

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 14, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

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

I. ROLL CALL

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

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES OF March 24, 2015

MOTION: To adopt the Planning Commission minutes of March 24, 2015

Motion made by Tarbox, seconded by Fitzgerald, so voted unanimously, as amended.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

IV. SITE PLANS

1. New England Cycle Works, Gold Star Highway – Extension Request

Staff reviewed the maps, noting that this is a one-year start of construction extension. The original site plan was approved on June 14, 2011 and a site plan extension would be required next year since site plans are good for 5 years under Connecticut Statutes.

Jeff Welcome explained the reason for the request for a start of construction extension, noting that a one-year extension had been approved last year as well.

MOTION: To approve an extension for start of construction until June 14, 2016

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

2. Silver Oak, LLC, 90 Welles Road (SIT15-01)

Peter Gardner and Peter Springsteel were present for this application.

Land Surveyor Peter Gardner has been working with Architect Peter Springsteel and Matt McCormack, principal owner of the property. Gardner reviewed maps for this 5.3 acre site which is zoned CB-15. The proposal includes tearing down the existing building to rebuild a clubhouse and office area, construct a new multisport facility, and install an overflow gravel parking area in the WRPD zone. Information was given about sidewalks, boundaries, vegetation, buffers, and a new access at the

southeast corner of the property. Gardner gave specifics about the revised septic system.

Peter Springsteel, 105 Starr Street, Mystic, reviewed the maps and spoke about improving the existing parking area, adding overflow parking, and the main and secondary access points. Currently there are four (4) indoor tennis courts. A new indoor sports facility will be built and both buildings will be connected by a clubhouse and a foyer between the two of them. Each facility will have a separate entrance. He spoke about an outdoor landscaped terrace surrounded by a wall, a small mezzanine area to be used as an office and a conference room, and building siding. Elevation and building heights were reviewed. Cypress trees would be planted along the front facade. The building official and fire marshal have been consulted.

Staff stated that the tennis club was approved in 1996, under a special permit as a private club. The zone changed to CB-15 a few months ago. The existing parking lot will stay, new landscaped islands and lights will be added, and a sidewalk will connect the parking lot to the building entrances. Additional information was given about landscaping along the front of the property, buffer requirements, and vegetated areas. The Ledge Light Health District (LLHD) has approved the activity with conditions. The onsite septic tanks will be relocated. Information was given about the drainage system and the frontage sidewalk waiver request. The fire marshal has reviewed the site and had minor comments about the design. Public Works and the Building/Zoning Official have approved the site plan. A separate lighting plan has been received. All lights will be full cut-offs and the height of light poles will be provided on the final plans.

An inquiry was made about the applicant taking responsibility for installing a visual barrier to the abutting property, if need be. Gardner noted that the development would meet what is required by zoning. Other inquiries were made about the parking lot requirements, building heights, serving alcohol, the sprinkler system, septic tanks, drainage requirements, impervious surfaces, and clubhouse membership,

MOTION: To approve waivers to Sections 7.5-2 and 7.5-4 of the Zoning Regulations and not require a frontage sidewalk or an internal connecting sidewalk based on Section 7.5-5 C of the Zoning Regulations for the following reasons:

1. The Commission finds that the POCD and the Master Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Trail Plan do not recommend frontage sidewalks along the area of Welles Road.
2. The Commission finds that there are no sidewalks within the immediate vicinity of the site and there will be no significant pedestrian movement to the site or between this site and those adjacent to it.

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

MOTION: To approve the Silver Oak LLC Site Plan (SIT15-01), 90 Welles Road, with the following modification:

1. Provide detail notes for parking lot lights on the final plan.
2. Address any outstanding Ledge Light Health District and Fire Marshal Requirements.

3. All technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed

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

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

The meeting recessed for two minutes and reconvened at 7:52 p.m.

