

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 10, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

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

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Kane, Munn, Steinford
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Tarbox, Zod
Absent: Sherrard
Staff present: Jones, Glemboski, Allen, Silsby

Acting Chairman Pritchard appointed Tarbox to sit for Sherrard and Steinford to sit as Acting Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. October 27, 2015

This item will be added to the next agenda.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff introduced Matt Allen, the new Planner I who recently began in the Office of Planning and Development Services.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS – None.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Cardinal Honda (531 Auto Realty, LLC), 531 Route 12 (SIT15-12)

Clinton Brown, of DiCesare-Bentley Engineers, reviewed the plans to expand the dealership. Background information was given about changes that have occurred on site throughout the years. Information was given about the storm drains, the sewer easement, existing trees and the existing sidewalk on Route 12. Permit history and building upgrades were noted. Maps were reviewed about the proposed display area. Brown stated that the additional paving will bring them up to the 50% allowable limit of expansion of a non-permitted use per the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD) regulations. He spoke about lighting, landscaping, grading, erosion control and storm drainage upgrades, noting that the on-site storm water separator will be replaced with a larger unit. Kim Cardinal Piscatelli and Stan Cardinal were present to answer questions.

Staff referred to documents included in the agenda packet, including information about WRPD regulations and onsite management of stormwater and hazardous materials. She reviewed landscaping, landscaped islands, street trees along Route 12, lighting, and a previous sidewalk agreement. Information was given about the special permit that was recently granted.

An inquiry was made about the overall coverage. Staff stated that it meets the building and impervious coverage requirements and the WRPD regulations. Steinfeld inquired if the proposed area is currently being used, to which Ms. Piscatelli stated affirmatively. Brown noted that the area will be black topped for ease of snow plowing. Steinfeld expressed concerns about adding more pavement. An inquiry was made about cars continuing to be parked on grassy areas.

Stan Cardinal spoke about the requirements made by Honda Corporation, related to the amount of parking spaces, building size and acreage requirements.

Staff stated that the 5-year sidewalk agreement for Pleasant Valley Road South has ended and a multi-use trail has now been established on the opposite side of Pleasant Valley Road South. Inquiries were made about Honda Corporation's requirements, in terms of dealership size. Discussion followed about lighting, WRPD regulations, pervious surfaces, and pavement. Brown stated that cars are currently being parked in the State right-of-way. Information was given about the 50% expansion limit.

MOTION: To approve Site Plan (SIT15-12) for Cardinal Honda, 531 Route 12 with the following modifications:

1. Add the following to Note 21 on the final plans: "There shall be no parking, storage, or display of any vehicles outside of the total 105,846 square feet that is approved for the non-permitted use on this site."
2. Add the following note to the final plans: "Lights along the south property line shall not be activated until additional approvals are received from the Planning Commission for occupying this portion of the site."
3. Provide a minimum of 1 tree for each parking lot island.
4. A note shall be placed on the plan that states, "Any modification to this plan imposed by another Federal, State, or Local agency shall require additional review by Town Staff or the Commission, whichever is appropriate".
5. Technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

Findings

The Planning Commission finds that the upgrading of the landscaping, the use of planters along the building frontage, and the significant natural trees and vegetation along the Pleasant Valley Road frontage meets the intent of Section 7.4 of the Zoning Regulations.

The Planning Commission finds that a sidewalk was previously not required along the Pleasant Valley Road South frontage and that the

construction of a 10-foot wide multi-use path on the opposite side of this street has sufficiently established the sidewalk/path network for this area.

The Planning Commission finds that the site plan meets the intent of Zoning Regulations, including Section 6.12 for the Water Resource Protection District.

Motion was made by Pritchard, seconded by Munn, so voted 4-0-1 (Steinford).

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. SolarCity Corporation, 1240 Poquonnock Road – Connecticut Siting Council Petition No. 1195 for Solar Electric Generating Facility

Staff stated that a site walk was held yesterday, November 9, 2015. The exact location was noted and details were given. Trees will be taken down in certain areas. The location of the solar panels and height was noted. SolarCity has agreed to install buffers adjacent to residential lots. Discussion followed about hours and days of construction.

Fitzgerald inquired about the financial aspect in regards to taxes.

Comments from the Wetlands Agency will also be considered before being sent to the Siting Counsel.

MOTION: To direct staff to draft a letter to the Connecticut Siting Counsel regarding Petition No. 1195, SolarCity Corporation 4.05 Megawatt Community Shared Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating facility, 1240 Poquonnock Road, that outlines the Planning Commission's concerns, including:

1. The hours of operation for driving the support posts should be reduced to 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday, to limit the impact on the adjacent residential area.
2. Additional landscaping should be installed along the southeast border of the facility to buffer the adjacent residential area.
3. The Commission notes that the facility is located in the Water Resource Protection overlay district and appropriate measures should be taken to protect the drinking water resource.

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

2. POCD Draft Themes

Staff recently received the development theme from the consultant. After reviewing the document, Staff will send it to the Planning Commission for further review.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Board of Appeals Referral for Public Hearings on November 18, 2015

- a. ZBA15-14 – Oyster Club, 13 Water Street, Mystic

Staff reviewed the proposal to enclose the existing patio. Information was given about setbacks and Waterfront Design District regulations. She added that quite a bit of ledge exists on the site. The Commission expressed concerns and suggested that a transparent type of door be used, which could be a portable structure for the summer.

The Planning Commission is concerned that the loss of the outdoor seating area will diminish the vitality of Water Street if the area is to be enclosed. The Planning Commission would prefer the enclosure to be transparent.

- b. ZBA15-15 – Community of Hope, 120 Walker Hill Road

Staff stated that the applicant did not make the deadline for the mailings. This item will be postponed until the December 8, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

2. Report of Commission

Tarbox expressed concerns again about the signs at Christopher's. Staff has brought this up to the enforcement officer.

An inquiry was made about the former Pfizer Day Care Facility on High Rock Road. Staff stated that a new site plan application has been received.

3. New Applications
 - a. The Sandbox Indoor Volleyball Facility, 1500 Gold Star Highway
 - b. High Rock Inn, 40 High Rock Road

Staff gave a brief overview of the new applications.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Site walk yesterday was attended by 4 members.

Tarbox stated that she will not be able to attend the December 8, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

A special meeting for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will be held on Thursday, December 17, 2015.

A holiday party will be held after that special meeting for the Planning Commission at the Seahorse Restaurant. Other land use commissions would also be invited.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:22 p.m. was made by Steinford, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinford, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II