

MINUTES  
TOWN OF GROTON  
ZONING COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 1, 2014 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Sutherland, Bancroft, Hudecek, Sayer  
Alternate members present:  
Absent: Marquardt, Middleton, Smith  
Staff present: Reiner, Glemboski, Silsby

Chairperson Sutherland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission welcomed Jonathan Reiner, the new Director of Planning and Development.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF Meeting of September 3, 2014.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of meeting of September 3, 2014.

Motion made by Bancroft, seconded by Sayer, so voted unanimously

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Special Permit #343 – Tollgate Plaza, 516-528 Gold Star Highway

Sutherland read the public hearing notice.

Staff stated that the applicant has requested to open and immediately continue the public hearing to November 5, 2014.

Sutherland asked the audience for comments and there were none.

MOTION: To continue the Special Permit #343 Public Hearing until November 5, 2014

Motion made by Bancroft, seconded by Hudecek, so voted unanimously

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Land Use and Zoning Regulation Review and Update

Sutherland stated that she had a meeting with Town Councilor Bob Frink in regards to searching for an outside consultant to assist in reviewing the zoning regulation. She is unsure of the status and will report back once she has received updated information. A Request for Proposal (RFP) may have been drafted. The Zoning Commission raised concerns about their role in the project, and would like to have a more active role in reviewing regulations. Concerns were also raised about the Town previously spending money for a consultant to update land use regulations and a final product was never completed. Discussion continued about the zoning regulations

being out of date and not user friendly. Reiner gave input as to how land use regulations and updates are handled in the previous Rhode Island municipality he worked for.

Background information was given about the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Sayer noted that she has been involved in a variance application and as such, has been reviewing the Town's zoning regulations, which she has found to be not user friendly.

## 2. POCD Update Report

Sutherland referred to the draft POCD report and she noted that the Planning Commission has found the report to be cumbersome and difficult to use in their workshops.

Staff gave a brief update on how the POCD workshops are going. She noted the draft document is disconnected between the goals and action items, and the main document. She explained the process the Planning Commission is following in reviewing the draft document. The goal is to have a good working document when the entire process is complete. Staff added that once the Consultant has revised the document, a review period will begin, prior to the public hearing process. An inquiry was made about viewing the POCD goals, which is available via the Town's website. The role of the Zoning Commission's involvement in reviewing the draft POCD was discussed.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission - None
2. Receipt of New Applications - None

## VII. REPORT OF CHAIRPERSON

Sutherland expressed her continued interest in being able to search zoning regulations on-line. Staff will look into the status of this request.

The Zoning Commission recommended putting together a flow chart to assist customers who are looking into submitting applications to the Planning Department. This could aid the citizen in assessing what he or she needs to do to move ahead with a project, step by step. Staff added that a processing and user guide could be helpful. In order to assist potential customers, a request was made to put together a list of the top 20 questions that potential applicants ask when inquiring about submitting an application to the Planning Department. Staff will look into this.

Staff noted that the Building Department has put together guide sheets to help customers with various processes. Discussion followed about activities that could be done with administrative approval versus requiring Commission approval. Staff will email a sample of the guide sheets that Building Inspection uses.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff welcomed the new Planning Director to the Town of Groton.

An inquiry was made to Reiner about his past experience and aspirations for the Town's Planning Department. Reiner explained that he was the Planning Director for the Town of North Kingston, Rhode Island for the past 9 years. Background information was given about the projects he had been involved in and how processes had improved during his tenure. He looks forward to working together with Town Staff and Commissions, in addition to updating zoning regulations with input generated by the Zoning Commission.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:39 p.m. made by Sayer, seconded by Hudecek, so voted unanimously.

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Sue Sutherland, Chairperson  
Zoning Commission

Prepared by Robin M. Silsby  
Office Assistant II

NOT APPROVED