

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chairman Sherrard called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Kane, Munn, Pritchard, Sherrard, Steinford
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Tarbox
Absent: Zod
Staff present: Jones, Reiner, Gilot, Town Attorney Michael Carey

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

III. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Watrous Subdivision SUB 14-01 – Acceptance of Open Space at 212 ½ Fort Hill Road

Staff reviewed the location of the Watrous Subdivision which is a three lot subdivision on North Pleasant Valley Road. There was no appropriate land for open space in that subdivision, so the owner offered this parcel which he owned. This parcel is much more desirable to the Town as open space due to its location and connection to other open space.

MOTION: To recommend acceptance of the 5.5 acres of Open Space at 212 ½ Fort Hill Road for the Watrous Resubdivision.

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

2. Morgan’s Run Subdivision Modification SUB 15-01, 16, 18 & 20 Cow Hill Road

Peter Brown, the applicant, requested a waiver to allow the issuance of building permits for the last two building lots before he completes the sidewalk or driveway aprons, which he cannot do until the asphalt plants open.

Staff explained the subdivision regulation that does not allow the final two building permits of a subdivision to be issued until the public improvements have been completed. Staff said the asphalt plants are not open, and there is a bond in place for the improvements. Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for those two lots until the improvements are completed

MOTION: To approve a waiver of Section 5.4 (1) of the Subdivision Regulations to allow the issuance of the last two building permits before the public improvements associated with the Morgan’s Run Subdivision have been completed and offered for acceptance by the Town with the following requirements and finding:

1. The public improvement bond shall remain in effect.

2. The certificates of occupancy shall not be granted until the public improvements have been completed and offered for acceptance by the Town.

The Planning Commission finds that the granting of the waiver will not be detrimental to public safety, health or welfare.

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

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Plan of Conservation and Development - Planning Commission Workshop Update

Staff met with the consultants recently, and should be hearing from them soon. Staff should have more information in the next few weeks.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Commission Referral for Public Hearing on March 4, 2015
 - a. Special Permit # 344, 715 Noank Ledyard Rd, Thomas Vignato, Applicant

Staff explained the referral to expand the Fields of Fire paintball facility to include additional outdoor recreation opportunities.

MOTION: The Commission recommended in favor of the special permit, but is concerned about buffering or screening of the facility from I-95.

Motion made by Sherrard, second by Pritchard. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Zoning Board of Appeals Referral for Public Hearing on March 11, 2015
 - a. Variance ZBA#15-02, 40 High Rock Road, Stonington Behavioral Health, Inc., Applicant

Attorney Carey stated that on this application it should be clear the commission should not make any insensitive or derogatory comments about this (or any) application. Commissioners should take special care to keep comments restricted to the relevant matter, not the circumstances of potential residents of the building in question.

Staff explained the referral. The site is zoned OMF. The building formerly housed the Pfizer daycare center. The applicant is proposing a 192 bed facility for accommodations for participants of the Stonington Institute. The applicant is requesting a use variance for the definition of "motel" in the regulations. Staff read the definition of "hotel/motel" from the regulations.

Linnea McCaffery, Robinson & Cole, representing the applicant, said she was present to answer any questions.

The Chairman said the next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for March 10th, the day before the Zoning Board of Appeals is scheduled to hear the application. He recommended that the Commission table the referral until the next meeting to allow staff some time to prepare a draft motion. The Commission discussed the definition of hotel/motel, and the actual variance requested. The Commission discussed the definition of “transient” and what the trigger would be that makes a hotel a hotel, not a residence.

Attorney Carey advised the commission that if anyone receives any written comments in the nature of his previous statement, s/he should give the communication to staff, and it should not to be considered part of this referral, and is not to be shared with the other commissioners.

Motion to table the referral to the next regular meeting on March 10, 2015, was made by Sherrard, and seconded by Steinfeld. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Noank Zoning Commission Referral for Public Hearing on March 17, 2015

a. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Section 2.26 Architectural Design

Staff explained the referral. The Commission had no comment.

4. Review Draft Municipal Coastal Program Sections 1, 2 and 3

Some comments made by the Commission:

- Section 2 – those reports should be moved to an appendix, since they do not add anything to the actual plan.
- It should be made clear that the subdivisions (City, GLP) are not included
- Preparing for Climate Change (3.2.5) – this is not a technical, scientific document, and shouldn’t be included in this section.

Staff said Section 4 will be discussed during the next regular meeting.

5. Report of Commission

Pritchard said he would not be present at the next two meetings. Fitzgerald said he would not be present at the next meeting.

Tarbox explained to the Commission that they should postpone agenda items to the next meeting, rather than table.

6. New Applications

Staff said the site plan application for Mystic Indoor Sports at 90 Welles Road was submitted.

VI. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

The Chairman reminded the Commission that the annual CFPZA dinner meeting will be held on the evening of March 26th. He asked staff to send the information and forms to the Commission.

Chairman Sherrard said he will email Commissioner Zod to check his status.

Chairman appreciates if you can advise staff if you are not able to attend a meeting, so that there is no risk of not having a quorum.

VII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff is working on the final scope for the market analysis and zoning audit. They will be putting together a steering committee comprised of various commissioners, staff and public.

Staff said they will be asking for funding for additional staffing to implement the proposed changes to the zoning regulations and support the economic development outreach goals of the Town.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:53 p.m. was made by Steinford, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant III