



June 6, 2023

Design Review Board
Town of Waterford
15 Rope Ferry Road
Waterford, CT 06385

RE: The Fat Tuna
378 Mago Point Way

Dear Board Members,

Mago Point Restaurant, LLC d.b.a The Fat Tuna is the owner of the property located at 378 Mago Point Way. This is the former location of the Sunset Ribs site. The owner is requesting approval of an outdoor paver patio to provide additional dining space.

Statement of Use

The restaurant is located on 0.24 acres in the Mago Point District (MPD). Under newly adopted state statutes, outdoor dining and/or outdoor entertainment are permitted as an accessory use subject to zoning compliance. The owner has invested considerable money in the remodel and upgrade of the existing restaurant. The building is served by public water and sewer. Due to the location of the existing building within the federal flood hazard zone coastal AE (El 13), renovations to date have been carefully designed to be valued at less than 50% of the building's value. The kitchen equipment has been completely updated. The interior dining space has been upgraded with new lighting and, much overdue, cosmetic improvements to enhance the dining experience. Unfortunately, the second-floor dining space could not be remodeled within the 50% budget.

To serve additional patrons, the owner would like to construct a full-service outdoor patio.

The project is exempt from Coastal Site Plan Review as it consists of minor exterior site work which would be classified as landscaping. The patio will be open from 11:00am to 11:00pm and will be a seasonal use from April through December. A portable, rolling bar/service cart will be rolled into place when needed. The patio will also be used for special events such as weddings

and parties. No live entertainment is proposed. The new patio will dramatically improve the overall aesthetics of this site and prevent the unsightly parking situation which often occurred with the previous use.

Consistency with the Mago Point Design Guidelines

The Town of Waterford, Planning and Zoning Commission has adopted the Mago Point Design Guidelines Waterford, CT (Guidelines) Effective October 17, 2016. The purpose of the guidelines is to:

- i. Promote, protect and enhance the unique character and landscape of Mago Point and its purposes pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 8-2j;
- ii. Guide the redevelopment of Mago Point in a manner that is consistent with the Mago Point master plan.
- iii. Preserve a careful balance between character and function;
- iv. Promote economic and social vitality.

The Guidelines have been carefully considered in the planning and redevelopment of the site. Sunset Ribs (now The Fat Tuna) building is identified as one of the “Unique Areas Within Mago Point” (page 16). The architectural character of the building has been preserved and enhanced with much needed cosmetic upgrades.

As previously mentioned, the existing building is located within the FEMA flood hazard zone coastal AE (El 13). An area inundated by 1% annual chance flooding. Mandatory floodplain management standards apply. Working with the Town Building Official and Flood Plain Administrator, renovations have been kept below the “Substantial Improvement” limits. The patio is considered a landscape improvement, will have no impact on the flood plain and is exempt from FEMA requirements.

The Guidelines provide recommendations regarding Landscape Design. A detailed landscape plan has been prepared that will enhance the outdoor patio area as well as the adjacent handicap parking spaces and dumpster area. Design considerations for this plan included:

1. The property is bordered by Mago Point Way, River Street and the adjacent parking access drive. The owner has proposed using a band of colored river rock along the edge of the pavement. This will provide a barrier from the salt-laden snow. It is the owners hope that sometime in the future these avenues will be abandoned by the Town and converted into additional park space.
2. Low growing perennial bed vegetation such as Golden Cypress, Pink Liatris and Beach Roses will preserve the view of the River while providing color and bird habitat. Taller growing shrubs such as Rose of Sharon and White Potentilla will be planted on the north

side of the building. A specimen tree as well as beach roses with black wood mulch will be incorporated around the handicap parking area.

3. Sod will be planted adjacent to the patio providing a “soft” transition to the patio dining area.
4. River rock will be installed at the outfall of the roof leader systems to reduce runoff velocities and promote on-site infiltration.

Site lighting to match the existing Mago Point style has already been upgraded with the initial phase of the remodel project in accordance with the Guidelines. Fence was installed to screen the mechanical services on the north side of the building from view and along the south side of the building to provide visual screening of the service areas.

Mago Point remains Waterford's only active commercial waterfront. Recent activities by property owners in Mago Point have focused revitalization efforts into this area. The redevelopment of this site with a new, vibrant and “high-end” restaurant use along with outdoor dining seeks to help continue to reverse this decline. People will be brought into the area and enjoy the adjacent Mago Park and Boardwalk to watch the boats go by or take sunset walk along the beautiful Niantic River.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours In Service,
James Bernardo Land Surveying, LLC



James Bernardo, LS