

**TOWN OF KENT**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

41 Kent Green Boulevard  
P.O. Box 678  
Kent, CT 06757  
Phone (860) 927-4625 Fax (860) 927-4541

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
KENT TOWN CLERK  
2017 SEP 18 P 12:39  
BY *D. Gray*  
TOWN CLERK

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2017 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

The Town of Kent Planning and Zoning Commission held a regular meeting on Thursday, September 14, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Kent Town Hall.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL AND APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES IF REQUIRED**

Commissioners Present: John Johnson, Chairman; Alice Hicks, Adam Manes, Anne McAndrew, Marc Weingarten, Wes Wyrick, Karen Casey, Darrell Cherniske, Matt Winter

Staff Present: Donna Hayes, Land Use Administrator

*Mr. Manes moved to add to the agenda item 6.B.3. Temporary Health Care Structures - discussion on whether to opt out or not. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Manes moved to move to the top of the agenda items 6.A.1, 6.A.2 and 6.A.3. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

**3. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**3.A. Regular Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2017.**

The word "to" was added after "prior" in the 3rd paragraph.

*Mr. Manes moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2017 as corrected. Mr. Wyrick seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

**3.B. Special Meeting Minutes of August 29, 2017.**

*Mr. Manes moved to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of August 29, 2017 as written. Mr. Wyrick seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

**6.A. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Possibility of closure, discussion and decision on the following):**

---

TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Commission at the subsequent meeting.  
Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

- 6.A.1.** Application #'s 64-17SP and 65-17C, Dolores Schiesel for Stephen M. Wolf, 34 Macedonia Brook Road, conversion of existing, approved guest house to accessory dwelling unit, Map 3 Block 9 Lot 5.

Chairman Johnson opened this public hearing at 7:05 pm and read the legal notice for the record.

Dolores Schiesel came forward and reviewed the plan to add a kitchen to this existing structure. There will be no changes to the exterior of the building. This lot is a 16.68 parcel. Donna Hayes reported that this was an approved structure that has been converted. The plan is approved by Torrington Area Health. Ms. Schiesel requested that all the site plan waivers be granted.

*Mr. Manes made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:05 pm for Application #'s 64-17SP and 65-17C, Dolores Schiesel for Stephen M. Wolf, 34 Macedonia Brook Road, conversion of existing, approved guest house to accessory dwelling unit, Map 3 Block 9 Lot 5. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Manes made a motion to accept all the waivers of 4.3 for Application #'s 64-17SP and 65-17C, Dolores Schiesel for Stephen M. Wolf, 34 Macedonia Brook Road, conversion of existing, approved guest house to accessory dwelling unit, Map 3 Block 9 Lot 5. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Manes made a motion to approve Application #'s 64-17SP and 65-17C, Dolores Schiesel for Stephen M. Wolf, 34 Macedonia Brook Road, conversion of existing, approved guest house to accessory dwelling unit, Map 3 Block 9 Lot 5. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

- 6.A.2.** Application #'s 68-17SP and 69-17C, Vin Roberti for High Watch Recovery Center, 62 Carter Road, installation of temporary office trailer, Map 14 Block 22 Lot 7.

Chairman Johnson opened this public hearing at 7:10 pm and read the legal notice for the record.

Vin Roberti came forward and reviewed a site plan for the installation of a temporary office trailer. The trailer is to be tied into sewer. They expect to have the trailer in place for 24 months. One exterior light will be utilized. The trailer will sit partially on the blacktop. Donna Hayes reported that this has been approved by Torrington Health Department and read the details of that approval. Mr. Roberti reported that currently they are re-flooring the offices and this will free up space to assist in this process. Four existing employees will be moved to this structure.

The Commission noted that a stipulation of approval should be that it should be removed within 24 months.

*Mr. Manes made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:16 pm for Application #'s 68-17SP and 69-17C, Vin Roberti for High Watch Recovery Center, 62 Carter Road, installation of temporary office trailer, Map 14 Block 22 Lot 7. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Manes made a motion to approve Application #'s 68-17SP and 69-17C, Vin Roberti for High Watch Recovery Center, 62 Carter Road, installation of temporary office trailer, Map 14 Block 22 Lot 7 with the stipulation that the trailer be removed within 24 months of its installation. Mr. Weingarten seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

- 6.A.3.** Application #'s 70-17SP and 71-17C, Barbara A. Brown, 530 Skiff Mountain Road, construction of accessory dwelling unit, Map 7 Block 18 Lot 6.

Chairman Johnson opened this public hearing at 7:17 pm and read the legal notice for the record.

---

TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Commission at the subsequent meeting. Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

There was no one present to represent this application. Donna Hayes reported that Ms. Brown is currently working on obtaining an easement from the neighbor for the proposed driveway and asked that this matter be tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Manes asked that the main residence be shown on the map for the next meeting.

*Mr. Wyrick made a motion to continue the public hearing at 7:21 pm for Application #'s 70-17SP and 71-17C, Barbara A. Brown, 530 Skiff Mountain Road, construction of accessory dwelling unit, Map 7 Block 18 Lot 6. Mr. Weingarten seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

**4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS (ORAL): None**

**5. OLD BUSINESS:**

**5.A. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Possibility of closure, discussion and decision on the following):**

- 5.A.1.** Application #'s 45-17SP and 46-17C, Birch Hill Recovery Center, LLC for Kent Realty, LLC., 46 Maple Street, operation of drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, Map 4 Block 12 Lot 6. (7-13-17 to 8-10-17)

Chairman Johnson reported that Donna Hayes found a petition that was posted on [change.org](http://change.org) with the use of her staff report letterhead; thereby, giving the illusion that the Town of Kent posted this petition. The Town Attorney and State Trooper were contacted regarding this matter and [change.org](http://change.org) removed this petition. It was noted that the unauthorized use of town letterhead is a Class C Felony - Impersonation of a Town Official.

Chairman Johnson re-opened this public hearing at 7:24 pm.

The correspondence from the following public members regarding this matter were read for the record:  
(see attached)

- Angela Yagid- Mr. Johnson responded to Ms. Yagid's comments and noted that he does not feel the Commission has been disrespectful in conducting this meeting. He thanked Ms. Yagid for taking the time to put her concerns in writing.
- Austi Brown
- Richard Lindsey
- Denise and Stephen Morocco

Chairman Johnson reminded the Commission that they are considering this application under the special permit section of the regulations. It is not the purview of this Commission to review business plans or personal history of the people involved. The Commission should be looking at the use and its possible impact on the town.

Denise Morocco questioned who in town is responsible for assessing the risk to the townspeople with respect to businesses. Chairman Johnson explained that the assessment is done by this Commission at the end of this process.

Ari Raskas came forward and reported that a full employee breakdown has been submitted as well as job descriptions and details regarding the types of security personnel recommended. Additionally, they have met with five members of Kent Fire and Ambulance to discuss various topics to address their concerns. He noted that the

---

TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Commission at the subsequent meeting.  
Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

CT State Medical Examiners predict 1078 overdoses in CT in 2017. He explained that there could be 5 to 10 more of like treatment facilities and still not have enough to properly address this epidemic.

Keith Fowler came forward and reviewed the staffing plan with the Commission. Mr. Johnson questioned the State's requirement with regard to staffing. Mr. Raskas reported that a 1 to 4 ratio is required by the State for detox and 1 to 8 for inpatients. Their proposed staffing plan exceeds the State's requirements.

Mr. Weingarten asked whether Birch Hill is committed to following the recommendations regarding the security professionals. Mr. Raskas advised that they have committed to two security personnel per shift; however, have not fully assessed the recommendations.

Ms. Casey questioned the specifics regarding physicians staffed. Mr. Fowler advised that physicians would be on call in rotation 24/7. Pharmacy will be outsourced. Ms. Casey questioned the discharge plan. Mr. Fowler reported that they have spent a lot of time throughout the State of CT creating discharge support. The plan will be developed for each patient on a case by case basis. It was noted that there are sober living homes all over CT, it is not Birch Hill's intention to open sober living homes. Mr. Fowler explained that their intention is to have multiple MOUs with sober homes. It is their intention to return patients to their community of origin with strong discharge plans.

Mr. Manes asked for clarification regarding the statement that two guards would be available at all times. This does not supply enough coverage with only 6 on staff. Mr. Fowler clarified that there would be part time coverage as well for overlapping.

Chairman Johnson discussed parking. Mr. Raskas confirmed there would be a maximum of 55 employees.

Chairman Johnson looked for a representative from the Kent Emergency Services in audience. No one came forward.

Bruce Whipple came forward and questioned whether this is a start-up business and if Mr. Raskas would be a passive investor. Chairman Johnson reiterated that this is about the use and not the ownership, which is a variable that changes. Mr. Whipple submitted materials for the Commission's consideration.

Matt Starr came forward with concerns with the actions of High Watch regarding what they have done to prevent competition in town. Their actions have been completely inappropriate. He feels that the commission should consider the information that High Watch has provided as inappropriate. He reported that the Fire Department responds to 3 to 4 calls a night for High Watch. An advantage to Birch Hill is that they will pay taxes to help support emergency services.

Patricia Oris discussed what she found as she researched the affect these types of facilities have upon a town. She found potential effect on EMS, property values, as well as sober living homes and associated problems that manifest within the communities. Ms. Oris noted that the property value survey came from MLS.

Attorney Joe Williams representing High Watch came forward. He reminded the group that this is a new use for the property. The prior use was terminated 2 years ago. There are two well established treatment centers in the area. It is Birch Hill's burden to demonstrate that they satisfied all the standards. Much of the information provided by Birch Hill is predictive and there have been many contradictions. Attorney Williams distributed a Facility Comparison Fact Sheet.

Attorney Williams stated that he believes the application is not in compliance with the following sections:

- 4.8.3 - Adequacy of Access to EMS

---

TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Commission at the subsequent meeting.  
Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

- 4.8.4 Adequacy of Sewer or Water Capacity
- 4.8.8 Traffic
- Subsection D. Parking

There has been no demonstration of compliance with site plan standards; therefore, the application must be denied. Additionally, requirements have not been met with regard to the Special Permit standards. Attorney Williams reminded the Commission that a list of questions was submitted at the beginning of these hearings. Many of these questions have not been answered.

Chairman Johnson discussed that the Regulations state that the Commission “should” consider these standards and asked if Attorney Williams had a different understanding. Attorney Williams confirmed that he has the same understanding that the standards “should” be considered.

Barbara Carr came forward representing young parents in town. She noted concerns with the distance from a hospital, proximity to town, crime increase, the property value decrease, and this will be walking distance to many school and parks. She is not sure Kent needs this facility, but would be much more receptive to this proposal if it was outside town.

Janet Rivkin questioned to where pharmaceutical would be outsourced. She also questioned the removal of hazardous waste. Mr. Fowler advised that pharmacy services will go out to bid. They will use a laboratory for drug testing, and waste management will also be a service contract. Once discharged, Birch Hill will no longer be responsible for drug testing of a patient.

Peter Jensen questioned the certification of conditions being met over the course of the years. Chairman Johnson advised that at times the Commission requires a report, some conditions not being met become rather obvious. The Commission can revoke the permit if it is found the conditions are not being met.

Jackie Martin asked that if something happens, such as a drop in real estate, will the townspeople just be stuck with this. Chairman Johnson advised that once a special permit is granted, the Commission cannot change conditions.

Wendy Murphy asked how drug dealers would be vetted from entering town on visitation days. Mr. Raskas reminded that group that they discussed extensively the screening of visitors on record at the previous meeting.

Chairman Johnson posed questions to the attorneys present regarding their opinions of the Commission’s latitude regarding special permit considerations. Attorney Fisher advised that special permits require discretion. The standards for approval are set forth under 4.15.3. He referred to Section 6.2.2 and that this use fits within this description. The most important of the special standards is the location consideration. These people are not criminals or court referrals. Attorney Williams advised that the Commission has to determine if criteria for decision has been satisfied.

Linda Palmer noted concerns about security. She told of her experience about working at Danbury hospital with one dangerous detox patient.

Ms. Hicks spoke about the Certificate of Need and Birch Hill’s application for a Level 4. Mr. Fowler advised that as part of their Certificate of Need they will report that they are seeking Level 4 licensing.

