

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

Chairman Sherrard called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

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

Chairman Sherrard appointed Fitzgerald to sit for Munn.

II. APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES OF December 9, 2014, POCD Workshop
December 9, 2014 and Planning Commission minutes of February 3, 2015.

MOTION: To adopt the Planning Commission minutes of December 9, 2014

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously, as written.

MOTION: To adopt the POCD Workshop minutes of December 9, 2014

Motion made by Fitzgerald, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously, as written.

MOTION: To adopt the Planning Commission minutes of February 3, 2015

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously, as annotated.

Planner Cullen arrived 7:05 p.m.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Mystic Weigh Re-subdivision Phases I and II, Flanders Road – Reduction of bonds and modification/clarification of bus stop design

Staff explained that the owner is asking for a 10% reduction of the bond for Phases 1 and 2. Public Works and Planning Staff agree with these changes.

MOTION: To reduce the public improvement performance bond for Phase I of the Mystic Weigh Re-subdivision to \$165,000 (10% of the initial bond value).

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously

MOTION: To reduce the public improvement performance bond for Phase II of the Mystic Weigh Re-subdivision to \$20,000 (10% of the initial bond value).

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously

Gary Gustamachio of JSG Development and Attorney William McCoy were present.

Staff gave background information on the Planning Commission's request for a bus shelter for the original approval and what improvements have been completed to date. Instead of building a bus shelter at the entrance to the subdivision along Flanders Road and Ensign Drive, alternative suggestions would be to eliminate the requirement or to build a large concrete pad.

Attorney McCoy gave background information and expressed his concerns for building a bus shelter in that location, a public right-of-way, as well as the maintenance of the shelter.

Inquiries were made about the benefit of a bus stop, the number of students who would utilize it currently and in the future, and the amount of homes located in the subdivision itself. Future bonding and phases were also discussed. Information was given about the public hearing that took place in 2004.

Concerns were raised about the Town maintaining this bus stop. The Planning Commission and the applicant agreed that installing a concrete pad with a bench would be sufficient.

MOTION: To modify the requirement for Mystic weight re-subdivision for a school bus shelter on Flanders Road and to accept a concrete pad adjacent to the sidewalk with a bench. The final design shall be approved by the Planning and Public Works Departments.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard, so voted 3 in favor, 1 opposed (Steinford). Motion Carried.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Mixed Re-Use, 534 Long Hill Road (SIT14-12)

Engineer Pat Lafayette was present.

Staff reviewed the site along with the maps and explained the proposal to turn this property into a mixed use. She spoke about the Long Hill watershed, drainage improvements, and impervious surfaces. Additional information was given about no change in runoff, impact fees, the existing concrete sidewalk, and large trees. This would be a low intensity use.

Building a connection over to the adjacent parking lots was brought up as a point of interest. After discussion about the potential of a parking lot, it was decided that a note should be added to the plans to state "if in the future, etc".

The applicant would agree with adding a note about future need. Discussion followed about other abutting properties and potential connections.

MOTION: To approve SIT 14-12, 534 Long Hill Road, Groton for mixed use (tarot reader and residence) subject to the following modifications:

1. The site is within the Long Hill Watershed and therefore subject to a voluntary impact fee of \$1,890 as a contribution of funds towards drainage improvements within the watershed. As a parcel of land less than 10 acres with an increase in impervious surface, the site is subject to fee of \$6,000 per acre and the site is 0.315 of an acre in size.
2. A note shall be added to the plan that the Planning Commission reserves the right for future connections to both sides adjacent commercial properties to the Connection Fund - Pin #168920909172 AKA 542 Long Hill Road
3. Technical items of staff shall be addressed.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously

2. Toll Gate Plaza, 516-528 Gold Star Highway (SIT14-13)

Matthew White of Angus MacDonald and Gary Sharpe Associates reviewed plans and explained how the site is going to be re-arranged. He spoke about the pumps, parking, and the driveway. Information was given about his request for a waiver of a sidewalk along Toll Gate Road. Other details were given about storm water runoff. He stated that other approvals have been granted from the Inland Wetland Agency, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Zoning Commission. The impervious surface will be reduced. A recommendation from Groton Utilities about storm water separators has been agreed upon as best management practices.

