

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 9, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

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

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Steinfeld
Alternate members present: Tarbox, Zed
Absent: Fitzgerald, Kane, Munn
Staff present: Jones, Allen, Silsby

Chairman Pritchard appointed Tarbox to sit for Kane, Zed to sit for Munn, and Steinfeld as Acting Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. July 12, 2016

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of July 12, 2016

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Zed, so voted unanimously, as annotated.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

It was noted that the Town Clerk has received the resignation of James Sherrard and that Pritchard will serve as Chair for the remainder of the term.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Deerfield at Mystic (SUB16-01), Deerfield Ridge Drive, Heather Glen Lane, Fox Run Lane – Open Space Marker Modifications

Mark Berry, Director of Parks and Recreation, requested a change to modify Condition #7 of the subdivision approval motion to allow wooden open space markers in lieu of stone walls. He stated that many of the existing stone walls have deteriorated. He reviewed his request to replace stone walls with wooden fences when the stone walls require maintenance. The primary reason for this request is because of the high costs involved in repairing the existing stone walls. A map showing the stone walls and pictures of wooden fences were reviewed. The approach will be to make an assessment of the worst sections of stone walls and then contact all abutters for their input.

Staff stated that subdivision approval was granted in 1988. She noted stone walls were required specifically for this subdivision to reflect its history as a farm.

Discussion followed about the costs of repair. A suggestion was made to solicit the opinion of the entire neighborhood regarding the wall replacement. Mark Berry stated that the Town does not have the money to repair these stone walls and is trying to come up with a realistic solution.

MOTION: To approve a modification to the Deerfield at Mystic Subdivision (SUB16-01) to allow wooden fence open space markers instead of stone walls.

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

V. SITE PLANS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Referral from the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Public Hearing on August 10, 2016 – ZBA#16-11 – 2 Bradley Lane, Matthew and Laura Boggio/Owners/Applicant

Staff reviewed maps and the variance application to build a roof covered front porch within the required front and rear setbacks. He stated that Bradley Lane is not an approved Town road.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

2. Referral from the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Public Hearing on August 24, 2016 – ZBA#16-12 – 5 Grove Avenue, Anne Esposito and Kenneth Soeder/Owners/Applicant

Staff reviewed maps and the variance application to reduce the rear yard setback. He stated that the old building has been demolished and a new house with an attached garage will be built.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

3. Referral from the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Public Hearing on August 24, 2016 – ZBA#16-13 – 391 Long Hill Road, Kyla Adams/Owner/Applicant

Staff reviewed maps and the variance application to add a 2nd story addition within the side yard setback. Staff stated that the Planning Commission will see this project in the near future to request site plan approval.

The Planning Commission had no comment

4. Referral from the City of New London for a Public Hearing on September 1, 2016 – Zone Text Amendment to Sections 520 (C-2 Zone), 614 (Parking) & 616 (Rec Space)

Staff gave a brief summary of the proposal which will allow residential housing in commercial zones. Staff had no concerns.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

5. Election of Vice-Chairman/Secretary

MOTION: To nominate Margil Steinfeld as Vice-Chairman/Secretary

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Zod. Motion passed 3-0-1, 1 abstention (Steinfeld).

6. Report of Commission

An inquiry was made about a property off Culver Avenue that the town has foreclosed on and whether it is true that this property may become open space. Staff stated that is correct.

7. New Applications

Staff reviewed a new site plan modification from Mystic River Residential Care, 14 Godfrey Street. She briefed the Planning Commission about the preference of the abutters to put in vegetation instead of a masonry wall, as required by the motion of approval. The owner has asked if a special meeting could be held to act on this application. The Planning Commission declined to schedule a special meeting on this item.

It was noted that vegetation is transparent acoustically and that the neighbors should be made aware of this fact. This application may be discussed at the next regularly scheduled meeting on September 13, 2016.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Pritchard reported he has signed the final plans for the U-Haul facility. He gave a brief summary of the Committee of Chairperson's meeting that he attended on 7/18/16. He also attended the recent Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments meeting regarding the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

Staff stated that a presentation will be made by the Public Education Office for the State FOI Commission at the next Committee of Chairpersons meeting scheduled for 10/17/16. All boards and commissions are welcome. The meeting will be held in Room 1 at the Town Hall Annex.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff stated that a memorandum regarding a referral from the City of Groton was handed out earlier tonight. She explained that due to the large size of the attachments, Planning Commission members should review the entire referral either online or at the Office of Planning and Development Services. This item will be on the next Planning Commission agenda on September 13, 2016.

In regards to an inquiry at the last meeting about Electric Boat employees parking on Bridge Street, Staff stated that the Traffic Authority is monitoring this situation and intends to post "no parking signs" if appropriate. She added that many complaints have been received.

Staff referred to the Spicer Mansion at 15 Elm Street and the concerns regarding the dining room being open to the public. She stated that Staff has met with the owners who have changed their advertising to reflect that dining is only available to guests or by invitation only.

Staff stated that the Mystic Soup Company, which will locate in the former Grossmans building on Noank Road, has been informed that a special permit and site plan approval are required. The restaurant was granted Historic District approval recently.

Steinford noted that the HVAC units at Gabrielle's Karate in Groton are currently screened with vegetation. Staff added that Arborvitae will be moved a couple of feet away from the units this September.

Tarbox stated that many political signs have been placed near a package store on Route 12. Though the position of enforcement officer is still vacant, Staff will inform the Building Official.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:58 pm was made by Zod, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinford, Vice Chairman/Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II