

MINUTES
ZONING COMMISSION
MARCH 7, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Cady, French, Marquardt, Sutherland
Absent: Hudecek, O’Neil
Staff: Davis, Gilot

Chairperson Sutherland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and seated Cady for Hudecek.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF February 1, 2012

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 1, 2012 as written.

Motion made by French, seconded by Marquardt. Motion passed unanimously

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of Feb 16, 2012 as written.

Motion made by Marquardt, seconded by French. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

French mentioned that the Library is doing a series on water. Juliana Barrett from OLISP will be one of the speakers later this month.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of proposed text amendment to Zoning Regulations Section 8.3

Staff recommended discussing this under Item V.2. on the agenda.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Groton Bible Chapel Teen Center, 66 Toll Gate Road – Height Modification Request

Jim Martin, representing Groton Bible Chapel, showed the architectural drawings of the proposed center. Mr. Martin detailed the existing campus and the proposed new building. The stair tower would go to the second level, but would not be occupied as “habitable” space. The purpose of the tower is for utilities, stairs and to contain a digital carillon system. The tower height exceeds the district standard so a modification is required.

The Commission discussed the decibel level of the church bells and potential impacts on neighboring populations. The Chair felt that if the noise would extend beyond the property boundary, that neighbors should be made aware and should have an opportunity to have input into the application process. The Church currently does not have bells. The recent Whittle proceeding was raised as to noise regulation and staff indicated that that special permit application and regulation of noise in that context was different and somewhat unique and could not be used as a basis for regulating noise in this application. Staff also said there is a State enforced noise ordinance, and that church bells might be exempt from that ordinance, and advised the Commission that this was a height modification application and that

justification of this building height modification should be the focus. Staff said if desired, they would communicate the Commission's concerns with the noise to the Planning Commission for their potential consideration under site plan review.

Mark Spruance, 8 Red Brook Lane, Ledyard, an elder of Groton Bible Chapel, said the bells could be taken out if the Town felt there would be a noise issue with the bells.

MOTION: To approve the height modification for a mechanical tower for Groton Bible Chapel, 66 Toll Gate Road.

Motion made by French, seconded by Marquardt. Motion passed unanimously.

The Zoning Commission had concerns for the noise that extends beyond the property boundaries and felt that neighbors should be notified. They requested that staff draft a note to the Planning Commission for Zoning Commission review, suggesting that neighbors should have the opportunity to be aware of the use, etc.

2. Commission Work Program for 2012

The Chairperson asked members to send ideas to staff and her regarding a work program for the Zoning Commission. Staff distributed OPDS's FYE 2013 Major Program/Planning Work Program Outline. The Chairperson briefly reviewed the items in the department's work program. Staff explained that this is the departmental work program, that it was based upon a variety of factors, was not all inclusive as to OPDS operations and that the POCD update was likely to be the major focus for 2012. Staff also mentioned the new FEMA maps expected later this year. Staff hopes to have an RFQ out this month for the POCD.

Staff distributed a document outlining Public Hearing Procedures used by other Commissions. The Chair said she would think about this procedure in conjunction with FOIA, POCD, Robert's Rules, etc., and consider making some changes.

The OPDS Monthly Inspection and Planning report for December was handed out. Staff said anyone can call Kevin Quinn with any questions regarding the building and inspection data.

Staff also handed out an article concerning staff/commission expectations. Staff suggested that the commission work program could be kept on the agenda, however the Chair indicated she would meet with staff to discuss comments received from members first then decide how to proceed.

3. New Application -Special Permit #325 – 12 Water Street

A public hearing was scheduled for April 4, 2012.

VI. REPORT OF CHAIR

Chairperson Sutherland said she met recently with staff. At that meeting, she requested that the agenda packets be mailed out earlier so that Commissioners have a week to review the packet information. She also encouraged members to review application files and to visit project sites. She would also like staff to include a monthly staff report and that she may also include a Chair's report. Staff noted various factors affecting the timely dissemination of relevant materials and the lack of authority to mandate submittals according to deadlines. After

discussion, it was agreed that the packets would be mailed on Tuesday of the week prior to the meeting. The Commission also discussed the possibility of staff emailing any pertinent information received subsequent to the packet mailing.

VII. REPORT OF STAFF - None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. made by French, seconded by Marquardt, so voted unanimously.

Mariellen French, Secretary
Zoning Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot, Office Assistant III