

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 14, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

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

Chairman Sherrard opened the meeting with roll call at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of September 9, 2008, special meeting of September 23, 2008 and regular meeting of September 23, 2008

MOTION: To approve the minutes of September 9, 2008 as amended.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed 4-0-1, 1 abstention (Munn).

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the September 23, 2008 special meeting as amended.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of September 23, 2008 as amended.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Roper said that Mr. Conlon of Pequot Avenue, asked about the status of the Precious Memories application that was before the Zoning Commission.

Edith Fairgrieve, 8 Rowland Street, Mystic, read a letter to the Commission from Wendy McFarland of 48 Bel Aire Drive, Mystic, who was unable to attend the meeting, at the Mystic Weigh Subdivision.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Great Brook Resubdivision, Gales Ferry Road & Daboll Road – Request for phase 1 bond reduction

MOTION: To reduce the public improvement bond for Phase 1 of the Great Brook Resubdivision, Gales Ferry Road & Daboll Road, to \$87,100.

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

2. Mystic Weigh Subdivision park improvements, Flanders Road – Request for bond release

Staff said they will inspect and inform the Commission at the next meeting regarding Ms. McFarland's claims. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 bonds will remain in place.

Chairman Sherrard asked staff to report on the status of this project at the next meeting.

MOTION: To accept the improvements and release the \$31,000 bond for the Mystic Weigh Subdivision park improvements.

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

3. High Street Subdivision – Request for bond reduction

MOTION: To table the High Street Subdivision request for bond reduction to later in the meeting.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Mystic Manor, 475 High Street

Al Wolfgram, A-L Consulting, represented the applicant. Mark Petrin, Architect, explained the phasing of the proposed expansion of the nursing home. The first phase will include a new entrance, additional parking, bath facilities for each room, and interior renovations as part of the Green House initiative. The number of residents and the building footprint will remain the same. Mr. Wolfgram explained the site improvements. The parking lot located at the front of the site will be graded at 5% rather than the required 3% because of the location of the existing abandoned leaching field and stone walls. The applicant asked for a waiver of the required 7% recreation space. There is 3,400 s.f. of atrium space and therapy areas provided which would be more appropriate for the residents, rather than traditional recreation space. The driveway lighting, underground utilities, dumpster locations and the wetland permit requirements were reviewed.

Staff reviewed the width of the driveway, portico height, parking and slope, erosion control, landscaping, sidewalks and recreation space. A gravel secondary access cuts through the adjacent trailer park. Use of this secondary access for emergency equipment was discussed. The Commission discussed pedestrian access to the site (for future applications), interior courtyards, interior and exterior recreation areas and signage for the emergency access. The Commission suggested an outdoor walkway or path around the perimeter of the building.

MOTION: To approve a site plan for Mystic Manor, 475 High Street with the following modifications:

1. A new automatic grease recovery unit shall be installed in lieu of the existing Zurn internal grease trap.
2. Improvement of the erosion control narrative and sequencing shall be provided including additional crushed stone per the wetland agency and protection for existing trees. This sequence

shall be consistent with the 2002 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Guidelines.

3. Technical Items of Staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission notes that certain areas of the new visitor parking area have been graded at 5% rather than the required 3% because of the direct relationship to stone walls and an abandoned sub-surface sanitary leaching field.

The Planning Commission notes that 3400 square feet of atrium space and therapy areas shall constitute an applicable substitution for the 7% total of recreation space required under 6.7-6G. This reduction results in the development of a residential life care community that meets the purpose and intent of Section 7.1-1.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

2. Lot 9, Library Hill LLC, 225 Leonard Drive (CAM)

Gary Sharpe, Angus McDonald Sharpe Associates, presented the application for two "spec" buildings, similar to others on Leonard Drive. These buildings will be used for leased "flex space", consisting of office, manufacturing and/or industrial uses. Mr. Sharpe reviewed the drainage and site conditions, parking and trash enclosure.

Staff reviewed the site conditions, parking, landscaping, wetland permit, existing frontage sidewalks, the gravel surface at the back of the buildings.

MOTION: To approve a site plan for Lot 9 of the Leonard Drive Subdivision (Library Hill LLC), 225 Leonard Drive, with the following modifications:

1. A note shall be provided on the final plan stating "Any change in future uses from what is shown on these plans shall require review and approval of the Town of Groton Zoning Official."
2. All handicapped parking shall comply with current state and local codes and regulations.
3. A landscaped island shall be provided to separate the handicapped parking space in front of Building 2 from the drive aisle.
4. All parking lot shade trees shall meet the requirements of Section 7.4-5(b).
5. A trash enclosure detail shall be provided on the final plan.
6. The processed gravel surface detail shall be modified to include a top coat of crushed stone or of loam and seed.
7. All staff technical items shall be addressed.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the Coastal Site Plan for Lot 9 of the Leonard Drive Subdivision (Library Hill LLC), 225 Leonard Drive, because it is consistent with all applicable coastal policies and includes all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

3. Benchmark Groton ALZ, 90 Poheganut Drive

Harry Heller, Attorney, represented the applicant, Benchmark Assisted Living LLC. Tom Gaston of Benchmark, and Ken Petrini, DiCesare-Bentley Engineers were also present. The proposal is for a 48 patient assisted living facility (residential life care community). Mr. Heller detailed the site location. A special use permit and wetland permit have been granted for this proposal. Mr. Heller detailed the history of this site within the Groton Executive Park Subdivision. Mr. Heller discussed the requirements of the regulations for a residential life care facility with a targeted population and reviewed the details of the facility including the living area “pods”, kitchens, courtyards, lounge areas, the management plan as submitted with the application, the existing drainage basin and parking. There will be a minimum age requirement of 55. A waiver of the required 100 s.f. of dead storage per dwelling unit was requested. Mr. Heller said that based on the special population of this facility, no dead storage would be necessary for these residents. A second waiver was requested for the minimum of 30 ft. of individual patio/balcony areas, because of the safety risk to the residents. Supervised outdoor recreation areas are provided. The landscaping and dumpster locations were reviewed. Mr. Heller asked the Commission to reduce the requirement for frontage sidewalks at this site due to the impact on the wetlands, conflicts with utilities, and that there will be no further development to increase pedestrian traffic at this site. The wetlands and the grading issues on the site were reviewed.

