

PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 24, 2005 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Roper, Sherrard, Steinfeld, Pritchard, and alternate Munn

Staff: Discordia, Goodrich, and Murphy (7:20 p.m.)

Chairman Sherrard opened with roll call at 7:05 p.m.

Chairman Sherrard appointed Munn to sit for the vacancy.

Chairman Sherrard opened the public hearings at 7:45 p.m.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairman Sherrard read an opening statement describing the public hearing procedures and guidelines.

1. Woods Walk Subdivision Modification, 1101 & 1078 Pleasant Valley Road (17 lots) - continuation

Michael Scanlon, DiCesare-Bentley Engineers, 100 Fort Hill Road on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Scanlon reviewed the location of the access driveways and parking areas with respect to lots 12, 9, 8 and 7. The plans were reviewed by the Fire Marshal and he found them to be satisfactory. Mr. Scanlon stated that to address some of the concerns of the Commission at the last hearing, they did move some of the proposed houses to provide more space for vehicular parking. They did not change any of the driveway configurations.

Mr. Scanlon discussed the request for active recreation space made by the Commission referred to Parks and Recreation. The original subdivision approval did not contain any such requirement for active recreation space. Mr. Scanlon submitted a copy of the minutes for the approval of the original subdivision that stated the Commission did not require an active recreation space area.

Staff noted that Mr. Scanlon had addressed the parking situation. Staff stated they received comments today from the Parks and Recreation Department at 3:07 p.m., by fax. The comments read, "I recommend an area for play, specifically for pre-school age children." Upon a subsequent phone call with the Director of Parks and Recreation to ask for further clarification, he stated Lot 5 would be a good, active recreation area for children as it is furthest away from residential units and it is adjacent to the open space.

Pritchard asked how many bedrooms were planned in these units. Mr. Scanlon stated that it would depend on the model. They could be 2, 3 or 4 bedroom units. Pritchard asked if there was any regulations controlling the number of bedrooms and staff stated there isn't unless the development required private septic systems.

Roper asked if there was more impervious area now than in the previously approved subdivision. Mr. Scanlon stated that there is more impervious area and there will be more pavement. The structures will be larger than a typical one family home. Mr. Scanlon stated that the Town's environmental planner did review the proposed resubdivision and didn't see a need to apply for another inland wetland permit. Mr. Scanlon stated that the stormwater basin is larger to handle the potential increase from more impervious surface area. Staff confirmed that there would be no adverse impact.

Steinford asked if there would be an actual condominium association with this development. Mr. Scanlon stated it would depend on who buys this property and how they plan to develop it so the current owner can't assure the Commission that there would be a condominium association. Steinford asked if they approve an active recreation area would the Town be responsible for it. Staff responded yes.

Munn stated that he endorses the provision of an active, open, recreation area.

Chairman Sherrard reminded the Commission that this proposal increases the subdivision by 15 dwelling units over the previously approved 19 single-family lots.

Chairman Sherrard asked if there were public comments and there were none.

Dr. Stephen Grobb, owner, stated that the market would determine the number of bedrooms in these homes. The property is surrounded by 100 acres of woods and the site is very wooded as well. Dr. Grobb stated that giving up one lot of 31,000 square feet for active, recreation space would be a hardship. There also is a 100-foot wetland buffer, which cuts down on the potential for more lots. He stated there is a playground nearby at the Navy housing development.

Mr. Scanlon stated upon receipt of the memo from the Parks and Recreation Department, that they looked at other areas on the site plan to accommodate the active recreation area recommended. He stated that they found numerous playscapes in catalogues. Most of these playscapes would only require 1,200 square feet and would more than adequately accommodate the Director of Parks and Recreation recommendation without losing an entire lot. Mr. Scanlon asked that they be provided an opportunity, if the Commission requires an active recreation area, to find an alternate area and retain lot 5 as a building lot.

Roper stated that making an active recreation spot makes this a more viable development and also benefits the Town. Roper stated that he would be open to see an alternative plan from the applicant. Roper stated that he supported a play area for children.

Staff stated that the public hearing could be kept open to the next meeting.

Mr. Scanlon stated that they might have to go back to the Inland Wetlands Commission to ask for a modification of the 100-foot imposed buffer to include a play area.

Staff stated that this recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Department just came in today and there wasn't any time to work with the applicant in regards to another location. Staff felt that the hearing should be continued to review the comments from Parks and Recreation and review alternatives regarding the location of the active recreation space.

Pritchard stated that he needed more information on the justification of this play area and the hearing should be continued.

Munn asked if the play area in Navy housing was accessible to this development. Staff stated that it was limited to the residents of Navy housing.

Chairman Sherrard is in favor of providing an active recreation area, because there is a substantial increase in units with this plan.

Staff stated that they would like to continue the hearing, and suggested a special meeting be scheduled.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing for Woods Walk Subdivision Modification, 1101 & 1078 Pleasant Valley Road (17 lots) to a Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 31, 2005 at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex.

Motion made by Chairman Sherrard, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

2. 332 CLH, LLC Subdivision, Heather Glen Lane, (2 lots)

Staff stated that more time was required for the referrals to the adjoining municipality and SCCOG and recommended the hearing be continued.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing for 332 CLH, LLC Subdivision, Heather Glen Lane, (2 lots) until June 28, 2005.

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of May 10, 2005

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the May 10, 2005, Planning Commission meeting with the following modifications:

1. Page 1, under PUBLIC HEARINGS, 3rd paragraph from the bottom, insert "in" in between "increase" and "density".
2. Page 2, 4th paragraph from top, delete "open" in first sentence.
3. Page 3, under SUBDIVISIONS, first paragraph, insert "and Kane will vote instead on this action" after "hearings"
4. Page 6, 4th paragraph from bottom, delete "Motion made by Roper, seconded by Munn...."
5. Page 8, under 2. Library Hill Resubdivision, in 1st motion, delete "Chairman Sherrard did not vote..."
6. Page 10, 5th paragraph down, insert "within the development" at the end of sentence.
7. Page 10, #5., before "IES", insert "the Illuminating Engineering Society" and put () around "IES".
8. Page 11, #9., delete "6 foot".
9. Page 11, #12., insert "shall be addressed" between "items" and "as".
10. Page 16, under REPORT OF STAFF, insert "polled the Commission and then" in last sentence between "Sherrard" and "stated".

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Roper handed out the following flyers:

- Thames River Basin Partnership Floating Workshop scheduled June 10, 2005.
- Advanced Zoning and Land Use in CT, Workshop.

Staff handed out the following flyers:

- CT Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies quarterly newsletter.

Chairman Sherrard asked if the public had any communications and there were none.

V. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Woods Walk Subdivision Modification, 1101 & 1078 Pleasant Valley Road, (17 lots)

Woods Walk Subdivision Modification was continued to a Special Meeting on May 31, 2005 at 7 p.m.

2. 332 CLH, LLC Subdivision, Heather Glen Lane (2 lots)

332 CLH, LLC Subdivision was continued to the regularly scheduled meeting on June 28, 2005.

3. Chrissos Subdivision, Capstan Avenue – Acceptance of Capstan Avenue Extension

MOTION: To recommend the acceptance of Capstan Avenue Extension for Chrissos Subdivision

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Pritchard, so voted unanimously.

4. Highland Valley (Copp Property) Subdivision, Pleasant Valley Road South (13 lots) – Schedule a Public Hearing

A public hearing was scheduled for Highland Valley (Copp Property) Subdivision, Pleasant Valley Road South (13 lots) for June 28, 2005.

VI. SITE PLANS

1. Sheetz Plaza, Route 12, Modification

Staff stated that in light of BRAC issues, the applicant has requested the Commission table the Sheetz Plaza modification until the applicant can complete the application.

MOTION: The Commission tabled Sheetz Plaza, Route 12.

Motion made by Steinford, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. IWA Referral for May 25, 2005 Public Hearing

Multi-family development (The Ledges East) at 375 Drozdyk Drive.

MOTION: The Planning Commission supports this Inland Wetland Agency application to provide access to the recreation facilities, and recommends

that any wetlands disturbance be kept to a minimum and that water is allowed to flow into the wetlands.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

2. Discussion of Town of Ledyard's Invitation to attend "Passive Recreation on Groton Utilities Property" panel discussion, June 2, 2005.

Staff stated that they have no additional information about the makeup of the panel. Chairman Sherrard asked if anyone on the Commission could attend, and Munn stated he would attend and report back at the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on June 14, 2005.

3. Town of Stonington Zoning Regulation Amendments for June 7, 2005 Public Hearing.

Staff stated that the Town of Stonington proposes to amend the zoning regulation specifically to effect the Mystic Seaport and Aquarium.

MOTION: The Planning Commission expressed concern with Section 4.10.4.9 pertaining to sign height. They recommended that sign heights should also be no higher than the height of the highest building on the adjacent property. The Planning Commission has concerns over the impact of noise and lighting on residential areas as a result of special events.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Roper attended the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) on May 16, 2005. The RPC is raising money to undertake a study of the impact on the region of proposed large development projects such as Utopia.

Steinford discussed The Fisherman Restaurant adding a deck. Steinford asked what arrangement does The Fisherman have with the Town of Groton regarding the parking at Esker Point. Staff stated that they would get the minutes of the Noank Zoning meeting and find out why it wasn't referred to the Town of Groton Planning Commission as it does affect traffic and parking. The Commission asked for a report at the June 14, 2005 meeting.

2. ZBA Referrals for May 25, 2005 Public Hearing.

MOTION: To add three new ZBA referrals for June 8, 2005 public hearings to the agenda.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

ZBA 05-12 – Almquist, 104 Warren Avenue

The Planning Commission had no comment.

ZBA 05-13 – Picken, 163 Starr Hill Road

The Planning Commission had no comment.

ZBA 05-14 – Cotter, 320 Gales Ferry Road

The Planning Commission had no comment.

ZBA 05-15 - Fuller, 114 Colony Road

The Planning Commission had no comment.

3. New Applications:

- a. Hickey Subdivision, 287 Briar Hill Road (5 lots)
- b. O & C Subdivision, 120 Godfrey Road (4 lots)
- c. Common Ground Subdivision, Pumpkin Hill Road (3 lots)

IX. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

X. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff reviewed the status of two resolutions before the Town Council to authorize the Town Manager to sign the respective streetscape project contracts.

Staff stated that the department is working with state agencies, to assist the governor's "strike force" with regards to the BRAC process.

The public hearing on fees in lieu of open space will be scheduled for a meeting in July of 2005. Staff stated they did get a response from the Town Attorney and are reviewing the draft language to finalize the proposal.

The Industrial Zone Revision Study (IZRS) has been completed for the City of Groton. A letter has been sent to the owner of Burnett's corner to board-up the site.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:38 p.m. made by Munn, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Margil Steinfeld