

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 19, 2014 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Acting Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Kane, Munn, Steinfeld, Sherrard (8:20 pm)

Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Tarbox, Zod

Absent:

Also present: Oefinger, Norris, Schneider

Staff present: Reiner, Jones, Glemboski, Silsby

Acting Chairman Pritchard appointed Zod to sit for Sherrard and Steinfeld to sit as Acting Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES OF October 28, 2014

MOTION: To adopt the Planning Commission minutes of October 28, 2014, as amended.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Subdivision Regulation Amendments – Staff had nothing to report.
2. Plan of Conservation and Development - Planning Commission Workshop Update

The next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2014.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission – None
2. Town Council Referral under CGS 8-24 regarding the Lease of Fitch Middle School to LEARN, 61 Fort Hill Road

Staff gave some background information as to when this item was previously discussed with the Planning Commission and recommendations made to the Town Council. Staff explained the new proposal which would include a 2-year lease at a different section of the school than had been previously reviewed. A copy of the draft lease was distributed, including a plan of the new location.

Town Manager Oefinger gave additional background information and gave specifics as to which sections of the building would be used. Details were given about

the lease. Oefinger noted that there will be the potential for a one-year extension though the Town will have total control of what is decided upon. He stated that LEARN will not be in the non-sprinklered portion of the building. Additional information about potential use of Fitch Middle School in the future was noted. Information was given about the roof and asbestos.

MOTION: The Planning Commission supports the continued educational partial use of Fitch Middle School by lease to Project Learn.

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

3. New Applications – None.

Glemboski left the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

4. Capital Improvement Program – Review and Recommendations

Oefinger thanked the Commission for reviewing the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). He gave a brief overview of the CIP package and explained that it is a planning document intended to identify projects that the Town needs to consider over the next 6 years. He thanked OPDS Staff for their hard work in preparing this document. Norris gave an overview of the CIP preparation.

The Commission reviewed each project with Staff, and supported the CIP, as presented. Significant discussion of items follows.

Oefinger gave background information about the Board of Education's requests and the need to prioritize.

Kane left the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

4) Parks and Recreation, A) Facilities, B) Improvements

One of these projects is the development of fields on the Merritt property. Oefinger noted that the Board of Education is considering the site for a new middle school. He noted that a meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2014, to discuss the school project. The Planning Commission was invited to participate in this meeting.

Sherrard arrived at 8:20 p.m.

Sherrard asked whether there is anything in the CIP regarding trail development at the Copp Family Park. He noted that the Copp Park Board had discussed the importance of requesting money for trails and that he thought the Parks and Recreation Director had developed a CIP project. Oefinger will look into this.

5) Education, A) School Design

Oefinger noted that the narrative will be updated to include funding received after 2007.

5) Education, G) S.B. Butler

The potential of S.B. Butler being closed was noted.

6) Public Buildings, E) Groton Public Library

Public Works Director Schneider stated that because Groton is considered a “distressed community”, the Town received grant funding as part of a State public Library Construction Grant. Specifics were given about the History Room and other site improvements to be done as part of this project.

The Planning Commission is strongly in favor of the Library History Room.

8) Planning and Economic Development, A) Economic Assistance Fund

The Planning Commission strongly supports this item.

8) Planning and Economic Development, B) Mystic Education Center

Oefinger noted that this project involves the review of any future plan for the property.

8) Planning and Economic Development, C) Open Space Acquisition

Oefinger stated that this fund has depleted quite a bit, noting that approximately only \$19,000 is left in the account. He suggested that a \$50,000 annual funding contribution would be better than the proposed \$25,000.

The Planning Commission strongly supports increasing the funding to \$50,000.

9) Water pollution Control Facility, E) Route 117 Sewers

Schneider explained the proposal to bring sewers up to the intersection in Ledyard.

The Planning Commission strongly supports this item.

Pritchard summarized all the items that the Planning Commission strongly recommends:

- The history room at the Groton Public Library.
- Increase funding to \$50,000 for open space.
- Route 117 Sewers
- The Economic Assistance Fund
- Board of Education funding request should be prioritized

Sherrard inquired about the potential to have water taxis and any burden that would be imposed on the Town going forward. A CIP project may be developed for this in the future.

The Commission noted that while they do not have concerns with the school projects, it seems unlikely that all the studies can be accomplished in the proposed time

frame. They recommended the Board of Education re-review the projects and set priorities.

VI. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

The Planning Commission discussed setting a date for their holiday get-together. It was determined that December 16th would be the best date. Oefinger clarified that no town money will be used.

VII. REPORT OF STAFF

a. Legal Update

Staff gave an update regarding the Oat Re-subdivision and the Mystic Glen Open Space Re-subdivision appeals.

Dime Bank has filed an action separate from the Oat appeal, to determine whether it has the legal rights to use the access off of Groton Long Point Road. If the action is successful, it will withdraw the appeal of the Commission's decision. The court should decide by the end of December.

The record and transcript for the Mystic Glen appeal have been filed. Both parties have filed briefs. A trial date should be set during a December status conference.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:46 p.m. was made by Pritchard, seconded by Zod, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinfeld, Acting Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II