

PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 28, 2006
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Roper, Sherrard, Steinford, Munn
Alternate members present: Perez Pullen, Kane
Staff present: Goodrich, Murphy, Stanowicz

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF February 14, 2006 and Special Meeting of February 16, 2006

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 14, 2006 with the following modifications:

1. Page 3, beginning of second paragraph should read, “Bob Mercer Architect, Mercer & Bertsche, Architecture and Engineering”
2. Page 4, Economic Development Strategic Plan, end of paragraph 6 should read, “Roper stated that he would like a performing arts and community center included as a recommendation in the plans.”

Motion made by Steinford, seconded by Pritchard. Motion passed, 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Munn).

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 16, 2006 as written.

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Steinford. Motion passed, 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Pritchard).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNUCATIONS

Staff told the Commission that there will be a two day workshop on Roundabout Planning and Design given by the Connecticut River Estuary. The workshop is on March 14th and 15th in Essex. Staff distributed the Sound Outlook Newsletter.

The Planning Department has received notification of a DEP permit for a dock on Palmer Cove.

IV. SITE PLANS

1. Lee Residence, 97 South Road

Mr. and Mrs. Lee, owners of 97 South Road, presented their application to convert a 3-family house to a 4-family house. The Lees are proposing to split the large apartment on the main floor into two one-bedroom apartments.

There is a two- car garage and six parking places. Ledge Light has approved the plan. The water and septic are approved. There is a dumpster on the property. The Lees showed photos of the exterior of the property and the location of the mailboxes. The Lees will add another mailbox to the front of the house to match the other three. There is an existing sidewalk on the opposite side of South Road. There is a large 24" caliper tree in the front of the property. There will be two means of egress for each unit. There will be no exterior modifications to the house. The property is located within the Coastal Area but there are no exterior changes so the project is exempt.

The Lees have requested relief from constructing frontage sidewalks. There are sidewalks on the east (opposite) side of South Road. There are no sidewalks on the west side. They do not want to remove the large tree to construct a sidewalk. Staff reviewed the Master Trails Plan. This property is in an area recommended to be striped and widened for a future bike path.

The house currently is served by overhead utilities. Staff doesn't recommend the utilities be placed underground in a Coastal Area for the addition of one unit.

Perez Pullen asked about the large tree that would have to be removed to accommodate a sidewalk. It is a large tree and the applicants would prefer to leave the tree and not build a sidewalk.

Kane asked staff if the Master Trails Plan is expected to be constructed in the near future. Staff answered no. Kane stated that in case the Town were to install the bike path then the new street tree shouldn't be placed near the potential area for a proposed bike path.

Steinford discussed the location of the mailboxes. He asked if there is walk-up delivery of mail. Mr. Lee answered yes, there is walk-up delivery on the entire street.

Roper asked staff for clarification of the proposed bike route for this area. Staff said widening of South Road may be required. The bike route that is proposed in the Master Trails Plan is on the opposite side of the road. The applicant has plenty of room to install the bike path if it is moved to their side of the road. They will have to remove the tree or construct the bike path around the tree. Roper asked if it is a possibility to put a sidewalk in around the tree. Staff said yes, there is this possibility. Roper asked if there is any other sidewalk on this side in that area. Staff answered no, and it is not called for in the Master Trails Plan to be on both sides.

MOTION: To waive the requirement under Zoning Regulations Section 7.5-1 for a five ft. frontage sidewalk along the entire frontage of 97 South Road.

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

MOTION: To approve a site plan for conversion of a three family to a four family residence at 97 South Road, with the following modifications:

1. Water and Electrical Lines shall be shown on the plan. It is noted that the electrical lines are currently overhead.
2. All technical items by staff shall be addressed.

The Commission finds that the increase from three units to four units does not justify the installation of underground utilities in a Coastal Area and allowing the utilities to remain overhead meets Sections 6.7-6 L 3 and 6.7-6 L 4 of the Zoning Regulations.

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

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. SCCOG Regional Plan of Conservation & Development Questionnaire – Review response

Staff reviewed the tabulated responses from the Commission members. The Commission reviewed the responses and concurred with the consensus of the Commission's responses as presented, with the addition of a comment that it is their opinion that there is a need for more stringent control of residential development.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Steinford attended the Economic Development Strategic Plan meeting on February 23rd.

Roper attended the Mystic Cooperative Task Force meeting on February 27, 2006. The Task Force gave approval to send a letter in support of the multi-modal transportation study. At this meeting there was also an update on the Mystic Streetscape project.

Munn also attended the Economic Development Strategic Plan meeting on February 23rd. He told the Commission members they could give him or staff any

comments on the Strategic Plan. The public information meeting for the plan is March 30th. Staff said the draft plan should be available around March 10th.

2. New Applications

- a. Colonel Ledyard Estates, Colonel Ledyard Highway
- b. Hilton Garden Inn, 224 Gold Star Highway

VII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard asked staff about the agenda for the next regular meeting on March 14th. He encouraged Commission members to go out and visit the sites before the next meetings.

VIII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff reported that the Fitch High School site plan will not be presented at the March 14th meeting because there is already a full agenda. Staff requested a special meeting for the Commission to review the plan before March 28th. The Special Meeting date was set for Monday, March 20, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 2 of the Annex.

Staff reminded the Commission that the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies was holding its annual meeting and awards presentation on March 23rd. The topic will be Elderly Housing and its Effect on Community Planning.

Staff stated that they will be bringing recommendations from the Conservation Commission on an update to the Conservation Theme of the POCD to the Planning Commission within the next 2 months, after the school projects.

Staff stated that the new fee schedule had been submitted to the Town Manager, and will be presented to the Town Council. The revision proposes an increase in application fees and the implementation of a "complex application" fee that will be required if additional expert review is required. The fee should cover our cost for legal ads, state fees and administrative costs.

Staff gave a brief overview of the status of the Mystic Streetscape project. The State is now requesting that the project be revised to address general drainage issues in downtown Mystic to prevent siltation of the Mystic River, which will delay the project.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. made by Steinford, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

Planning Commission
February 28, 2006
Page 5

Respectfully submitted,

Margil Steinfeld