

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 9, 2017 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Kane, Munn, Steinfeld, Zod
Alternate members present: Tarbox
Excused Absence: Fitzgerald, Munn
Staff present: Glemboski, Allen, Silsby

Chairman Pritchard appointed Tarbox to sit for Munn.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

This item was postponed until the next meeting on May 23, 2017

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Pritchard received notification of the reappointment of Ray Munn to the Planning Commission with a term date of December 31, 2021.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS - None

V. SITE PLANS

1. Ju Sushi Restaurant (SIT17-05), 1043-1045 Poquonnock Road

Scott Keller, a personal friend of the owner who translates for Mr. Ju Kwak, reviewed the plans and explained the proposal, which includes converting the front building into retail and changing the parking lot. Information was given about landscaping, the driveway and signage. Kitchen equipment will be minimal.

Discussion followed about signage and whether a previous sign location could be utilized. Staff stated that the Zoning Official will need to make that determination. Otherwise, current zoning requirements would need to be followed. Staff referred to the necessary modifications that would be required. Staff explained that this property is in a commercial zone though it borders a residential zone. Staff suggested that a fence be installed as a buffer. Fence and driveway requirements were reviewed.

Mr. Keller referred to an existing ornamental tree that may need to be moved to another location because of the location of the required handicap space. He would prefer to leave the tree in its current location and revise the handicap parking area. Tree and driveway requirements were reviewed by Staff. Alternative locations for the tree were discussed. Staff noted that Public Works will require a grease trap.

Zod would be in favor of using the existing ornamental tree as a shade tree and adding one more to fulfill the requirement. He expressed concerns about light shining on the street and would prefer full cut-off lights. Staff will add this as a technical item. The Commission would prefer to keep the tree in its current location and add a note on the plans stating that if the tree was moved or died, a replacement would be done accordingly. The hours of operation were noted. Staff stated that the current plan shows the ornamental tree being

removed but that if the tree ends up staying in its current location, a field modification would be required to change the handicap parking area.

MOTION: To approve Site Plan SIT17-05 for Ju Sushi, 1043-1045 Poquonnock Road subject to the following modifications:

1. Two (2) street shade trees shall be located along the property's Poquonnock Road frontage to meet the requirements of Section 7.4-3 (Front Landscaped Area).
2. A solid and opaque fence shall be located along the property's western boundary to meet the requirements of Section 7.4-4 (Buffer Area).
3. The width of the driveway shall be increased to 24 feet in order to meet the requirements of 7.2-10 (Interior Drives).
4. A grease trap shall be installed to meet the requirements of the Department of Public Works.
5. All technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously

2. Groton Multi-Family Apartments (SIT16-09), Route 12/Pleasant Valley Road North – Request for Extension of Start of Construction

Staff stated that the project was approved on June 28, 2016. The applicant is in the process of finishing up the check prints and hopes to begin construction in the fall.

MOTION: To grant an extension for a one-year start of construction to June 28, 2018 for the Groton Multi-Family Apartments site plan, 0 Route 12 and Pleasant Valley Road North.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Kane, so voted unanimously

3. Four Winds at Mystic (2004) – Request for Extension of Start of Construction

Attorney Tom Londregan, Ron Bonvie and Clint Brown were present for this item. Attorney Londregan explained that the existing site plan expires in March 2020 and that an extension for start of construction is required yearly if construction has not yet begun.

Staff reiterated that regulations require an extension for start of construction one-year at a time. Attorney Londregan referred to a previous concern about obtaining an extension from the Army Corp of Engineers for the wetlands work.

Clint Brown reviewed the process and conditions that are required. He noted that check prints were recently submitted and are being reviewed by Staff. Architectural plans will soon be submitted to Staff.

Attorney Londregan requested a one-year start of construction until May 26, 2018.

Staff confirmed that check-prints have recently been received but not yet reviewed.

MOTION: To grant an extension for the one-year start of construction to May 26, 2018 for the Mystic Active Adult LLC (Four Winds at Mystic) site plan, Noank Ledyard Road

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Kane.

An inquiry was made about the Planning Commission seeing the revised plan again. Staff noted that the Planning Commission would only see the plans if significant changes are being made.

The Motion passed unanimously

VI. OLD BUSINESS – None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Board of Appeals Referral for a Public Hearing on May 24, 2017
 - a. ZBA#17-04 – OLIO Restaurant, 33 Kings Highway

Staff reviewed plans showing the specifics of the application for this non-conforming site. Details were reviewed about the proposed bump-out addition, covering two outdoor areas of a patio and a deck. The purpose of the addition is to use it as a walk-up take-out window for primarily Electric Boat employees. Information was given about landscaping and a sidewalk. Discussion followed about the size of the addition and the tightness of the area, for which the Planning Commission expressed concerns. The Commission requested clarification in regards to the bump-out and the scaling of the plans. Staff will get clarification and add this item to the next agenda.

- b. ZBA#17-07 – Luxury Cat Kennel, 1352 North Road

Staff reviewed the plans to convert the building into cat condos. He explained why the owner would like to install the sign on the property line, which would require a variance due to setback requirements. Information was given about the vast amount of arborvitae or evergreens that are currently on site and the need to clear these trees for sign visibility.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

1. Report of Commission

Tarbox expressed concerns again about lighting at Fields of Fire on Noank-Ledyard Road. She feels there is too much lighting, which is a distraction to motorists. She believes that more trees have been cut down. Staff will pass these concerns along to Deb Jones.

Steinford expressed a concern about 420 Long Hill Road and the woodchip piles. Staff will pass this item to the appropriate person.

An inquiry was made about permits for banners and blow-ups and whether they are considered signs. Staff will discuss this with the zoning official.

2. New Applications - None

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Pritchard noted that the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Committee will be holding an informational meeting this coming Thursday at 2:30 pm in Room 1.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff stated that the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD) Zoning Amendment public hearing has been continued to May 31, 2017.

Staff stated that the Town Council is currently considering combining the Planning Commission with the Zoning Commission to form one commission. Input from Planning Commission members is welcome. An opinion from the Town Attorney about the way to proceed is being given to the Town Council. The Commission discussed pros and cons.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:06 pm was made by Zod, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

Hal Zod, Vice Chair/Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin M. Silsby
Office Assistant II