

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
May 10, 2010 Meeting

Commission Members Present: Alan Gannuscio, Janet Ramsay, Marshall Brown,
Vincent Zimnoch, and Jim Szepanski

Town Staff Present: Town Planning Coordinator and Assistant Zoning and Wetlands
Officer Jennifer Rodriguez, Town Engineer Dana Steele, and
Town Planning Consultant Michael O'Leary

Chairman Gannuscio called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Commission roll call was taken.

Chairman Gannuscio seated Mr. Szepanski for Commission Member Scarfo for all of the evening's proceedings.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

There were none.

REVIEWS:

There were none.

ACTION ON CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

There were none.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Discussion with Commission and Staff

Chairman Gannuscio suggested that they move Item VII.a (Main Street Zoning) to the end of the meeting, between Items IX. and X., in order to utilize the digital equipment upstairs. Commission members and staff all agreed.

b. Discussion of the Connecticut Water Company's proposed sign on the water tower

John King, Director of Engineering for the Connecticut Water Company, addressed the Commission. He explained that First Selectman Wawruck had spoken to Jack Kieth, Connecticut Water Company's Region Manager, and had inquired about

putting Windsor Locks up on the tank on Elm Street the next time that the Water Company did any work up there. Mr. King then stated that they were planning on repainting the roof and shell of the tank down to the catwalk this year.

Mr. King stated that he had contacted Ms. Rodriguez about what the rules were regarding the sign. He went on to say that Ms. Rodriguez had said that Windsor Locks really did not have many rules for such a sign.

Mr. King noted that they had not decided which side of the tank the sign would be placed on nor had they decided if it would be in one or two locations on the tank. He went on to say that their sketches were based upon what had been done in other towns.

Chairman Gannuscio referred to the appearance and stated that it was not anything that was controversial; it looked fine. He went on to say that the most visible spot would be the east facing side of the tower. Mr. King commented that he did not know where First Selectman Wawruck had envisioned the sign. He then pointed out that the place where he had seen the tower the most while driving around town was while riding up Spring Street. Mr. Keith stated that Mr. Wawruck had not mentioned where he had wanted the sign to be placed on the tower.

Chairman Gannuscio asked which spot would be easiest for Connecticut Water Company. Mr. King suggested that they would confirm with First Selectman Wawruck which side he wanted the sign to be placed on and that then they could report back to the Commission. Mr. Gannuscio stated that he had no problem with the sign. He then agreed that the Connecticut Water Company should check with First Selectman Wawruck regarding the location and that they could then just work it out with staff.

Mr. Brown clarified that it would not be painted on the tower, but would be on a piece of sheet metal. Mr. King stated that it would be painted right on the tower.

Chairman Gannuscio asked the Commission members and staff for any questions. Ms. Rodriguez noted that they typically based sign size on the linear front of the building, but that there was no linear front to the tower. She then asked what she should base the size upon. Mr. Gannuscio asked what size the sign was on the tower in East Windsor. Mr. King stated that what had been presented was almost exactly the same size of the one in East Windsor. Mr. Gannuscio referred to the submitted sketch and noted that it would be 11 feet high by 21 feet long.

Chairman Gannuscio commented that it would be better to have the tower covered with the Connecticut Water Company logo and “Windsor Locks” instead of graffiti. He went on to say that the proposed size did not seem to be overwhelming; the proposed dimensions seemed okay.

Chairman Gannuscio moved to approve the appearance and dimensions of the sign as shown on the submitted mock-up. Ms. Ramsay seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the motion was approved.

Mr. King stated that they would work out the position of the sign on the tower with staff. The Commission members all agreed that that would be fine.

c. Determination of grading revision for Woodridge Condominiums at Oak Ridge Drive

Gary Merrigan and Daryl LeFebre were both present.

Mr. Steele stated that the applicant had approached him about possibly making grading changes to the site. He explained that the applicant had found that it would be more advantageous to raise the grade of the road. He then noted that there was a large hill in the middle of the site and that the applicant was originally going to be lowering that hill substantially. Mr. Steele stated that they were still going to be lowering it, but not as much as had originally been proposed. He then pointed out that less material would be taken off of the site, the road grades would have a little more pitch to them and the houses would be up a little higher.

Mr. Steele stated that the proposed revision would actually help with the drainage in the back of some of the lots. He went on to say that he was pleased with the proposed change. He then noted that the only question was whether or not it would require a modification approval from the Commission.

Mr. Steele commented that his initial thought had been that if there were going to be dramatic changes to the grading, houses being moved and/or the road configuration being moved that it would completely change the characteristics of the development. He went on to say that after looking at the grading plan he did not believe that that was the case. Mr. Steele stated that they were only going to be raising the road, at the high point, about 6 feet and that they would still be cutting about 19 feet off the hill.

Mr. Steele stated that it seemed to be a positive change and that it did not seem to have any impacts on the limits of disturbance, there would be less material coming off the site, and it would not change the location of the houses. He then asked if the

Commission wanted he and staff to review it or if they wanted the applicant to come back to the Commission with a modified application. Chairman Gannuscio commented that Mr. Steele had basically already reviewed it and just given the Commission his comments. Mr. Steele pointed out that he had reviewed a preliminary plan, but that he would need a full set of revised plans. He went on to say that there did not seem to be any changes that were worthy of a new application. Mr. Gannuscio asked if there was any impact to the neighbors. Mr. Steele replied that there was not.

Chairman Gannuscio asked Mr. Merrigan and Mr. LeFebre if they had any comments. Mr. Merrigan stated that they had felt that it was a better solution. He went on to say that it would provide for better views of the Town and also allow for walk-outs for half of the proposed units; it was a better fit to the site.

Chairman Gannuscio stated that he felt that it was something that should be left to staff. The Commission members all agreed.

Chairman Gannuscio moved that any grading revisions for Woodridge Condominiums at Oak Ridge Drive be left for staff review rather than requiring a whole new set of plans and application. Ms. Ramsay seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the motion was approved.

MINUTES:

Chairman Gannuscio referred to the April 12, 2010 meeting minutes and noted that he, Ms. Ramsay, Mr. Brown, Mr. Zimnoch, Mr. Scarfo, and Mr. Szepanski were present at that meeting. He then asked the Commission members and staff for any comments or corrections. Mr. Steele suggested the following changes/corrections:

Page 2, second paragraph, the fourth sentence should read “The discussion continued briefly and Mr. Steele stated that there would be no supervision and that he had understood that there would be less liability that way.”

Page 10, fourth paragraph, the second sentence should read “He went on to say that there was no parking calculation, but that he did not recall any parking....”

Page 11, prior to the first paragraph the heading “Ahlstrom Correspondence” should be added.

Mr. Gannuscio moved to approve the April 12, 2010 meeting minutes, as revised. Mr. Zimnoch seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Public Input

There was none.

b. Receive New Applications

- i. Liquor permit application of Kristina Liberty for 590 Spring Street.

Chairman Gannuscio commented that their traditional approach had been that they asked that all abutting properties be presented with the application. Ms. Rodriguez stated that she had measured on the GIS and that there was about 250 feet between the property in question and the Day Care Center nearby. She then noted that the minimum was 200 feet. Mr. Gannuscio commented that that would also put the Pickleworks and the Blackboard Café beyond the minimum radius required for other liquor permits.

Chairman Gannuscio moved to schedule a special permit public hearing on the application of Kristina Liberty for the property located at 590 Spring Street for June 14, 2010. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the motion was approved.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that someone had spoken to her about possibly opening a pawn shop where the hardware store had formerly been on Elm Street. Yassir Bakr then addressed the Commission and stated that the hours of operation would be from 10:00 am to 6:00 or 7:00 pm. He went on to say that he would have both indoor and outdoor security. He then noted that he was also planning on building a second doorway which would allow him to buzz the customers in. Mr. Bakr explained that the security system would cover the doors, windows and roof.

Mr. Bakr pointed out that there seemed to be ample parking for the pawn shop. He then stated that he would like to reface the existing signs and also possibly add a sign on one of the exterior walls of the building.

Ms. Rodriguez questioned what happened at a pawn shop and if it was similar enough to the use that was previously located on the site for Mr. Bakr to move in and open for business. Chairman Gannuscio noted that the site had previously been an auto parts store

and a hardware store and that it was currently vacant. A brief discussion followed and Mr. Gannuscio asked if guns and firearms would be part of the pawn trade. Mr. Bakr replied that he would not deal with guns and firearms.

Ms. Rodriguez noted that the Fire Department would take a look at the floorplan and safety issues. She went on to say that she could take a look at the signage. She then asked Mr. Bakr if he was simply looking to reface the existing signs. Mr. Bakr replied that he would like to reface the existing signs and also add a sign on the exterior wall of the building.

Chairman Gannuscio stated that the pawn shop was a reasonably similar use. The other Commission members and staff all agreed.

COMMUNICATIONS AND BILLS:

Chairman Gannuscio moved to approve Mr. O’Leary’s invoice for his March/April, 2010 retainer in the amount of \$3,333. Mr. Zimnoch seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the motion was approved.

Chairman Gannuscio called for a brief recess at 7:45 pm in order to move the meeting to the Second Floor Conference Room.

RECESS:

The meeting resumed at 7:55 pm in the Second Floor Conference Room.

OLD BUSINESS:

Main Street Zoning

Chairman Gannuscio stated that he had previously asked First Selectman Wawruck for his concerns regarding Main Street and that he had said that he wanted something that would allow for increased density.

Mr. O’Leary distributed a memorandum dated May 8, 2010 and a Main Street hand-out. He then noted that the Commission had had a workshop about two months prior regarding the Plan of Conservation and Development. He went on to say that that Plan had contained a number of Objectives. Mr. O’Leary stated that Items 1 through 5 in his memorandum were the Plan’s Objectives that were specific to Main Street. He then

noted that Item 1 had already been completed. He also pointed out that one of the recommendations in the Main Street Study had also been the Commission's Objective 3 from the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Mr. O'Leary stated that Items 1 through 12 in his memorandum had come right from the 2008 Study. He went on to say that the Master Plan had contained a lot of good concepts but that it had not supplied a model zoning regulation or techniques to use. He then commented that there was still a lot of work that needed to be done to move forward.

Mr. O'Leary referred to the Main Street hand-out and stated that it contained the following maps:

- Existing Land Use;
- Existing Zoning; and
- three pages of Land Use Recommendations.

Mr. O'Leary stated that there were two major things that needed to be decided:

- what kind of zoning district the Commission/Town wanted to work towards; and
- the actual boundaries of that zoning district.

Mr. O'Leary stated that a Village District was one of the strongest Downtown zoning districts that they could adopt. He went on to say that it would require an architectural review process with either a panel or village architect on-call. Mr. O'Leary then asked Ms. Rodriguez if she had talked to any other towns regarding their experience with the Village District. Ms. Rodriguez replied that she had talked to the people from Suffield and that they hadn't had any complaints from applicants at having to go through that process. She went on to say that she had not heard back from a couple of the other towns (Kent and Ridgefield) that she had contacted.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that the Madison regulation consisted of about 100 pages that included photographs of examples of what they were looking for. She then passed that document around to the Commission members and staff for their review.

Mr. O'Leary then read the Statute regarding Village Districts to the Commission members and staff and proceeded to ask them what kind of zoning district they wanted to pursue. He noted that a Village District or an Historic Overlay Zone had been suggested in the Main Street Study. He went on to say that as far as being defensible the Village District was the stronger option.

Mr. O'Leary referred to the actual boundary of the district and stated that the Commission needed a full copy of the Main Street Study. He went on to say that they had the core of Main Street and then suggested that a transitional area would be appropriate for some of the areas just outside of the Downtown, such as Suffield Street.

Mr. O'Leary commented that it might be a good time for the Commission to look at the zoning and put something in place while the economy was not doing so well so that it would already be in place when the economy got up and running again. He went on to say that they needed to have the Economic and Industrial Development Commission (EIDC) and the Main Street property owners involved in the process of developing the regulations. Ms. Rodriguez noted that Ferraro Hickson now had a good list of the property owners and their contact information.

Ms. Ramsay agreed that they needed to move forward. Chairman Gannuscio agreed that it needed to be a coordinated effort. He went on to say that the concept/idea was probably one of the few things that the Commission could push forward and not run into a lot of resistance when it came to expenditures.

Mr. O'Leary commented that they might want to tap into an architect when it came time to actually put regulation standards together. He then asked the Commission members if it was the direction that they wanted to head in. The Commission members all agreed that it was.

Chairman Gannuscio stated that he wanted First Selectman Wawruck and the Board of Selectmen to have access to Mr. O'Leary's May 8, 2010 memorandum and Main Street hand-out. Mr. O'Leary stated that he would email those documents to them. He went on to say that he would also send it along to Patrick McMahon, the EIDC's consultant. He then noted that he and Ms. Rodriguez needed to sit down with Mr. McMahon and Chris Ferraro from Ferraro Hickson.

Mr. O'Leary commented that zoning was important, but that it was not everything; there were other things that could also be done. He went on to say that he and Ms. Rodriguez would do some more research with other planners, Mr. McMahon and Mr. Ferraro and that they would report back to the Commission.

Chairman Gannuscio asked the Recording Secretary to carry the Main Street Zoning over to the June meeting agenda. Mr. O'Leary then suggested that they continue to keep it on the agenda so that they could continually provide updates to the Commission.

Chairman Gannuscio moved to adjourn to the meeting. Ms. Ramsay seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5 – 0, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Ferrari
Recording Secretary

THIS IS A DRAFT

Please check the following month's meeting minutes for official approval of these minutes and any amendments or corrections that were made.