Staff reiterated the applicant's comments about approvals granted, moving gas pumps, installing a larger canopy, parking, lighting, landscaping, and the location of the convenience store. Zoning requirements have been met. Staff feels this design will work well. Information about the request for a sidewalk waiver along Toll Gate Road was given.

Inquiries were made about safety in the parking lot and hours of operation. Owner Nick Sahin stated that the hours of operation will most likely be from 6:00 am until 10:00 pm. An additional inquiry was made about the building being a partial 2-story building. A suggestion was made to add a couple of additional trees to be used as a buffer, along the north property line. The merit of the sidewalk along Toll Gate Road was discussed.

The Planning Commission felt that the changes to the design will be a big improvement.

MOTION: To approve a waiver of section 7.5-5 C of the Zoning Regulations and to not require a frontage sidewalk along Toll Gate Road based upon the following:

1. The Commission finds that the Master Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Plan recommends the sidewalk network be established on the north side of Toll Gate Road.
2. The Commission finds that the site is not located within a recommended sidewalk infill area or a priority network area, as established within the Plan of Conservation and Development.

3. The existing trees and power lines along Toll Gate Road prohibit the reasonable installation of the sidewalk and the removal of the large evergreen trees along this frontage would reduce the established buffering for the existing residences on the north side of Toll Gate Road.

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

MOTION: To approve a site plan (SIT14-13) for Tollgate Plaza LLC, 516-528 Gold Star Highway subject to the following modifications:

1. The canopy shall be designed to meet the following requirements in order to be consistent with the site plan objective for lighting under Section 8.4-3 of the Zoning Regulations:
 - a. The sides (fascias) of the canopy shall not have mounted lights or be illuminated.
 - b. Light fixtures shall have flat lenses and shall be completely recessed into the underside of the canopy.
2. Lighting on the site shall meet all building code requirements for energy conservation.
3. Technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

The Planning Commission notes that there are sufficient landscaping and shade trees currently on site or shown on the final plan to meet the intent of Section 7.4 of the Zoning Regulations.

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

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Subdivision Regulation Amendments – No action was taken. This item will be removed from the next agenda.
2. Plan of Conservation and Development - Planning Commission Workshop Update

Staff noted that the most current information has been given to the consultants but no response has been received to date.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Town Council Referral of Sisisky Property Acquisition under CGS Section 8-24 – 2 Parcels on Flanders Road

Staff spoke about the two parcels on the West side of Flanders Road adjacent to the landfill. She noted that Public Works is in agreement to use the area basically as a buffer. Maps were reviewed.

MOTION: The Planning Commission supports the donation of the two (2) parcels of Sisisky property on the west side of Flanders Road, for future use by the Town.

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

2. Town of Groton Municipal Coastal Program Update – Discussion of Process

Staff distributed an outline that they put together and requested that all Planning Commission members bring the outline to the February 24th meeting. Discussion will begin that night and continue at subsequent Planning Commission meetings.

3. Election of Officers

MOTION: To elect James Sherrard as Chairman of the Planning Commission

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

MOTION: To elect Jeff Pritchard as Vice Chairman/Secretary of the Planning Commission

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Fitzgerald, so voted unanimously

4. Report of Commission – None.

5. New Applications – None.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Staff distributed a newsletter including information about the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies annual conference scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2015. Those interested in attending should contact the Planning Department.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

In regards to an inquiry about Central Hall, it was noted that construction has begun on one of the parking lots.

A concern was raised about not expanding the current node up Route 1 in Mystic. An inquiry was made about the Oat Re-subdivision/Dime Bank lawsuit, to which staff will report back on.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. was made by Fitzgerald, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.



Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II