Staff reviewed prior approvals for this site, assisted living facility requirements, drainage from the site, landscaping, parking, provisions for loading areas, dumpster locations, drop-off area, fire access, WRPD requirements.

The Commission discussed pavement striping for crosswalks, overhead coverage in the exterior lounge areas, fences, courtyard access, the amount of resident storage provided, no cooking facilities in rooms, signage, interior sidewalks, the possibility of an exterior path, exterior lighting, parking, fire access to the rear of the building, handicap parking, “country kitchens”, restricted street parking, and age requirements for this facility.

MOTION: To approve a site plan for Benchmark Groton ALZ, 90 Poheganut Drive, with the following modifications:

1. Technical Items of Staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission notes that this facility has a targeted population which has no need for the 100 square feet of dead storage under Section 6.7-6A. This is consistent with the Planning Commission’s ability under Section 6.7-7L to allow a reduction in the requirements because it will result in the development of a residential life care community meeting the purpose and intent of Section 7.1-1.

The Planning Commission notes that this facility has a targeted population which could be put at risk by the inclusion of individual patio/balcony areas per Section 6.7-6B requiring a minimum of 30 feet of space per unit. The proposed protected courtyard space will provide the spirit of these recreational areas within a safer environment for this

particular facility. This is consistent with the Planning Commission's ability under Section 6.7-7L to allow a reduction in the requirements because it will result in the development of a residential life care community meeting the purpose and intent of Section 7.1-1.

The Planning Commission notes that a reduction in the requirement for the frontage sidewalks is appropriate for this facility and takes into account the constraints of its natural resources.

The Planning Commission notes that this project falls within the Water Resource Protection District and as such includes specific provisions for dumpsters, avoidance of the use of salt and no storage of hazardous materials.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard

MOTION: To amend the motion to delete the first note.

Motion made by Munn. Motion was not seconded.

Original motion passed unanimously.

The Commission took a short recess and the meeting resumed at 10:05 p.m.

VI. SUBDIVISIONS

1. High Street Subdivision – Request for bond reduction

Munn recused himself based on his recusal during the subdivision application. Chairman Sherrard seated Zod for Munn.

MOTION: To reduce the performance bond for the High Street Subdivision to \$4,013.00.

Motion made by Zod, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

Munn was reseated.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Land Use Regulation Update Project

Staff said the next public meeting will be October 29, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. The Commission will discuss the regulation update project at their next meeting. Commissioner Fitzgerald provided to staff some information and questions regarding cluster housing. Staff will include this information in the next agenda packet.

2. Review of Planning Commission By-laws

The Commission tabled this discussion to a later date.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Munn asked about funding to begin the POCD process. Staff explained that OPDS would be seeking funding for this purpose in the FY 2009-2010 budget request.

Roper said he attended a meeting of the Regional Planning Commission on September 15th and updated the Commission on the Route 11 greenway project, the New London transportation center and the tri-town path connections.

Kane updated the Commission on the status of the Thames Street project, and handed out a summary of the three design options and related costs.

2. Zoning Board of Appeals referral for October 22, 2008 public hearing

ZBA08-11 71 Pequot Avenue, Stottlemyer, Applicant

Staff explained the referral. The Commission had no comment.

3. Town of Stonington referral for November 18, 2008 public hearing

PZ0825RA Town of Stonington text amendment to Article VII to Create Regulations for Alternative Energy Systems.

Staff explained the referral.

MOTION: To send the following comments to the Town of Stonington in response to their referral of proposed text amendment PZ0825RA.

1. Provisions should be included to notify abutters (unless such are already required by special permit procedures or some other current regulations).
2. The fall zone should include the blades.
3. Interference with radio frequency should be addressed (unless otherwise addressed in current general performance standards).
4. Please give consideration to the potential negative effects of "flicker shadows", especially during seasonal or daily periods when the sun is low on the horizon.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

4. Town of Ledyard referral of "Proposed Source Water Protection Plan"

MOTION: To table the Town of Ledyard referral of "Proposed Source Water Protection Plan".

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

5. 2009 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

The Commission concurred that the second meetings in July and December would be held only if needed.

MOTION: To adopt the 2009 Planning Commission meeting schedule as amended.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

IX. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Sherrard said there will be a Committee of Chairpersons meeting on Monday, October 20th at 6:00 p.m. and anyone is welcome to attend, or forward any items of concern for Sherrard to be brought to the meeting.

There will be a groundbreaking ceremony this Friday at 3:00 p.m. for the new Town animal shelter and salt shed.

Chairman Sherrard said he would not be at the next meeting on October 28th and appointed Pritchard as the Acting Chair for that meeting. Steinford said that he also would not be at that meeting.

Sherrard asked if anyone knew if Pizzetta's one-night event was successful. Staff reported in the affirmative.

X. REPORT OF STAFF - None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:29 p.m. made by Roper, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant II