront systems. Proposed façade renderings were shared. Mr. Colman shared staff comments, which were positive. Commissioner Millette confirmed where new storefront systems will be installed. Commissioner Peters requested more information regarding heights and other measurements. Commissioner O'Brien asked if the applicant had considered brick as a façade as opposed to trivet. He confirmed with Ms. Laureano that signage is not part of this approval. Commissioner James confirmed that new trash cans and benches will be installed. Landscaping plans will be included in a future phase. Commissioner Gough confirmed that there was authorization from the Town Manager to begin non-discretionary improvements as he has seen that some work has already begun.

Bonnie Bercowetz, 492 Park Avenue, is the Chair of the Economic Development Commission and one of the last original owners of the Copaco Shopping Center. She spoke in support of this application. Commissioners thanked Mr. Hicks for this project and expressed excitement related to the revitalization of the shopping center.

It was moved by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy to approve the site plan application for 335 Cottage Grove Rd (A.K.A. Copaco Center) – Façade Improvements as part of a Multi-phased Major Improvements. The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0-0 vote.

b. Amendment to Site Plan Approval to request a deferral of sidewalk installation at 529 Cottage Grove Road. Applicant: Mark D'Adabbo Property Owner: Estero Holding Company LLC

James Cassidy, Engineer was present along with the applicant, Mark D'Addabbo. The development was approved in July 2025 for a new 15,349 sq ft shopping center. The applicant is requesting a sidewalk deferral due to uncertainty about future sidewalk specifications and potential conflicts with the planned East Coast Greenway. Access ramps are being installed by the State of Connecticut on an adjacent street. Mr. Cassidy has been in contact with former Town Engineer, Rob Trottier, and the State Department of Transportation and is now seeking guidance from the Commission as to how best to proceed. Mr. Cassidy shared a proposed declaration to be put on the Land Records agreeing to the sidewalk installation in the future. Mr. Colman shared staff comments. He recommended deferring the sidewalk installation until the East Coast Greenway is developed further. Commissioner O'Brien stated that he is comfortable with a two-year deferral. Commissioner James expressed safety concerns and the need for immediate pedestrian access along Cottage Grove Road, given the bus stop nearby.

It was moved by Commissioner James and seconded by Commissioner Gough to approve the amendment to the site plan approval to request a deferral of sidewalk installation at 529 Cottage Grove Road for two years. The motion failed by a 3-4-0 vote. YES: K. Gough; E. Medwinter; S. Millette NO: R. James; B. Lester; J. Marshall-Nealy; L. Peters

c. Draft Proposed Text Amendments to the I-1 and I-2 Industrial Districts distributed for discussion and future consideration. Applicant: Bloomfield Town Plan and Zoning Commission

The Commission briefly discussed text amendments regarding data centers, requesting staff to draft language prohibiting them outright. A public hearing is required for all text amendments and will be scheduled for a future meeting.

Commissioner Medwinter left the meeting at 12:28am.

6. Old **Business**
   - **a.** POCD Future Land Use Map
   - **b.** POCD Draft Plan

Chair Lester noted that staff distributed draft POCD copies for review. He requested that the Commission review this document before it is discussed at a special meeting to be held within the next month.

7. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner James; seconded by Commissioner Marshall-Nealy and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:30am.

The next regular meeting is October 22, 2026.