

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 10, 2013 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Kane, Pritchard, Munn
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald
Absent: Sherrard, Steinfeld, Zod
Staff present: Murphy, Gilot

Acting Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., seated Fitzgerald for Sherrard and appointed Munn as Acting Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of August 13, 2013

MOTION: To approve the minutes August 13, 2013, as amended.

Motion made by Kane, seconded by Fitzgerald. Motion passed 3-0-1, 1 abstention (Munn).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. McDonald Court Resubdivision, 0 McDonald Court (SUB 13-03) (CAM)

A public hearing was scheduled for October 22, 2013.

V. SITE PLANS

1. Randall's Wharf Driveway Modifications, 17 & 31 Water Street (SIT 13-07) (CAM)

Staff said the applicant requested the application be tabled as he is still working with CONNDOT and staff to finalize the plan. The second phase of the Mystic streetscape project may be impacted by the proposed location.

MOTION: To table site plan review of Randall's Wharf Driveway Modifications (SIT 13-07) to the next regular meeting on September 24, 2013.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Munn. Motion passed unanimously.

1. Advantage Personal Training, 2906 Gold Star Highway (SIT 13-05)

Ellen Bartlett, CLA Engineers, represented the owner, Greg Drab. Ms. Bartlett detailed the location and the site, the former Barber Appliance.

The existing building would be expanded for a personal fitness facility. Ms. Bartlett detailed the site access, roof and storm drainage, and landscaping buffer. A wetland permit was granted by the Inland Wetland Agency.

A waiver of the sidewalk requirement was requested for Route 184 and Welles Road. There are no sidewalks in the area at this time. A sidewalk along Route 184 would require a 10 ft. high retaining wall next to the wetlands due to the existing grades. The applicant also requested a waiver of internal sidewalks to connect the building to the frontage sidewalk, as there is no frontage sidewalk.

Greg Drab, the owner, was introduced. Mr. Drab, a Groton resident, has operated a personal training facility in Stonington since 1999. His plan is to expand and prefers to move his business to Groton, not far from his existing business. The fitness facility would serve 200-400 members. His facility currently provides personal training and small group training, and he hopes to add physical therapists to his business in the new location.

Staff discussed the history of the site. The loading area on Welles Road will be closed off, so one of the driveway entrances will be closed. The Town engineer and all other agencies are satisfied with the plan. No sidewalks are proposed in the Trails Plan for that area. It is the desire of the Town to have sidewalks on Route 184, but due to the difficulties of building a sidewalk at this site due to the grade and slope, and the proximity to wetlands, it is more likely to involve a project for the Town or State. Also, the project will be in conformance with WRPD standards.

It was the determination of the Building Official that 32 parking spaces are required and 32 are provided. Two handicap spaces are included as required. Two entrances are provided, one in front and one in the rear.

Ms. Bartlett described the proposed landscaping. Staff said that based on the layout and the land, he would recommend approval of the waiver of requirement for internal sidewalks. Staff provided a copy of the trails plan which showed the proposed sidewalk plan for that area of the Town. Staff said it is not recommended to install sidewalks because of the amount of disturbance of wetlands, the WRPD, and the huge expense for the applicant to provide the sidewalks because of the grading. Staff said they requested the applicant to include the lighting levels to the edges of the property.

MOTION: To approve a waiver of section 7.5-2 regarding frontage sidewalks on Welles Road and on Gold Star Highway for the following reasons:

1. Sidewalks are not recommended along Welles Road by the Plan of Conservation and Development and the Master Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trail Plan.
2. Construction of a sidewalk along Gold Star Highway would require the construction of a 10 foot retaining wall and could impact the wetlands at the base of the slope.
3. There will be no significant pedestrian movement to the site.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Kane. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To approve a waiver of Section 7.5-4 regarding internal sidewalks for the following reasons:

1. There are no sidewalks along the site's frontages
2. The applicant has provided for internal walks along the building's frontage for safe pedestrian movement.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Munn; motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: To approve the site plan for Advantage Personal Training, 2906 Gold Star Highway subject to the following modifications:

1. The outside lighting shall be adjusted such that the photometric plan shows no glare beyond the property lines.
2. The area identified by staff to be restored to comply with Section 6.12-4B shall be shown on the landscape plan. It shall include 3 non-invasive deciduous trees and 10 non-invasive shrubs in addition to the loam and seed.
3. Technical items as raised by staff shall be addressed

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Fitzgerald. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Subdivision Regulation Amendments – No report
2. Plan of Conservation and Development Update

Staff said they have been working with the consultant on open space, economic development and sustainability. The September 19th Steering Committee meeting will be cancelled and another meeting will be scheduled for October, which may mean moving the original date to another. Staff is working on that notice. The Chair emphasized getting this notice out early. Staff expects that the meeting in November will be a public meeting for community input.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Pritchard attended the groundbreaking for the Thames Edge at Fairview project.

Pritchard said there is a sign in front of Gabriele's Karate, advertising office space for lease. He asked staff to investigate to make sure they are in compliance with their recent site plan approval and building permits.

2. New Applications
 - a. Mystic Glen Open Space Resubdivision Modification, 24 Greenbriar Court and 25 Whitehall Lane, Mystic (SUB 13-02)

Staff provided the Commission with a locational map of the subdivision. The application is not to create any new lots but to modify a few items in the existing resubdivision, particularly the number of lots permitted to access the road system. Staff gave a general overview of the modifications proposed and expects this will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

- b. Luther Enterprises LLC Development, 170 Leonard Drive (SIT13-08) (CAM)
- c. McDonald Court Resubdivision, John C. Oat, 0 McDonald Ct. (SUB 13-03) (CAM)

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

The CIP letters have gone out to department heads; staff hopes to bring the CIP to the Planning Commission by December.

Staff received an administrative site plan application from the Copp Dog Park to add additional natural parking. A bid package for the project is going out soon.

The J & S Trolley Trail, near Haley Farm, will begin soon. Public Works will continue the trail through that area.

Public Works drainage work on High Street will begin soon.

Staff will present an update of phase II of the Mystic streetscape project to the Town Council on September 24th.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:54 p.m. was made by Fitzgerald, seconded by Kane, so voted unanimously.

Ray Munn, Acting Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant III