

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 23, 2017 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Kane, Munn, Steinfeld, Zod
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald
Excused Absence: Tarbox
Staff present: Jones, Allen, Galetta

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. April 25, 2017

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of April 25, 2017, as amended

Motion made by Kane, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

2. May 9, 2017

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of May 9, 2017, as amended

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Kane, so voted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. SUBDIVISIONS - None

V. SITE PLANS

1. Walker Hill Road Tank Replacement (SIT17-02), 105 Walker Hill Road

Dave Corollino, of Groton Utilities (GU), presented the application to the Commission. This proposal is to replace the existing Walker Hill Road Water Storage Tank with a new 2.2 million gallon tank. The existing 1.5 million gallon tank is 75 years old and requires replacement due to structural deterioration. The existing tank will be demolished after the new tank is constructed. The larger tank will result in a 10% gain in volume and have the ability to provide for future needs. This tank supplies water protection for Navy housing.

A small triangle shaped area on Seely School Drive will be deeded to the Town. There is an existing sidewalk and pedestrian walkway on the east side. In addition, a 10' wide bituminous sidewalk will be installed for use as a multi-use trail that may eventually connect to an existing bike path.

The project will be constructed in two phases. The new tank will be built in phase one followed by the construction of a pump station and multi-use trail in phase two. The new concrete tank will have no lights or antennas. Street trees will be planted on Walker Hill Road and Seely School Drive per Town of Groton Zoning Regulations. Drainage off the new tank will discharge to a level spreader. The drainage calculations have been reviewed by the Town Engineer.

The pump station has not previously existed on the site. The plan is to use gray paint for better blending with the existing environment and easier maintenance in the long term.

MOTION: To approve a site plan (SIT17-02) for the Walker Hill Road Water Tank Replacement, 105 Walker Hill Road, subject to the following modifications:

1. The landscape plan shall be modified to include shade trees along Seely School Drive in accordance with Section 7.4-3 of the Zoning Regulations.
2. All technical items raised by staff shall be addressed.

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

2. Central Hall Modification (SIT17-04), 18-22 West Main Street (CAM)

Staff noted that Central Hall is not ready for discussion this evening. This item was postponed to the next meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Zoning Board of Appeals Referral for a Public Hearing on May 24, 2017
 - a. ZBA#17-04 – OLIO Restaurant, 33 Kings Highway – Continued*

Staff reviewed a revised plan with the Commission. The location of the service window was not shown on the plan; however, the dimensions for the proposed structures were found to be accurately scaled.

The Commission voiced concerns about the impact the proposed addition will have on pedestrian traffic onsite.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Commission Referral for a Public Hearing on June 7, 2017
 - a. SPEC#353, Luxury Cat Kennel, 1352 North Road

Staff presented an overview of this application for the Commission explaining that they have already seen it relative to the variance application that is also required. Assuming the variance is granted, this referral will go to the Zoning Commission for Special Permit to convert 540 sq. ft. of a barn for a cat kennel business. The subject location is 1352 North Road where the applicant's father resides. An existing barn on the property will house the cat kennel business. It is designed as a relatively small operation that will include an office and 10 enclosures that will house 20 cats. There is one additional enclosure for a sick animal to be quarantined per State of Connecticut regulations.

Staff noted that the current regulations for kennels were ostensibly written for dog kennels. There are stipulations about distances from property lines and outdoor areas for animals. The kennel under discussion is for cats and is completely contained indoors, therefore, concerns that might be based on the kenneling of dogs do not apply. Current Special Permit regulation criteria should not cause any concerns as there are only 3 parking spaces required, there is no expansion of the existing building, there is an existing paved driveway and the property fronts on a State road where there is plenty of width. Planning Staff did not see any obvious concerns. The location has public water utilities with a septic system that the kennel will be attached to. The kennel waste will be self-contained and

disposed of with fold up inserts that will be taken away. The property is rather large with approximately 12 acres. There is one lot to the south (1342 North Road) that is fairly close, however, the applicant's close relation lives there and supports the business. The house on this lot lies approximately 125' from the barn. The next closest house, at 1341 North Road, lies approximately 250' from the barn. Staff explained that any expected traffic impact will be mitigated by a service that will be offered to pick up and deliver the cats from customers' residences to kennel and back.

Staff noted the application will need site plan approval but that will probably be administrative. Staff will make it quite clear that this is for cats only and cannot be converted to a dog kennel. The Commission stressed its concern that this is indeed made very clear.

1. Report of Commission

Steinford noted that the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant has been demolished. Staff noted that this is an existing non-conforming building and there is a wall that has been left standing. The rebuild and remodel will be conducted around the wall. He also noted that he was disappointed not to be able to view the TIF meeting on the Groton TV Channel. Staff noted that the first 15 minutes had audio problems and it will eventually be shown in its entirety. Steinford also expressed his disappointment with the slow progress of the Central Hall Building project which has involved a considerable amount of staff time and cost over the past several years.

2. New Applications

Staff noted that an application has been received for the expansion of the Old Mystic Fire District parking lot on Cow Hill Road. This project will require a Wetlands application and Site Plan approval.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff advised there is a second public open house on the Joint Land Use Study on Wednesday, May 31, 2017 at the Waterford Town Hall. Two identical sessions are scheduled for 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Staff noted that at this evening's meeting the Town Council Committee of the Whole reviewed a draft ordinance to create a combined Planning and Zoning Commission. The Town Council will introduce the ordinance and schedule a Public Hearing at the meeting on June 6, 2017. The plan is to hold a Special Meeting for a public hearing on June 20, 2017. If the ordinance passes the Planning Commission would become a Planning and Zoning Commission and the Zoning Commission would no longer exist. The Commission discussed the impact of the action with staff. Staff noted that the Commissioners may attend the Town Council meeting and speak under public communications to voice their concerns about the ordinance. The Commission will speak as individuals on June 6. Additionally, they will develop a statement on behalf of the entire Commission to be submitted at the public hearing. They can forward their concerns to staff who will produce a draft for their consideration.

Staff noted that the Zoning Commission continued the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD) Public Hearing to a Special Meeting on May 31, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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Motion to adjourn at 8:02 p.m. was made by Munn, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

Hal Zod, Vice Chair/Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Lynda Galetta
Office Assistant II