

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
DECEMBER 13, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Kane, Munn, Pritchard, Steinford, Zod
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Tarbox
Excused Absence:
Staff present: Jones, Glemboski, Gilot

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. November 22, 2016

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of October 25, 2016 as written.

Motion made by Kane, seconded by Zod, so voted unanimously. Motion passed 3-0, 2 abstentions (Munn, Steinford).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. SUBDIVISIONS - None

V. SITE PLANS

1. The Sandbox (SIT16-12), 1500 Gold Star Highway – Site plan modification

Brendan Woolrich, Sandbox Sports LLC, presented the modification request. He would like to add an additional phase to the original site plan approved by the Planning Commission, due to financing. Phase I will be the construction of a fabric tension structure on the same pad as originally approved. A trailer for bathroom facilities which will be ADA compliant and connected to the utilities on the site will be placed next to the fabric tension structure. The type of building structure is the only thing to be modified in the new Phase I. Mr. Woolrich expects that in approximately two years, he will secure financing to build the steel frame building after they prove the business model.

Staff said as part of the phasing, the septic system will be built and the portable bathrooms will be hooked up to it. The Fire Marshal and Building Official reviewed the plan and had no issues with the fabric building.

The commission had concerns on how the staff would enforce this to ensure that eventually the steel structure is built. Mr. Woolrich said he doesn't want a bad looking, ill kept facility. The need to put up this building was due to financing requirements. They will keep this as long as it works for them; if it falls into disrepair, they will apply for financing for the steel facility. The life span of a fabric building is approximately 5 – 7 years before corrosion and tears become an issue. He expects to replace the fabric building before then.

The commission asked staff if there was any way to limit the amount of time the fabric building could be used. Staff said they could put a time limit on the phasing. Also, the blight code could be enforced if the building becomes unsightly. Restrooms will be accessed outside the building. Mr. Woolrich explained that the utility expenses will be much higher with the fabric building, so that would not be the most efficient use of their dollars. Staff reiterated that they are approving a phasing plan, not a site plan. Staff said the parking meets the zoning requirements.

Wind-proofing and wind loading requirements were discussed.

MOTION: To approve the Site Plan Modification (SIT16-12) and phasing plan for The Sandbox, 1500 Gold Star Highway.

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

2. Gold Star Professional Office (SIT16-13), 479 Gold Star Highway

Bob Pfanner, Engineer, represented Bob Reardon, the owner of 479 Gold Star Highway. The site was the former emissions station for the state, and then a fish market. The proposal is to convert the building to professional offices. The site work will be minimal with minor architectural changes; sidewalks will be installed at the front and back and broken pavement and curb will be repaired; trees on the site will remain; the trash receptacles for the offices may be relocated to the existing propane pad or remain in the existing area. The drainage for the site was reviewed. Signage will consist of two signs; a variance was granted for a sign in the right-of-way.

Staff said the site will be cleaned up; minor changes were reviewed. Staff said they would recommend that the existing bituminous pad be replaced with concrete if it is to be used for dumpsters. The Inland Wetlands Agency determined that no wetland permit was required. The pedestrian access from the parking lots was reviewed. Staff said the parking is adequate. The drainage on the site was detailed. The site is located in the WRPD. There would be no increase in impervious. The old mechanical equipment will be removed and new equipment will be installed on the roof, with containment. The traffic pattern was reviewed. Staff said full cutoff fixtures will replace the existing exterior light fixtures.

MOTION: To approve Site Plan (SIT16-13) for Gold Star Hwy Professional Center at 479 Gold Star Highway with the following modifications:

1. Provide notes on the final plan stating:
 - a. A concrete dumpster pad shall be required if dumpsters are used on the site
 - b. All landscaped areas on the site shall be cleaned-up prior to a Certificate of Occupancy
 - c. All exterior lighting fixtures shall be full cut-offs.
2. Any technical items raised by staff shall be addressed.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford; motion passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Notice of Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) for Off-Airport Tree Obstruction Removal at the Groton-New London Airport

Staff reviewed the notice for tree removal at the airport. They noted that it is selective clearing and easements will be needed from property owners.

The Commission had no comment.

2. Report of Commission - None

3. New Applications

Staff said a site plan application was submitted for new signage for the Grasso Tech high school. A site plan is required because a portion of the driveway and the new sign are located on town property.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

The commission discussed cutoff lighting and enforcement of site plan requirements, such as lighting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:03 pm was made by Steinfeld, seconded by Zed, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinfeld, Vice Chairman/Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant III