

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 10, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

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

Chairman Sherrard called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF meeting of October 15, 2009 and meeting of October 27, 2009.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 15, 2009 as amended.

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

MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 27, 2009 as amended.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed 4-0-1, 1 abstention (Sherrard).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff mentioned that some commission members will be attending the regional training session by Randall Arendt regarding commercial and residential mixed use centers, on Thursday, November 12th at 5:30 p.m.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Morgan's Run Subdivision, Cow Hill Road – Request for extension for recording of mylars

MOTION: To grant a 90 day extension for recording of mylars for the Morgan's Run Subdivision, Cow Hill Road, to March 5, 2010 for original approval (SUB09-02) and April 1, 2010 for the modification (SUB09-05).

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

2. Mystic Ice House Subdivision, New London Road – Acceptance of public improvements and open space

Staff explained that he previously had some concerns with the condition of the improvements. The apron needed repair. The Town Engineer said the repairs are acceptable to the Town. The town holds a \$29,000 bond which will be held for another year, and the Town Engineer will have to re-examine those aprons; if necessary, the bond would be used to repair the improvements.

MOTION: To recommend acceptance of the public improvements and open space for the Mystic Ice House Subdivision, New London Road.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Pritchard.

Discussion ensued on the condition of the empty lots at the site. Staff said he is concerned by but could not defer acceptance of the improvements because the developer hasn't addressed that issue. The developer does not own the lots in question. Staff is considering zoning action at the site.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Four Winds at Mystic, Noank Ledyard Road – Request for extension for start of construction

Attorney Tom Londregan represented the applicant. Mr. Londregan said that at their extension request last year there were documents they needed to submit to the Town. Since then, all the required documents have been submitted to the Town and they are being reviewed. The Director stated that in large part the delay was a result of the protracted litigation and staff's delays in finalizing its review of documentation.

MOTION: To grant a one year extension for start of construction to Four Winds at Mystic, Noank Ledyard Road, to September 28, 2010.

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

2. Hummingbird Hollow, 110 New London Road

MOTION: To accept an extension to December 17, 2009 from Hummingbird Hollow, 110 New London Road.

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

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Land Use Regulation Update Project

Staff explained that the subdivision regulations and road and drainage standards are in process but moving slowly, and will be the next for the Commission to review. Some draft zoning regulations materials with respect to site plan standards were received from the consultant. The Zoning Commission is working on the use tables and minor amendments to the zoning map. Staff said he is waiting for information from consultant to integrate conservation subdivisions into the zoning regulations.

2. Planning Commission By-Laws - No report
3. Review and action on draft communications to DEP and GOSA regarding the Merritt Family Forest Trails

Staff indicated that, as requested, they worked with Commissioner Roper to produce the drafts in the packet. The Director noted that he had not reviewed the letter provided to the Commission.

Staff recommended, relative to the format, sending a much shorter cover letter to the DEP, with a certain set of recommendations that could be numbered. An addendum for historical background could also be included if the Commission wished.

The Commission discussed the historical context, length of letter, and type of communication to send. They concurred that the objective should be clear, and the letter could be broken into sections, or a letter with an addendum-type format. The letter should be addressed to the Commissioner of DEP, who is new to that position. Staff said the letter should be focused on the DEP's flawed process, and not place blame, to assume that the document is a true consensus document issued by the entire Commission.

Fitzgerald stated that he congratulates GOSA for the good work they have done for the Town, but he was unhappy with how the last meeting went with attacks on commissioners, staff and others, and that GOSA is trying to dictate terms to the Town.

Staff explained to the Commission that Mr. Furlong requested a copy of the Planning Commission's draft letters, but staff did not provide the copy to date as it is the work of the Commission, and not staff. The Commission agreed that this was the proper approach. Staff will work with Commissioners on the document and provide a copy to Mr. Furlong when it is in final form and approved by the Commission.

It was the consensus of the Commission to communicate their suggestions to staff through email.

The Chairman said these letters will be signed by the "Chairman of the Town of Groton Planning Commission and its members", so it should be a consensus of all the members.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission - None
2. New Applications

Staff said an application was received in the Planning Department yesterday for minor amendments to the Pleasant Valley Church site on Grove Avenue.

3. Zoning Commission referral for November 4, 2009 public hearing
Special Permit #313 - 117, 151 & 159 Cow Hill Road (Lawrence Monteiro, Applicant)

Staff explained the history of the original subdivision and the proposed development of a new veterinary clinic, and detailed the common access for the lots.

MOTION: To send a favorable referral to the Zoning Commission for Special Permit #313, 117, 151 & 159 Cow Hill Road.

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

4. Zoning Board of Appeals referral for November 18, 2009 public hearing
ZBA09-10 – 250 Pleasant Valley Road South, Starr Burying Ground Assoc./Owner

Staff explained the referral.

MOTION: Although existing lots appear to be within 1.7 feet of the street line, the Commission is concerned with the 1.6 ft. setback as it could adversely impact future or existing public improvements and should be reviewed for an appropriate setback.

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

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

The Chairman and staff discussed December 15th or December 16th as possible dates for the Commission's holiday party.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff said the 2011 budget process has started for the department. Staff would like to recommend Roper for the SEAT (South East Area Transit) board. Mr. Roper requested additional information on responsibilities of Board members, which staff will provide.

Staff is sending notices to 2,028 affected landowners in all political subdivisions and placing a block ad in the newspaper for a public meeting that DEP will hold here at the Town Hall Annex on Monday, November 30th at 6:30 p.m., relative to FEMA's proposed new flood maps.

The Town has been chosen as a model community for a climate adaptation plan, developing strategies on how the federal, state and local governments can coordinate with each other to adopt to climate change. A stakeholder group is being formed. Three meetings are planned, and the first meeting is scheduled for December 9th, 9 am to 3:45 p.m. A notice will be sent to the Chairman requesting a representative from the Planning Commission.

Staff discussed the Pfizer announcement to eliminate their New London center and the regional impacts and anticipated benefits on the Groton campus.

Staff updated the Commission on the Mystic Seaport Area Multimodal Study. Bob O'Neill from the Zoning Commission will be in the advisory group.

The Director will be on the Management Team overseeing the project with Stonington and the Seaport.

Staff said the Town Manager and the Town Council will be discussing how to proceed on necessary repairs for Thames Street in light of the failed referendum.

Staff said they received a referral from City of Groton today for an access road at West Side Middle School. A gravel road was put in to access the ball fields, now will be used for emergency services. The Commission had no comment.

Staff and the Commission discussed the following items:

- The Marine Science Magnet School and the lease at Eastern Point School.
- Efforts by the Groton Business Association to rename the airport.
- Dialogue between the City and/or Town and Pfizer with respect to repairs to Thames Street as part of the accommodations required with the closing of their New London campus.
- Kane talked to the environmental planner regarding a dumping ground at the Mystic Oral School, and its effect on the pond there. Staff said they would look into it, get any update, and see if there's anything they could do.
- Steinfeld said there will be a ceremony tomorrow at the Submarine Veteran's Memorial on Bridge Street in observance of Veteran's Day.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant III