

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 10, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Munn, Pritchard, Steinfeld, Sherrard
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Zod
Absent: Roper, Kane
Staff present: Davis, Glemboski, Doolittle

Chairman Sherrard called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. He sat Zod for Roper.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of December 5, 2011.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of December 5, 2011 as written.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Cindy Ashton, 818 Noank Ledyard Road, asked permission from the Commission to speak on the Fields of Fire site plan item on tonight's agenda. The Chair directed Ms. Ashton to speak after the applicant presents his application.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Great Brook Subdivision, Great Brook Road – Request for bond release (Phase I) and reduction (Phase II & III)

Staff noted the memo included in tonight's packet from Public Works stating that Phase I has been inspected and that it is ok to release the maintenance bond. Also included in tonight's packet, another memo from Public Works stating that it is acceptable to reduce the public improvement bond to the 10% maintenance amount for Phase II & III.

MOTION: To release the remaining public improvement performance bond of \$87,100 and the cash reserve of \$8,000 for Phase I of the Great Brook Subdivision, Great Brook Road.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To reduce the public improvement performance bond for Phase II of the Great Brook Subdivision to \$137,000 (10% of the initial bond value).

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Munn. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To reduce the public improvement performance bond for Phase III of the Great Brook Subdivision to \$63,000 (10% of the initial bond value).

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Millpond Estates Subdivision, Route 184 – Request for bond release

Staff noted the memo from Public Works stating that the subdivision has been inspected and that it is ok to release the final bond.

MOTION: To release the remaining performance bonds of \$58,400 and \$2,000 and the cash reserve of \$5,840 for the Mill Pond Estates Subdivision on Gold Star Highway

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Zod. Motion passed unanimously.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Fields of Fire, 715 Noank Ledyard Road – Action required

Tom Vignato, applicant, addressed the Commission explaining the game of paintball and his plans for the site. He is proposing to “phase” the project, building up to 5 fields during the first phase. He discussed parking, restrooms, storage units and the requested waivers.

Staff and the applicant discussed the hours of operation, number of fields, number of participants as well as the requested waivers.

The Commission and the applicant discussed in detail the proposed fence, bathrooms, generators & utilities, future parking expansion and signage. Mr. Vignato discussed the potential storage containers and explained their efficacy, safety and location.

The Commission discussed granting a waiver for Phase I and requiring the applicant to reappear to reevaluate parking and the buffer modification.

Cindy Ashton, 818 Noank Ledyard Road, addressed the Commission concerned with noise, safety, parking and other concerns.

MOTION: To approve waivers to Sections 7.5-2 and 7.5-4 of the Zoning Regulations and to not require a frontage sidewalk or an internal sidewalk based on Section 7.5-5 C of the Zoning Regulations for the following reasons:

1. The Commission finds that the Master Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Plan recommends sidewalks on the east side of Noank-Ledyard Road and that any development on that side of the road will likely be required to install sidewalks.

2. The Commission finds that there will be no significant pedestrian movement to the site or between this site and those adjacent to it.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To approve a conditional modification of the front landscape buffer for Phase I only reducing it from 50 feet to 20 feet for the following reason:

1. The Commission requires sufficient evergreen plantings and fencing to meet the intent of the regulations and provide sufficient screening to any future residential development to the east of the subject property as determined by the Director of OPDS.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the Fields of Fire Paintball Facility, 715 Noank-Ledyard Road, with the following modifications:

1. This project may be constructed in two phases. Phase I will consist of a 17-space parking area, all equipment, storage and restroom trailers, all fencing, the woodchip trail and all fields east of the central wetland.
2. Prior to the initiation of Phase II the applicant shall appear before the PC to evaluate the operation and determine if modifications are necessary, including but not necessarily limited to approval of the parking buffer modification with respect to Phase II.
3. Noise attenuation shall be provided for the air compressor trailer.
4. All staff technical items shall be addressed.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Dunkin Donuts, 368 Route 12 – Request for extension or action required

The applicant has requested a 30 day extension to February 13, 2012.

MOTION: To grant a 30-day extension to February 13, 2012 and to table this item

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Lighthouse Point, Pleasant Valley Road North – Request for extension for start of construction

Genevieve Salvatore, representing the applicant, addressed the Commission requesting a one year extension for start of construction. She stated that the owner still intends to follow through with this application however, with the tough economy, can only do so once funding is available.

MOTION: To grant a one year extension for start of construction to January 25, 2013 for Lighthouse Point, Pleasant Valley Road North.

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Steinford. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Land Use Regulation Update Project

The POCD update will be initiated in the next couple of months.

2. Gabrielle's Karate Update

Staff reported the owner's negative response to the Commission's request for a site plan application. The Commission directed Staff to request that the zoning officer issue an order to have the HVAC units removed.

3. Zoning Commission Referral for January 4, 2012 Public Hearing - Special Permit 323, Fairview Estates, 231 Lestertown Road

Staff noted that the Public Hearing has been continued to February 1, 2012. Staff supplied the Commission with a brief overview of the project and site layout. Staff noted that due to the various types of senior housing proposed, two different zoning regulations are being applied to this site. The Commission requested time to look over the materials and tabled this item.

MOTION: To table the Zoning Commission Referral for January 4, 2012 Public Hearing - Special Permit 323, Fairview Estates, 231 Lestertown Road

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Report on Tracking of Approved Projects

Staff handed out a table of expiration dates. The Commission decided to look over the information and discuss this matter at the January 24, 2012 meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Commissioner Steinfeld noted Mr. Berg property has withdrawn his appeal of the cease & desist order regarding his properties on Azalea Drive and Hillcrest Road.

2. Election of Officers

MOTION: To nominate James Sherrard as Chairman of the Planning Commission

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Zod. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To nominate Jeff Pritchard as Vice Chairman/Secretary of the Planning Commission

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Referral from the Town of Ledyard - Zoning Regulations Amendment - "Open Space Subdivision" - Public Hearing 1/12/2012

Staff and the Commission briefly discussed this item. The Commission had no comment.

4. Referral from Noank - Zoning Regulations Amendment - Public Hearing 1/17/2012

Staff and the Commission briefly discussed this item. The Commission had no comment.

5. New Applications

- a. Groton Bible Chapel Youth Center, 66 Tollgate Road

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard noted the CIP special meeting being held January 18, 2012. He also noted the Committee of Chairs meeting on January 23, 2012.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff handed out DEEP referrals of storm water applications.

Staff noted the copy of a letter to Mr. Eckhouse (Colonel Ledyard Estates) included in tonight's packet. Staff would like the Commission to take formal action to expire the subdivision. The Commission agreed with Staff's position and asked Staff to proceed accordingly.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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Motion to adjourn at 9:34 p.m. made by Sherrard, seconded by Munn,
so voted unanimously.

Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Katie Doolittle
Office Assistant II