3. Fields of Fire Paintball Facility Expansion, Noank Ledyard Road (SIT15-03)

Tom Vignato, Fields of Fire owner, reviewed the plans and explained the proposal to expand the facility to include an aerial ropes course, a remote control car track, a mountain bike track, a new speedball field, widened access driveway, and expanded parking. The proposed activities would bring in more types of guests and attract more tourists. A video was shown of an aerial adventure park and information was given about the company who would be installing the aerial apparatus. Vignato stated that a wetlands permit was granted to widen the entrance driveway by 8 feet. Trees will not be damaged by the construction and installation of the cables on the trees for the aerial ropes course. He hopes to begin construction before May. Details were given about hours of operation, parking, signage, marketing, underground power lines, and a landscaped buffer. There is no water or sewer on the property. He explained his request for a frontage sidewalk waiver.

Staff stated that the property is zoned industrial and residential. A wetlands permit and a special permit were previously granted. She noted that everything on the property is basically temporary. She gave details about the pervious parking lot. The LLHD and fire marshal have minor concerns that will be addressed by notes. She spoke about the sidewalk waiver request and explained that the property across the street is zoned residential, which is where the sidewalk Bicycle, Pedestrian & Trails Master Plan recommends it to be. Indoor pathways from gravel parkways will be built in order to get to staging buildings.

Inquiries were made about the fence along I-95, signage, the term of the leased property (40 years), the distance of the aerial activities, parking requirements, and lighting. Discussion followed about having lighting available if customers are still finishing up activities at dusk. Vignato stated that he could add a note to the plans to add emergency lighting. Staff stated that adding a non-glare lighting stipulation would be covered under technical items. Regarding an inquiry about selling food in the future, Staff stated that the applicant would be required to submit input from the Planning Commission as well as contacting the LLHD if food is to be prepared and sold on site. Additional inquiries were made about telephone usage for emergencies and using temporary lights at night. Staff stated that an additional condition could be added to allow temporary lighting only with administrative approval from the OPDS. In regards to a concern that permanent lights should be on site, Staff recommended adding language to the motion that "emergency and temporary lighting shall be shown on the plan".

MOTION: To approve waivers to Sections 7.5-2 and 7.5-4 of the Zoning Regulations and not require a frontage sidewalk or an internal sidewalk

based on Section 7.5-5 C of the Zoning Regulations for the following reasons:

1. The Commission finds that the Master Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Plan recommends sidewalks on the east side of Noank-Ledyard Road and that any development on that side of the road will likely be required to install sidewalks.
2. The Commission finds that there will be no significant pedestrian movement to the site or between this site and those adjacent to it.

Motion by Pritchard, seconded by Tarbox, so voted unanimously

MOTION: To approve the Fields of Fire Paintball Facility Expansion (SIT15-03), 715 Noank-Ledyard Road with the following modifications:

- 1) Emergency and temporary lighting shall be shown on the plan
- 2) All technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed

The Commission finds that the phased parking plan is consistent with Section 7.2-16 of the Zoning Regulations and that gravel is an acceptable alternative parking surface in that it reduces impacts to surface and ground water resources.

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

V. OLD BUSINESS – None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. City of New London Referrals for Public Hearings on April 16, 2015
 - a. Historic Overlay District (Section 440), Anthony Silvestri
The Planning Commission had no concerns.
 - b. Zone Map Amendment (Coit Street West Historic Overlay District), Anthony Silvestri
The Planning Commission had no concerns.

2. Review of Draft Municipal Coastal Program Section 5.1 – 5.4

MOTION: To postpone this item until April 28, 2015

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

3. Community Market analysis/Land Use Regulatory Audit – Focus Group
Action on this item is postponed until April 28, 2015.
4. Report of Commission – None.

5. New Applications – None.

VII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Acting Chairman Pritchard gave a recap of the Committee of Chairpersons meeting held on Monday April 13th. The following items were brought up: the school facilities plan and the reorganization of the OPDS.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff distributed information about the Dime Bank judgment pertaining to the McDonald Court Lot/Oat Re-subdivision. Staff explained that a new re-subdivision application is to be submitted.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:52 p.m. was made by Tarbox, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

Barbara Tarbox, Acting Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II