Ms. McAndrew reported that she spoke with four recovering drug addicts and asked them about their thoughts on the location. They felt it was not a good location. It is too accessible to everything for the wellbeing of the patient.

---

TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Commission at the subsequent meeting.  
Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.



Mr. Fowler noted that there are great detox facilities in inner cities. Regardless of whether a facility is in an urban or rural setting, it is about the quality of the program.

Lynn Worthington questioned the regulations regarding sober homes. Donna Hayes advised that sober homes are protected under the Fair Housing and Disability Act. Zoning cannot regulate sober homes. Ms. Worthington asked if the option of paid emergency services would impact Zoning's decision. Mr. Johnson advised that emergency services does have impact on Zoning's consideration.

Mr. Winter questioned whether someone in need of detox could be considered of capacity to voluntarily admit themselves to a facility. Mr. Fowler advised that the law would consider them of capacity to do so. Mr. Raskas clarified that they can admit someone intoxicated over legal limits if they are running a Level 4 facility.

Denise Morocco asked for confirmation that the public can submit nothing after the public hearing closed. This was confirmed to be correct.

Jackie Martin asked what could be done to extend the public hearing to further review the research submitted. Chairman Johnson explained that State Law prescribes certain time limits. It would be up to the applicant to grant an extension.

Jane Zatlin asked that the Commission consider the location and the fact that Kent does not have the infrastructure to support such a facility. This decision impacts the townspeople of Kent. She is upset by the kinds of answers that have been given by Birch Hill.

It was noted that Donna Hayes reached out to the Kent Fire/Ambulance Services via e-mail regarding pending questions; however, they have not responded.

Mr. Wyrick questioned whether parking information is available. Donna Hayes reported that she walked the site and observed room for parking expansion if needed. She was advised that the sewer had been over engineered and can get this in writing from the current Sewer Commission for the record. It was noted that this applicant will have to get approval from the Sewer Commission and this can be a condition of Zoning's approval.

Mr. Cherniske asked for specifics regarding security so the Commission could condition accordingly. Mr. Weingarten suggested that the specifics of the recommended security become a condition of approval.

The group discussed the lack of response from the Fire Department to certain questions and the results of the Fire Department's meeting with Birch Hill. It was questioned whether it can be assumed that they are satisfied.

Maryann VanValkenberg shared that she lost a family member to drug abuse and hopes, if granted, Birch Hill will do everything they say they will do.

Denise Morocco implored the Commission to take a hard look at the data. Birch Hill has only offered confusing and contradicting data.

Patricia Oris advised that legal recourse to correct errors is limited. It is very difficult to manage conditions of an approval. She discussed the decrease in tax rolls as a result of this approval with regard to the decrease in property value.

Eric Epstein noted that the data the Fire Department submitted at the last meeting should be still be considered.

---

TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Commission at the subsequent meeting.  
Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

Jean Spec, a member of Fire Department, agreed that the data provided regarding call volume and how taxing such a facility becomes on the volunteers should be considered. She questioned whether the applicant would apply for supplemental first response. Keith Fowler reported that they would happy to apply for supplemental first response. Additionally, Ari Raskas stated they will train a minimum of two staff members to be EMTs to be available 24/7.

Ari Raskas stated that Birch Hill is willing to accept the job descriptions submitted as part of their application. He stated that 2 security personnel, as per job descriptions, submitted will be on site at all times and can be a condition of approval.

Paul Szymanski reviewed parking availability and referred to his letter submitted at the last meeting. There will be 110 spaces, he found no signs of erosion, sewer capacity to be sufficient, and demonstrated that site lines accommodate significantly greater than the posted speed limit. He submitted a request for a waiver of requirement 4.3, although, he has technically provided over 75% of that information. Everything stated on the record regarding the site plan will stand.

Eric Epstein stated that it is great that Birch Hill wants to put EMTs on staff; however, this will not help elevate the call volume for the ambulance.

*Mr. Manes made a motion to close the public hearing at 10:07 pm for Application #'s 45-17SP and 46-17C, Birch Hill Recovery Center, LLC for Kent Realty, LLC., 46 Maple Street, operation of drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, Map 4 Block 12 Lot 6. Mr. Cherniske seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Manes made a motion to table deliberations until next regularly scheduled meeting for Application #'s 45-17SP and 46-17C, Birch Hill Recovery Center, LLC for Kent Realty, LLC., 46 Maple Street, operation of drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, Map 4 Block 12 Lot 6. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

## **5.B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION**

**5.B.1.** Rewrite of Zoning Regulations: No action taken.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **6.B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION**

**6.B.1.** Application #74-17C, Hiram Williams for Kent Center, LLC, 10 North Main Street, alterations to existing building and change of use from residential/commercial to commercial, Map 19 Block 42 Lot 29.

Wes Wyrick and Darrell Cherniske recused themselves from this matter and left the meeting. Marc Weingarten and Anne McAndrews were seated.

William Manasse and Scot Samuelson presented the application and explained that this is a preexisting nonconforming building. The upper level is being eliminated to create a cathedral ceiling. The front porch line is being reduced. The plans were reviewed with the Commission. Donna Hayes reported that this proposal has been reviewed and approved by ARB. The square footage will be reduced from 3639 to 3479. The reduction of the number of parking spaces required was noted. It was explained that the building will be dismantled and restored in conjunction with the Building Inspector's recommendation.

---

## **TOWN OF KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2017**

These are draft minutes. Corrections may be made by the Commission at the subsequent meeting. Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for possible corrections and approval of these minutes.

*Mr. Manes made a motion to accept waivers 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.9, 4.3.10, 4.3.11, 4.3.12, and 4.3.13 for Application #74-17C, Hiram Williams for Kent Center, LLC, 10 North Main Street, alterations to existing building and change of use from residential/commercial to commercial, Map 19 Block 42 Lot 29. Mr. Weingarten seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

Donna Hayes reported that the ARB recommended that John Baker review the plans as he is the only architect on the ARB and could not make it to that meeting. The applicants will return to the ARB for landscape, lighting and signage.

*Mr. Manes made a motion to approve Application #74-17C, Hiram Williams for Kent Center, LLC, 10 North Main Street, alterations to existing building and change of use from residential/commercial to commercial, Map 19 Block 42 Lot 29 with the understanding that any alteration that were not approved by the ARB be brought back before them. Mr. Winter seconded.*

*Discussion: Winter confirmed that the existing plantings will be protected.  
The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **6.B.2. Review of the Draft Regional Plan of Conservation & Development**

The Commission confirmed their review of the Regional PoCD and had no comments. It was determined to be a good blue print from which the towns in the NW Corner could build upon.

#### **6.B.3. Temporary Health Care Structures - discussion on whether to opt out or not.**

Donna Hayes reminded the group that effective October 1, 2017 a new law regarding Temporary Health Care Structures goes into effect. It is the Town Attorney's recommendation that the town opts out of this and recommended that the Commission schedule a public hearing to make their determination.

*Mr. Weingarten made a motion to set a public hearing for October 12, 2017 to discuss the possibility of opting out regarding Temporary Health Care Structures. Mr. Winter seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Weingarten asked for the reasoning to be available at the public hearing as to why it was recommended to opt out.

### **7. STAFF REPORT:**

No action taken.

The Commission requested that discussion regarding the Incentive Housing Zone be added to the agenda for next month.

### **8. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES:**

No action taken.



## **9. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**

### **9.A. Administrative Permits and Certificates of Compliance**

No information was submitted with the packet. Two month's worth of information will be supplied at the next meeting.

### **9.B. Monthly Financials – July, 2017 - reviewed**

No action taken.

### **9.C. Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies Quarter Newsletter, Summer 2017**

No action taken.

### **9.D Northwest Hills Council of Governments, Notice of Public Hearing, Tuesday, September 19, 2017, regarding draft Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.**

No action taken.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

*Ms. McAndrew moved to adjourn at 10:37 p.m. Mr. Weingarten seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Tai Kern

Tai Kern,  
Land Use Clerk

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
KENT TOWN CLERK  
2017 SEP 18 P 12:39  
BY *J. Brady*  
TOWN CLERK

received  
9/14/17  
DMH

To: Planning and Zoning

Subject: Concerns about potential Birch Hill Drug Rehabilitation

My husband and I have deep concerns about the prospect of Birch Hill coming to Kent.

Briefly:

- Their initial presentation was weak and not well organized.
- Their presentation threw into question the competency of the leaders of Birch Hill.
- Thus far they seem to lack a sensitivity or concern about their impact on the village of Kent.
- The principals have not offered a thorough business plan with research, statistics, documentation, impact on the community, etc.
- The location of the facility is walking distance to the Town.
- This proximity means that, unless there is a prison-like barrier around the facility, the residents will be coming in to town and potentially bringing more drugs into town. This is the nature of addiction.
- We have hundreds of young people from our schools that already struggle with availability of drugs. We know this from long experience of our daughters at Kent School. The proximity of the facility adds a risk to adding to the drug issues we are already dealing with in Kent.
- What is the impact on the Fire Dept? The traffic? The State Police?
- What is the impact on property values?
- Will there be 24 hr doctors on duty? Nurses? Security?
- Full resumes of the principals need to be available to everybody in Kent.
- A copy of their business plan needs to be available to everybody in Kent.

In short, thus far, the presentation by Birch Hill to our town is woefully inadequate and unprofessional. (My husband and I both have a background in mental health as well as business.)

Every citizen of Kent needs to be able to feel comfortable that these concerns and any others are fully answered and in a positive way or Birch Hill must not be allowed to inhabit a building simple because they meet bureaucratic bylaws. We do not have Dunkin' Donuts or McDonalds. Why is Birch Hill any different. If it is different, we need an explanation.

Denise and Stephen Morocco  
21 Muller Rd  
Kent, CT 06757

  
  
August 21,

Town of Kent

Planning and Zoning Commission  
2017

Subject – Birch Hill Recovery

As part of the rewrite of the regulations of the Planning and Zoning Commission a few years back I recall a recommendation that the Town have an Economic Development Commission.

None has been formed. I think the rationale was that since the local towns had received a grant for Economic Development to be assisted in each of the towns, a separate commission wasn't necessary. The consultants Goman & York, hired with the grant money would help each one of the Towns on various projects. I don't believe any meaningful consultation took place in Kent.

There was some consideration for The Kent but nothing of any consequence resulted.

In your capacity as the Planning organization for the Town of Kent do you feel that adequate analysis of The Kent property has been made to seek a Best Use situation for the property ? Could it be marketed as an Office Complex, Assisted Living Facility ? Has every avenue been explored ?

Respectfully submitted.

Richard Lindsey



 ORIGINAL

RECEIVED  
8/22/17  
amh

August 22, 2017

Mr. John Johnson, Chairman  
Planning & Zoning Commission  
41 Kent Green Blvd.  
Kent, CT 06757

RE: Birch Hill Rehabilitation Permit Application

Dear Chairman Johnson and Board Members:

I am writing you to express my thanks to the Commission for giving the townspeople the chance to express their opinions about the above-referenced proposal. I thought the comments aired at the August 10 meeting were for the most part thought-provoking and illuminating.

I had and still have no strong feeling one way or the other as to how you should vote on the proposal, but I do urge you to keep the concerns of the Kent Volunteer Fire Department at the forefront of your minds should you vote to approve the application.

While it was heartening to learn from the representatives of Birch Hill that they will be able to handle most of the medical problems their guests will encounter "in house", they did say they would call on KVFD for "psych calls" aka crisis intervention calls. From my experience as an EMT serving on the KVFD ambulance for 10 years I know these calls are in a class by themselves. The "golden hour" is less important than gaining the trust of the patient in order that s/he can be moved to the ambulance and transported safely to an appropriate facility, which in my day was either Danbury and Torrington. More time at the scene and double the transport time removes the ambulance from service for other calls by a fair margin.


I also thought it was nice that the representatives of Birch Hill stated that they would make a donation to KVFD. However, this rather misses the point. I cannot speak to the current state of KVFD's recruitment program or call volume, as it has been over 10 years since I went on veteran status. I can, however, state that it is not money in the till, nor is it the number of emergency vehicles in the firehouse that determine how many calls the Ambulance can respond to. Rather it is the number of qualified personnel and their availability at any time that allows the ambulance to roll.

I know the Commission can place conditions on an approval of this kind of permit and I have racked my brain for a useful suggestion that would protect KVFD's ambulance squad from the strain of adding a 90-bed facility to its responsibility. I have come up with only one idea.

Birch Hill might be asked to ensure that a portion of its staff be trained and certified as EMTs and that these individuals be encouraged to join KVFD (thereby practicing under the medical license of the department's medical control) and be allowed to serve on ambulance calls to the Birch Hill facility during their work hours. If there are as few calls to Birch Hill as its representatives predict this would interfere very little with the staff's routine. And by supplying training of this sort to its non-medical staff, Birch Hill will only enhance its in-house care.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



Austi Brown





ORIGINAL

RECEIVED  
9/5/17

August 30, 2017

Town of Kent  
Planning and Zoning Commission  
41 Kent Green Blvd  
PO Box 678  
Kent, CT 06757

Dear Board Members:

I have gone back and forth over whether or not to write this letter. In the end, I would be upset with myself if I didn't express my views.

My husband and I attended the meeting on August 10, 2017 regarding Birch Hill's proposal to repurpose the town's empty nursing home into a rehab facility. The tone of the meeting, from my perspective, was annoyance by some board members at the large turnout. And in my opinion, several speakers were admonished by board members for expressing negative views on the proposal. This causes me concern, thereby this letter.

I can certainly see the benefits from Birch Hill's point of view. They are looking at a building needing minimal modifications, much less expensive than building a new facility; a beautiful, natural setting in which to market their facility and approaching a town in need of additional tax revenue.

Looking at the empty store fronts due to the loss of businesses in town, some falling into disrepair and the slow housing market, I can certainly understand the need to revitalize the town. I too wish to see Kent once again become a destination of choice. I simply do not believe this type of facility is the answer.

I am not insensitive to those whose loved ones struggle from addictions. Unfortunately, I have witnessed this disease in several extended family members. Some have succeeded in their struggle, others have not. However, our town is already fulfilling a social obligation to combat this epidemic with an excellent facility at High Watch.

What is of most importance is that you are voting on what "sales personnel" have given you as a framework of their plan.

- **A Level 4 facility:** How can this be obtained with the severity of client health issues due to addiction and enduring detox, with only RNs on staff, and physicians on call?
- **Staffing levels:** The levels they presented do not appear adequate to the potential severity of some of the clients' health issues.
- **No court mandated admissions:** How would they be able to discriminate against these clients?
- **They see their clientele as "businessmen/women" self-admitting:** Highly unlikely due to the demographic population of most drug users.
- **No need to worry about security because they will be wearing bracelet monitors and staff would know the client's location at all times:** Why would this be needed if there were no "criminals" as clients? Why would a self-admitted "businessman/woman" subject himself to



wearing a monitor as though they were a criminal? What does a monitor do to prevent someone from leaving?

- They would not "market the facility" thereby giving Kent the reputation of the drug rehab town of CT: They stated they are "hoping" not to use outside marketing, just referrals from physicians. On my one hour drive to work, I hear addiction centers advertised from all over the State. I honestly do not believe they will not market the facility to get their share of "business".

My concerns go on and on.

The representatives for Birch Hill had quick, pat answers for any negative concerns. Not a reliable way for Board members to obtain crucial information.

They have yet to apply for a CON from the State of CT. Getting an approval from our Town before their applying to the State would certainly give them points toward approval. But we are not voting on what the State will in the end approve. What if they are only approved for a level 2 or 3 facility? Once the approval for this type of facility is given by the town, what reason would we have to deny a modified status? None

This facility would be larger than the two closest hospitals. That in itself is a burden. This is a small town, with limited resources. We are responsible, not only for the safety and security of our townspeople, but for hundreds and hundreds of children from all over the world that come here for their education. No one can guarantee that this type of facility does not pose risks to the community.

While I understand the need for more rehab facilities in the State, and the need for Kent to revitalize, I beg you to look down the road. Because once we head down this path....we will have no way to return.

Sincerely,



Angela Yagid  
12 Old Homestead Lane  
South Kent, CT 06785