

MINUTES
ZONING COMMISSION
JULY 7, 2010 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: French, Hudecek (7:06), Marquardt, O’Neill, Sutherland
Absent: Cady, Haviland, Brandt
Staff: Murphy, Davis, Doolittle

Acting Chairman O’Neill called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Chairman Hudecek (7:06) sat Marquardt for Brandt and Sutherland for Haviland.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF June 2, 2010.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of June 2, 2010 as written.

Motion made by French, seconded by O’Neill. Motion passed 4-0-1, one abstention (French).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner French noted that the next Climate Change and Sustainable Community listening session is Monday, July 12, 2010; she invited Commissioners to attend and/or speak.

Steve Woodruff addressed the Commission wishing to speak at tonight’s meeting regarding the NMDD. Staff and the Commission agreed that he may speak under the Land Use Regulation Update Project item on tonight’s agenda.

Sydney Van Zandt, 3 Front Street, read and handed out a letter from herself to the Commission dated 7/7/10, and handed out a letter dated 7/7/10 from Joan Smith GOSA President to the Groton Task Force on Climate Change. Ms. Van Zandt spoke to the Commission regarding the Climate Change workshops, the land use regulation update, the “sheep farm” and other related matters. She encouraged the Commission to watch the “Climate Change” commission meeting videos when they are available online.

Jim Furlong, 57 Fishtown Lane, provided copies of a 6/15/10 article he wrote for the GOSA website regarding data and reports that were handed out by staff and discussed at the 6/2/10 zoning commission meeting.

In response to a communication received from Commissioner French, staff clarified that with respect to certain meetings, Commissioners may not be invited to participate, at the discretion of the organization holding the meeting, and that it is often therefore, not within staff’s prerogative to decide whether or not to invite Commissioners.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Land Use Regulation Update Project

Staff briefly discussed the historical background of and possible changes to the NMDD. The Commission invited input from the public regarding the district.

Tom Vivirito, Owner of Fleet Motor Company, 972 Route 12, read a letter from Clint Brown to Larry Chesler dated July 2, 2010 with suggestions on how to revise the NMDD. Mr. Vivirito felt that the Northwest corner of Groton has been limited for the past 20 years due to the NMDD and its requirements.

Staff noted that in the past, most businesses in that area have catered to the Navy and the services that the personnel are most interested in. He also noted that there are multiple issues involving this unique area including slopes, soil contamination, CAM requirements, Navy operations and Navy plans, and State DOT issues. Staff noted that the analysis of issues and options needs to consider both the market, as well as community and property owner preferences.

Commissioner O'Neill felt that the NMDD represents a unique zone and set of problems that need to be addressed separately from the Zoning Regulation update project. Staff suggested that in October, this specific issue be revisited, depending upon the status of the land use regulation update at that time.

Robert Schwartz, Owner of Auto Parts Store, 1002 Route 12, noted that all of the utilities are available but no new businesses have arrived in years. He felt that this was directly related to the zoning. The Commission and Mr. Schwartz discussed specific concerns with Mr. Schwartz feeling that that required size of the parcels was an example of a limitation that should be considered. Staff felt this specific information was helpful but also suggested that lot size has a relationship to public safety in terms of curb cuts and lot access, and that the State DOT would likely take interest in that particular aspect.

Tom Vivirito mentioned the special permit requirement even for minor changes as an impediment that should be reconsidered.

Dominic Ceravolo, 986 Route 12, addressed the Commission regarding multiple properties that he has purchased. He had hoped to rent them out or sell them, but stated that he has had trouble finding interest due to the regulations.

Staff requested that any other comments and/or suggestions from the public be submitted in writing within the next week and Staff will then report to the Commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting, with a general overview of issues and a very basic discussion of possible options.

Staff handed out, and briefly discussed, a working draft of Section 6.11 of the Zoning Regulations (erosion and sediment control).

Staff also provided an overview of the present regulatory framework for industrial zones, its relationship to the WRPD requirements, SEDP, adjacent zoning and land uses and to the current "use tables." Staff suggested and the Commission agreed that prior to or at least concurrent with the update and simplification of the industrial use tables, it would be beneficial to also make any necessary adjustments to the industrial zoning framework. In that regard staff discussed briefly the intent to simplify those tables through use of NAICS definitions. Staff also discussed prior and continuing work on the other use tables, in particular the simplification of the general commercial use table.

Staff also handed out and discussed the three "illustrative" design concepts for the "sheep farm" tract, which were based upon the draft unit yield and environmental

protection model. Staff and the Commission members discussed the illustratives, how they compared to prior approved development on this parcel in various respects, and comparisons to conventional residential development forms. In response to a question regarding the illustratives, staff noted that unit sizes and the number of bedrooms was not a part of this exercise and that purported fiscal impacts could not be used as a basis for community land use policy, plans and regulation.

The Chairman had concerns with the illustrative buildout potential of the proposed regulation of 35 vs.75 units and the same amount of open space.

Commissioner O'Neill left at 9:09pm.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Staff reported that a new application had been received regarding 235 Lestertown Road (Fairview - Odd Fellows).

VI. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

VII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff noted that due to budget cuts the OPDS will most likely lose another position which will affect both internal and external clients.

Staff noted that the department's monthly report has changed slightly and handed out a copy of the month of May as an example.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:32 p.m. made by French, seconded by Sutherland, so voted unanimously.

Susan Sutherland
Zoning Commission

Prepared by Katie Doolittle, Office Assistant II