



Town of Hamden
Planning and Zoning Department

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February 18, 2026

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes

The Planning and Zoning Commission, Town of Hamden, held a hybrid Regular Meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 7:00p.m. The meeting was held in-person in the Legislative Council Chambers/Auditorium at Memorial Town Hall, 2372 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06518, and remotely via Town Zoom teleconferencing at <https://hamden.zoom.us/j/82468227728>.

Commissioners in Attendance: **In-Person:** Michele Mastropetre (*Chair*), Joseph McDonagh (*Vice Chair*), Richard Pearce, Hannah Leckman, Ronald Leonardo, Calvin DeMarsilis
Via Zoom: Barbara Andrews

Staff in Attendance: **In-Person:** Eugene Livshits (*Assistant Town Planner*), Chris Soto (*Assistant Town Planner*), Maisie Albis (*Commission Clerk*)
Via Zoom: Genevieve Bertolini (*Stenographer*), Tim Lee (*Assistant Town Attorney*)

Chairman Mastropetre called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:09p.m., after a brief recess following the Special Meeting. The clerk read the agenda into the record. Members and staff introduced themselves.

A. Public Comment Session

Chairman Mastropetre called for comments from the public regarding topics within the purview of the Commission but not otherwise on the evening's agenda. There were no comments from in-person or remote attendees. The Chairman closed the public comment session.

B. Regular Meeting

1. Site Plan #25-1530

1407 and 1409 Dixwell Avenue
PDD #3 Final Site Development Plan
Applicant: 1409 Dixwell Avenue Associates, LLC

Attorney Bernard Pellegrino represented the applicant, joined by property owner Joseph Natale, engineer John Schmitz, and members of the SoulStar team. He explained that the current proposal is the final site development plan for the Planned Development District (PDD) previously approved for the properties. A hybrid cannabis retail establishment associated with SoulStar was approved at 1409 Dixwell Avenue prior and is within the PDD; the rest of that building is intended to be converted into a cannabis cultivation and production facility. The cultivation facility will require interior and exterior improvements. Exterior improvements to the existing residential buildings are also proposed, as well as the construction of a new 20-unit residential building at 1407 Dixwell Avenue. Mr. Pellegrino stated that all of the newly constructed units will be deed restricted at 80% AMI for 40 years.

Mr. Schmitz reviewed the site plans in more detail. He showed the Commission the existing site conditions, then presented what was being proposed. The new residential building would be two stories with 10 units on each level and would be around 6,300 sq. ft. A new parking area would provide 26 additional spaces, bringing the available parking for the entire lot to a total of 102 spaces. The site already has electric, water, and sewer service which will be extended to the new building. An additional stormwater detention system will be added to account for the increase in impervious surfaces and will be tied into the existing stormwater management system. Mr. Schmitz referred to the stormwater report and the Stormwater Operations and Maintenance Plan that had been submitted with the application.

Mr. Schmitz described the soil and erosion control plan for the construction phase. He also made reference to the landscaping and photometric plans that had been submitted. The landscaping plan provided 10,000 sq. ft. of green space, 6 new shade trees, and plantings around parking areas. A stone dust path will allow access to the Farmington Canal Trail. The photometric plan demonstrated compliance with Town regulations regarding light levels and spillover. Mr. Schmitz also mentioned that a traffic study showed no impacts to off-site intersections.

Commissioner DeMarsilis asked how many of the new parking spaces were designated as handicap accessible. Mr. Schmitz replied that two of the 26 new spaces were intended as such.

Commissioner Pearce recalled that the RWA stated in its comments that the applicant should identify who is responsible for inspecting the stormwater management system. Mr. Schmitz said that it would be the landowner. Commissioner Pearce then asked how often inspections would take place. Mr. Schmitz stated that they would be quarterly and that the processes were outlined in the Stormwater Operations and Maintenance Plan.

Commissioner McDonagh pointed to the path leading to the Farmington Canal Trail and tried to ascertain how the pedestrian traffic would interact with the entering and exiting of buses from Oregon Avenue. Mr. Schmitz explained that a portion of the driveway will be blocked off and a fence will be erected to separate the residential parking area from the buses.

Chairman Mastropetre invited Mr. Soto to read his report. In it, he reviewed the standards set forth by the PDD petition and confirmed the current site plan's conformity with them. He noted that

the proposal exceeded the PDD requirement that 20% of residential units be set aside as affordable at 80% AMI; with 100% of the 20 new units being set aside, a total of 40% of units on site will be designated as affordable.

Mr. Soto raised several points for clarification. First, the architectural plan set originally submitted had labeling errors on sheets A5 and A6: “Building A East Elevation” on A5 should read “Building A West Elevation” and the west elevation shown on sheet A6 should be disregarded. There were no plans submitted that were specific to Building D. The PDD petition indicated that the existing residential buildings would be redeveloped to match the proposed new elevations, therefore he had made an assumption that the facades shown would also apply to Building D.

Mr. Soto next requested that an updated landscaping plan detailing the nature and any amenities—such as grasses, benches, playscapes—for the 4,660 sq. ft. of open space shown between Buildings B and D, which were unspecified on the submitted plan. Regarding the stone dust path to the Farmington Canal Trail, Mr. Soto stated that bollards or fencing should be added to protect it from the existing bus parking area. He also pointed out that a trash collection area was not depicted on any plans.

Mr. Soto reported that the stormwater management and photometric plans were found to be adequate. A traffic study determined that there should be no changes to level of service at the immediately surrounding intersections. Mr. Soto noted that traffic patterns for commercial vehicles were unclear, as were locations for loading and unloading. It also appeared as though fire apparatuses would need to reverse out of the parking area based on its layout.

Mr. Soto concluded his report with the Planning and Zoning Department’s staff recommendation that the Commission approve the application subject to the following conditions:

1. The site development plan must be revised in consultation with the Hamden Fire Department to provide for access through or a turnaround area for Fire apparatuses and approved by the Town Planner prior to permitting.
2. The site development plan must be revised to show the trash collection point(s) and enclosure(s).
3. The 5’ wide stone dust path connecting the development to the Farmington Canal Trail should be protected by bollards or some type of fencing. This feature should be reflected in an updated Landscaping Plan.
4. An updated Landscaping Plan identifying the nature and any amenities of the open space is to be approved by the Town Planner.
5. The updated Landscaping Plan is to be approved prior to zoning permitting.
6. Soil and erosion control measures shall be implemented prior to any improvements and maintained until all disturbed areas have been permanently stabilized.
7. The applicant is responsible for acquiring any permits or approvals from the state, town, and utility companies.

Chairman Mastropetre sought clarification on the number of residential units that would be set aside as affordable at 80% AMI. Mr. Soto explained that 40% of the total residential units on site would be affordable, with the 20 new units being set aside and the 30 existing units remaining at market rate. Chairman Mastropetre then asked if the trash collection area would need to have particular waste containers for cannabis material. Mr. Soto specified that he had been referring to trash collection for the residential buildings; waste collection for the cultivation facility is handled indoors. They agreed that the condition should be revised to reflect that the dumpster enclosure is for the residential buildings.

Commissioner McDonagh raised a question about the flow of delivery traffic to the loading dock at the rear of the cultivation facility building. Mr. Soto's report indicated that the stone dust path crossed in front of the loading area, and Commissioner McDonagh wanted to know whether deliveries would enter from Dixwell Avenue or from Oregon Avenue. Mr. Pellegrino commented that the privacy fencing between Buildings C and D and the neighboring bus parking area would block off access from that direction. Mr. Soto added that the hybrid retail establishment had its own loading dock at the front of the building that could potentially be used for the cultivation facility as well, but that he had not wanted to make that assumption.

Commissioner Leckman asked if there would be anything in place to prevent people from entering the property from the Farmington Canal Trail. She was concerned that bicyclists would use the site as a cut-through to get to Dixwell Avenue. Mr. Pellegrino felt that any such attempts would also prevent residents from accessing the property from the trail and vice versa. They discussed the possibility of installing a "Private Property: No Trespassing" sign. Commissioner McDonagh believed that people would be most likely to continue down Oregon Avenue to Dixwell rather than using the stone dust path, thus mitigating the potential problem.

Commissioner Pearce returned to the issue of trash removal from the cultivation facility. He acknowledged that Mr. Soto's report described a process of placing cannabis waste mixed with inert materials into odor-proof bags but asked how those bags would then be removed from the site. Mr. Soto replied that the bags would be stored indoors and collected regularly by haulers. Commissioner Pearce asked whether it would be considered hazardous material as opposed to ordinary refuse. Amanda Rosario, a member of the SoulStar team, explained that it is treated like any other organic waste and does not require specialized collection. Commissioner Pearce was concerned about the release of odors when the bags are crushed by a compactor truck, but Ms. Rosario said the odors would be neutralized and contained at that point.

On the topic of odors, Commission Bond appreciated the steps that had been taken since the concept plan phase to minimize the impact on residents. She commented that the odor mitigation plan stated that contact information would be provided to report any concerns and asked where residents would be able to find that information. Ms. Rosario responded that the email address would be listed on the cultivation facility's website.

There were no further questions from the Commission. Chairman Mastropetre addressed

Mr. Pellegrino to confirm that he understood and agreed to the conditions as presented and revised. Mr. Soto reviewed that the condition regarding trash collection was revised to specify that the dumpster area will be for the residential buildings. Commissioner Pearce asked if a condition should be added to mandate that the loading dock associated with the hybrid retail facility be used by the cultivation facility as well; ultimately, the Commission and Mr. Pellegrino agreed.

Chairman Mastropetre called for a motion on the application. **Commissioner DeMarsilis moved to approve Site Plan #25-1530 with the conditions included in Mr. Soto's February 10, 2026, staff report as revised during discussion, as follow:**

1. The site development plan must be revised in consultation with the Hamden Fire Department to provide for access through or a turnaround area for Fire apparatuses and approved by the Town Planner prior to permitting.
2. The site development plan must be revised to show the trash collection point(s) and enclosure(s) for the residential buildings.
3. The 5' wide stone dust path connecting the development to the Farmington Canal Trail should be protected by bollards or some type of fencing. This feature should be reflected in an updated Landscaping Plan.
4. An updated Landscaping Plan identifying the nature and any amenities of the open space is to be approved by the Town Planner.
5. The updated Landscaping Plan is to be approved prior to zoning permitting.
6. Soil and erosion control measures shall be implemented prior to any improvements and maintained until all disturbed areas have been permanently stabilized.
7. The applicant is responsible for acquiring any permits or approvals from the state, town, and utility companies.
8. The loading area for the cultivation facility will be the loading area specified under the hybrid retail establishment application (Special Permit and Site Plan #24-1380).

Commissioner McDonagh seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and the application was approved with conditions.

2. C.G.S. §8-24 Review #26-445

Six Lakes Signage on Farmington Canal Greenway

Applicant: Town of Hamden

Commissioner McDonagh identified himself as a liaison between the Six Lakes Parks Coalition (SLPC) and the Hamden Regional Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Mastropetre asked if he would be recusing himself. He said he would participate but wanted his position stated on the record.

Kathy Czepiel, a representative from SLPC who also serves as Connecticut Land Protection Manager at Save the Sound, presented the proposal. The SPLC is seeking to install two

informational signs on the Farmington Canal Greenway to educate the public on the history of the Six Lakes area. Ms. Czepiel explained that Six Lakes is 102.5 acres of green space in Southern Hamden that has been affected by environmental contamination for decades. Though property owner Olin Corporation has been under State consent order to remediate the site since the 1980s, she said, little progress has been made. Part of SLPC's mission is to ensure the prompt and thorough remediation of the site.

Their mission also involves working toward the conversion of the property into publicly accessible open green space. SLPC envisions a public park that would offer space for passive recreation and education and provide connectivity between neighborhoods. Ms. Czepiel highlighted the opportunity to redress of environmental injustice experienced by residents of the surrounding neighborhoods in particular. The signs are intended to raise awareness about both the history of the property and its future potential.

Ms. Czepiel informed the Commission that the design and production of the signs would be fully funded by grants and donations and that Hamden Public Works committed to pro bono installation. She showed a mockup design which presented information about the geological and human history of the site, as well as a "vision for the future", alongside images of native wildlife. She also pointed out three locations that had been identified by the Town Engineering Department as possible installation sites. The goal of SLPC is to have the signs installed by Earth Week at the end of April, though the proposal would first need to be heard by the Legislative Council for approval.

Chairman Mastropetre requested that Mr. Livshits read his report. Within it he noted that the proposal had been presented to the Farmington Canal Commission earlier in February and that they had voted in support of the project subject to a final agreement regarding the language and locations of the signs. He concluded with a recommendation that the Commission issue a favorable report to the Legislative Council with the following condition:

1. The proposed language of the signage and specific locations will be reviewed and agreed upon with the Farmington Canal Commission.

Commissioner Pearce clarified whether the proposal was for two signs or for three. Ms. Czepiel explained that it was two signs but that three possible sites had been identified. With no further questions, Chairman Mastropetre called for a motion. **Commissioner Pearce moved to issue a favorable report to the Legislative Council with the condition stated in Mr. Livshits' February 10, 2026, staff report. Commissioner Bond seconded and all members voted in favor. A favorable report with one condition will be issued to the Council.**

C. Old Business

1. Review of January 27, 2026, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting minutes

Commissioner McDonagh moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner DeMarsilis seconded. Chairman Mastropetre and Commissioner Bond abstained from voting

as they had not been present on January 27. All other members voted in favor and the minutes were approved as written.

D. New Business

No new business was introduced.

E. Adjournment

Chairman Mastropetre called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner DeMarsilis made the motion, seconded by Commissioner McDonagh. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:06p.m.

Submitted By: _____

Maisie Albis, Commission Clerk