

MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
TOWN OF GROTON  
GROTON ZONING COMMISSION  
NOVEMBER 14, 2017 – 6:30 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Hudecek, Marquardt, Sayer, Smith  
Alternate members present: Archer  
Absent: Edgerton, Sutherland  
Other: Jeff Pritchard, Planning Commission Chairman  
Staff present: Glemboski, Jones, Gilot

Acting Chairperson Hudecek called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and seated Archer for Sutherland.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. November 1, 2017

MOTION: To approve the minutes of November 1, 2017 as written.

Motion made by Sayer, seconded by Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

III. ITEM OF BUSINESS

1. Commission Workshop – Zoning Regulations Rewrite Project

Acting Chairman Hudecek said the commission would not be taking any oral comments from the public at this meeting, but they would accept written comments. Oral comments will be taken at the next regular meeting in December.

a. Consolidated Zoning Commission Minutes

Staff said they compiled past Zoning Commission minutes from the beginning of 2015, when the Commission previously discussed some of the definitions and zones. This should give a good background of previous discussion on certain items. Staff said they could continue to add the ongoing discussions from future minutes onto this list. The commission asked if the Town of Groton gateway will be discussed. Staff said that could be part of the design discussions. Staff said some of the setbacks for commercial districts have been updated with the previous zone text amendment for the DDD, and can be reviewed when the mixed use is discussed. The commission discussed the gateway, which staff said could be addressed with the design standards; setbacks for commercial districts, and the zoning audit. The goals used for the zoning audit were reread for the commission, which were consistent with the goals established by the Zoning Commission with regard to the zoning regulation rewrite project.

b. Use Table and Use Definitions

Staff discussed the Horsley Witten memo dated November 8<sup>th</sup> which was included in the agenda packet.

Staff said the attorneys are reviewing all residential definitions, institutional definitions (group homes), hotels, bed and breakfast, and definitions relative to that, such as family, or household unit. The consultants' attorney did a quick review of our existing

regulations and pointed out some things that need updating, such as sign regulations (need to be content neutral), group homes, protected classes, etc. Staff will bring comments relative to each section as they review them.

Staff said they met with Groton Utilities today regarding their “open space” designation. Groton Utilities was concerned that the “open space” designation would be misunderstood to mean that their land was open to the public. They were comfortable with the uses. Staff reminded them that even though a use is allowed, it doesn’t mean they have to use it as it is zoned, because they are the property owner. They don’t have to use it as it is zoned, such as right now it is zoned residential, but they don’t have to use it for residential. They were more comfortable with a conservation type zone or designation. Haley Farm, Bluff Point, Pequot Woods, would all be handled in the same way – conserved. The uses for each of the open space zones have not been defined yet. The commission wanted to have two categories of open space – passive and active. Groton Utilities would be the same as the conservation zone, rather than a separate third zone exclusively for Groton Utilities. One of the goals is to consolidate zones rather than increase them. Staff didn’t designate the smaller parcels as a specific zone, such as the Kelly parklet or tot-lots in the middle of subdivisions. The commission was comfortable with that.

### Use Table

Jeff Mr. Davis, Horsley Witten Group, started with a review of the green highlighted areas in the open space category of the Use Table. The Commission made the following comments:

- Commercial Agriculture – Currently prohibited in open space. Commercial would be over 5 acres. Commission said X.
- Nurseries and Greenhouses, Commercial – Currently C, only relative to open spaces designated on the map. Commission wants X (prohibited).
- Riding or boarding stable – listed now as special permit. Commission said X (prohibited).
- Art Gallery or museum – educational center or interpretive center – should have a separate list of allowed accessory uses specific to those zones, a finite list. Commission said “A” accessory, with a limit on square footage
- Campground – Commission said X for both types of open space (prohibited).
- Commercial Recreation, Outdoor – SP for active; X for conservation
- Entertainment or Sports Facilities – same as above
- Golf course – X for both
- Marina or Yacht Club – X for both
- Public Recreation – keep both as a C
- Temporary events – C for active; X for conservation
- Theater or Cinema – C for active; X for conservation
- Restaurant mobile – C for both
- Restaurant – C for active; X for conservation
- Retail, Small Scale – X/ for both (most of those might be covered under temporary events).
- Telecommunication facility – the Siting Council will make decision but the town can comment that it is prohibited by the town’s zoning – X for both
- Telecommunication tower – X for both

Mr. Davis asked about the formatting and symbology. The commission liked the new symbology used in the regular table. They don't like the use of the same letters in the WRPD. It was suggested that a dot or some symbol be used to indicate to go to the WRPD section and to keep the chart in the WRPD. Other suggestions included leave the column in the table and have a "W" in all the sections marked, which would inform someone to go to the WRPD section. Keep the letters consistent. Mr. Davis asked if they want every box filled in on the table. Hudecek doesn't want every box marked; other commissioner like having all boxes marked. The table could be changed to "table of uses".

Horsley Witten will review for the next meeting. Possibly, any condition placed by the WRPD will be marked with a "W", which would indicate to go to the WRPD section. "X" stays if the use is prohibited in WRPD. P's and C's convert to "W". "Any markings in WRPD would indicate "see Section XXX" in the legend. Not all uses in the use table are listed in the WRPD table.

### Definitions

- Agricultural events – seasonal, temporary – Horsley Witten is trying to eliminate zoning on temporary events (carnivals, fairs, etc.), as recommended in the zoning audit. These would be licensed by an authority rather than through zoning. Ordinances could be used. Staff was concerned that if there is not zoning, who would enforce lights, noise, etc.
- Animals - may not be dealt with in the definitions. Rather than define pet/family animal, identify them as domesticated animals traditionally kept in the home. The five acre requirement also could be eliminated. The commission remained undecided on definitions of pets vs. livestock, and the five acre requirement. Pet is referred to in uses such as veterinarian, groomer, kennel, etc.; livestock vs. pets. More discussion will be needed on this topic.
- Campsite – No need to limit the amount of time someone could stay at the campground.
- Small scale food production - kindred was changed to non-alcoholic beverage production (for small and large scale). The size limit for small scale production was reduced to 3,000 square feet.
- A definition for salvage, shredding scrap, etc. should be added – salvage as opposed to outdoor storage. The commission did not want this use allowed in the town.
- Small scale retail – Staff thought 10,000 sq. ft. maximum was more appropriate than 15,000 sq. ft. The commission agreed.

Accessory building setbacks – the relationship between primary and accessory buildings may change to make the setback relative; only the front will change to a minimum of 20 ft. behind the front facade of the primary building. The 6 ft. setback for side and rear for accessory structures would remain the same.

### Section 3

Mr. Davis explained that descriptions have been added for each of the zones, and a definition for porch was added. He said they are working on the analysis of the WDD comparison for dimensional standards, and hope to have that done soon.

Some commissioners thought that “MYS” might be problematic for the Mystic zone, because not all of Mystic is included in that zone. A different name might be more appropriate to avoid any confusion.

The Historic District Commission is not included at all in the zoning regulations. Something may be included in the front of the regulations, because people cannot find the historic district on the zoning map.

c. Other Document Items/Comments

Staff had no other documents for review at this time.

Staff said there are no special permit applications at this time, so there will not be a public hearing in December. Mr. Davis said he would like to discuss the map and the public outreach component at the December meeting. He said the map would be updated to address the two open space districts.

Downtown Mystic zone – some portion may be added. Staff would like those areas enlarged on a map, for public information.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:18 p.m. was made by Smith, seconded by Hudecek; so voted unanimously.

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Susan Marquardt, Secretary  
Zoning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot  
Executive Assistant