

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 14, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chairman Sherrard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Sherrard (left 9:15 pm), Pritchard, Munn, Steinford
Alternate members present: Zod
Absent: Kane, Tarbox
Staff present: Jones, Glemboski, Allen, Silsby

Chairman Sherrard appointed Zod to sit for Kane.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. May 24, 2016

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of May 24, 2016

Motion made by Steinford, seconded by Pritchard, so voted 4-0-1 (Zod), as annotated

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. SUBDIVISIONS - None

V. SITE PLANS

1. Property of Carol S. Sharpe Family Trust (SIT15-05), 245 Leonard Drive – Request for a 1 Year Start of Construction Extension

Staff reviewed the request for a one-year start of construction extension.

MOTION: To approve an extension for one-year Start of Construction for 245 Leonard Drive Office Warehouse Building (SIT15-05) to June 23, 2017

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

2. Sub-Century Event, Movie night at Poquonnock Plains Park (SIT16-10), 150 Fort Hill Road

Mark Berry, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained that movie night at Poquonnock Plains Park on July 8, 2016 is part of the Sub-Century Anniversary celebration. Details were given about the event including hours of use, lighting, screen size, power, and parking. He stated that as required, letters will be mailed to all abutters.

Staff gave background information about lighting at Poquonnock Plains Park. Berry will contact the Police Department about adjusting the traffic light while people are exiting the park. The event will be cancelled if it rains.

MOTION: To approve Sub Century Movie Night temporary lights at Poquonnock Plains Park, 150 Fort Hill Road (SIT16-10)

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

3. Savings Institute Bank & Trust (SIT16-08), 970 Poquonnock Road

Jay Fisher, Senior Vice President of Accubranch in Bloomfield, CT reviewed plans and photos as he explained the need to update and modernize the bank. Details were given about the traffic pattern and parking. The owner has committed to repaving the entire parking area. He noted that the plans are consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development. Parking calculations were given. Information was given about lighting, setbacks, and zoning regulations, pertaining to stacking requirements. The intent is to continue to have a drive thru with two stacking lanes.

Dan Kroeber of Milone and MacBroom of Cheshire, CT reviewed the traffic circulation, noting that this site is in the DDD zone. Specifics were given about setbacks, footprint of the building, acreage, landscaping, parking and the minor impervious surface increase. A bituminous sidewalk will be removed and replaced with a concrete sidewalk. A handicapped ramp will be installed to improve pedestrian access. A 15 foot pedestrian easement will be given to the Town.

Staff explained that the project improves the site in various ways. Inquires about pedestrians walking from the parking lot to the building were addressed. Kroeber will reaffirm that the entrance in is one-way only. Signage was addressed. Concerns were raised about traffic congestion coming off of the Route 1 entrance. A suggestion was made to install a very large sign so customers do not go out the one-way entrance. A note about the sidewalk will be added as a technical item.

MOTION : To approve SIT16-08 for site plan approval for the Savings Institute Bank & Trust, 970 Poquonnock Road, subject to the following modifications:

1. An additional street tree shall be planted along the property's Poquonnock Road frontage to provide a total of six (6) and meet the requirements of Section 7.4-3 (Front Landscaped Area).
2. A note shall be included on the plan stating that at least six (6) street trees, with a minimum caliper of two (2) inches and a minimum height of six (6) feet, shall be maintained along the property's Poquonnock Road frontage in perpetuity in order to meet the requirements of Section 7.4-3 (Front Landscaped Area).
3. All technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

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

4. AMERCO – U-Haul (SIT16-07), 187 Gold Star Highway

Those present for this application were Clint Brown of DiCesare Bentley Engineers, Mr. & Mrs. David Pollock of AMERCO and Megan Gardner of Gardner and Gerrish. Brown reviewed the plans for the development of a U-Haul facility. The wetlands mitigation and erosion control plans were reviewed. Information was given about storm water management, the existing curb cut, and the driveway. The existing sidewalk will be eliminated and reconstructed along the entire frontage. The sidewalk gap will be filled in. Information was given about utilities, grading, landscaping, and screening.

Ms. Gardner, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan. She spoke about the various types of vegetation including trees and bushes that will be planted.

Staff stated that a wetlands permit was granted. The applicant has met all requirements of the zoning regulations and the applicant worked with the Department of Transportation about property access. She referred to sight lines, the storm water treatment plan, and landscaping. The owner of the adjacent hotel has agreed to a number of easements, though they have not been finalized yet. These easements will be submitted to Staff before final plans can be recorded. Public Works and the Fire Marshall are okay with the plans. Inquiries were made about the retaining walls, roof line, street trees, landscaping, fencing and lighting. Staff stated that no vehicle repair will be done on-site.

MOTION: To approve Site Plan (SIT16-07) for AMERCO U-Haul at 187 Gold Star Highway and 0 Pamela Avenue with the following modifications:

1. Both parcels shall be consolidated prior to the recording of final site plans in land records.
2. All final easement document(s) associated with the adjacent property N/F Sai-Dutt Guru shall be reviewed and approved by the Office of Planning and Development and shall be filed in land records by the applicant/owner prior to or at the same time as the recording of the final site plan. The easement document(s) shall provide for access to the N/F Sai-Dutt Guru property for the installation, replacement, and the continued maintenance of landscaping to meet the Town of Groton Zoning Regulations for both sites. The document(s) shall also provide for the grading and the installation and maintenance of drainage improvements as shown on the site plan.
3. Technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed.

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

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Town Council Referral under CGS 8-24 – Ordinance Appropriating \$184,500,000 for the design and construction of the 2020 Groton Schools Initiative

The referral was reviewed and discussion followed about driveways adjoining, open space and the Merritt Property.

MOTION: The Planning Commission supports the presentation of the Groton 2020 plan to construct a new consolidated middle school and convert two existing middle schools into “renovated like new” elementary schools to Groton voters in a bond referendum

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard, so voted 4-0-1 (Steinford abstained)

2. Referral from the Zoning Commission for a Public Hearing on July 6, 2016 - Special Permit #349, 10 Water Street, Mystic

Staff reviewed the project to convert retail into a standard restaurant. Information was given about parking and a small seating area. She noted that the outside seats are not in the public right-of-way. She has no concerns.

MOTION: The Planning Commission recommended approval of Special Permit #349 for a standard restaurant at 10 Water Street.

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

Sherrard appointed Pritchard as Acting Chairman before leaving the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

3. Draft 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development Update (POCD) – Review of Key Recommendations

Staff reminded the Commission that a special meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 29th at 6:30 p.m. in Room 1 at the Town Hall Annex, which has been advertised and will be televised. Milone and MacBroom will be doing the presentation that evening. Written comments previously received will be reviewed by the Commission prior the public meeting. She stated that the Town is required to have an approved Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) by July 1, 2016, in order to continue to receive funding. The Planning Commission will hold another special meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2016, to discuss the POCD as well as routine business.

4. Report of Commission

A concern was raised about the Electric Boat facility on Kings Highway, whereby an excessive amount of vehicles are parking on Bridge Street and in the break-down lane. The issue is that Electric Boat is not complying with its agreement with the Town. Staff will look into this concern.

A blight concern was raised about the Schwartz complex on Long Hill Road, next to the Stonington Institute building. Staff will pass this along to the Zoning officer. An inquiry was made about a business sign installed at Lighthouse Square.

In regards to an inquiry about filling the vacancy of the Zoning Enforcement Officer, Staff stated that the Town is hoping to change the job description to combine it with a Planner position. She hopes this position is advertised in the next month or so.

5. New Applications - None

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

IX. REPORT OF STAFF - None

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:32 p.m. was made by Munn, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

Jeffrey Pritchard, Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II