

MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 27, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

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

Acting Chairman Pritchard opened the meeting with roll call at 7:01 p.m.; he seated Kane for Sherrard and appointed Roper as Acting Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of October 13, 2009 and special meeting of October 15, 2009.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 13, 2009 as amended.

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

MOTION: To table approval of the minutes of the special meeting of October 15, 2009, to the November 10, 2009 meeting.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Roper noted that he had received a communication from Mickey Weiss in regards to the Mystic River Residential Care application.

Sydney Vanzandt, GOSA Director, 3 Front Street, spoke to the Commission regarding the Groton Open Space Association (GOSA) and the Merritt Family Forest Trails.

Jim Furlong, 57 Fishtown Lane, GOSA Director, urged the Commission to take no further action in regards to the Merritt Family Forest Trails matter.

Genevieve Cerf, GOSA Director, 17 Crescent Street, spoke to the Commission concerning the Merritt Family Forest Trails property.

Brian Kent, 125 Fishtown Road, spoke to the Commission to rebut comments made by GOSA Directors.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS – None

V. SITE PLANS

1. Fitch High School Parking Lot Access, 101 Groton Long Point Road

Rick Norris spoke to the Commission detailing the plan for removing the current jersey barriers and replacing them with two poles connected by a chain with reflectors.

The Commission felt a third “center” bollard would be helpful.

MOTION: To approve a Site Plan Modification for Fitch High School, 101 Groton Long Point Road with the following modifications:

1. Galvanized caps shall be provided for the poles.
2. Both vertical and horizontal reflectors will be connected throughout the hot dipped galvanized standard quarter inch chain.
3. All staff technical items shall be addressed.

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

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

### 1. Discussion Regarding Merritt Family Forest Trails

Commissioner Fitzgerald had a prepared statement thanking Matt Davis and Mike Murphy for doing the job as requested by the Planning Commission and that criticism of them by some council members was unjustified. He also stated that he felt the Planning Commission has rights to look into this matter.

Commissioner Steinfeld also felt the Commission should have some involvement and asked the Commission to write a letter to the DEP asking them to review their policies on how these grant applications are handled and that the Commission be involved in any future applications in Groton. He strongly disagreed with Ms. Cerf’s statements made this evening.

Commissioner Roper urged the Commission to also send a letter to GOSA asking them to reconsider their position. He was concerned that the positions that have been taken on this property might negatively impact support of open space proposals. Commissioner Roper also asked the Commission to send a letter to the State regarding their management of this grant program and that it is important to know what other groups are doing.

Commissioner Kane opposed writing a letter to the DEP about a certain part of a document without looking at the entire document. He also objected to GOSA not allowing dogs on the property. He stated that the property was bought with state tax dollars and therefore should be reviewed by a state agency.

Commissioner Munn stated that he does not believe that the Commission has standing in the matter and questioned whether such action is within the Town’s charter. He also agreed with Commissioner Steinfeld that the Commission is not pro development, but takes a balanced approach.

Commissioner Zod agreed that this might have a negative impact on how people view open space and generally shared Commissioner Munn’s concerns as to the Commission’s standing in the matter. He feels that the Commission mandate is broader than that of the DEP or GOSA.

Commissioner Pritchard raised concerns about long term management of the property and the State's grant process. He also felt a communication with the DEP should be sent.

The members discussed whether or not a motion and vote would be required with respect to sending a communication to the DEP and GOSA. It was the consensus that a motion and vote would not be required and staff was directed to work with Commissioner Roper to draft a letter to the DEP and a letter to GOSA, both of which would be reviewed by the members at the next meeting, at which time a formal motion and vote could be taken if deemed necessary. The Commission requested that the communication to DEP be constructive and focused towards improving the process, not simply a "complaint".

Staff responded to Commissioners' comments and concerns regarding the Commission's "charter," generally summarized the essential elements of the matter and felt that there is nothing inherently wrong with a municipal planning commission communicating its concerns with another agency of government.

The Commission took a recess at 8:39 pm and reconvened at 8:49 pm.

2. Land Use Regulation Update Project

Staff gave the Commission an update regarding anticipated staff availability and schedule for work on this project.

3. Planning Commission By-laws – No Report

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Commissioner Roper gave Staff a publication regarding green roof systems.

Commissioner Kane attended the School Board meeting held October 22, 2009 and provided the Commission with an update regarding the proposed new middle school.

Commissioner Steinford reminded the Commission that Tuesday, November 3, 2009, is Election Day with a special referendum on the Thames Street improvement project.

2. 2010 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

The Commission felt that the meetings on July 27, 2010 and August 24, 2010 would only be held if necessary, and that there would be no regular meeting scheduled for December 28, 2010.

MOTION: To approve the 2010 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule as amended.

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

3. Town Council Resolution #2009-0259, requesting a report pursuant to CGS 8-24 regarding proposed lease of Town property on Gary Court for the purpose of constructing and operating an electric generating facility

Staff detailed the proposal and addressed the Commission's questions.

Tom Solinsky, CMEEC, responded to the Commission's questions.

**MOTION:** To send a favorable report to the Town Council regarding this CGS 8-24 referral for the necessary Lease and Easement Use Consent Agreement to permit the siting, operation, and maintenance of diesel powered electric generating facilities by SEA (Sustainable Energy Analytics) and CMEEC (Connecticut Municipal Electrical Energy Cooperative) on land at the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant, subject to the following recommended conditions:

- 1) CMEEC shall provide for an emergency power interconnect to the power feed for the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant to assure reliable power for operation of the plant in cases of emergency.
- 2) CMEEC shall obtain administrative site plan approval from the Director of Planning and Development for site access and security improvements at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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

#### VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Pritchard discussed the Committee of Chairpersons meeting he attended in Sherrard's place on October 19, 2009.

#### IX. REPORT OF STAFF

No report from staff.

#### X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:17 p.m. made by Pritchard, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

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Peter Roper, Acting Secretary  
Planning Commission

Prepared by Katie Doolittle  
Office Assistant II