

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
August 21, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Commission Members Present: Vincent Zimnoch, Jim Szepanski, Alexa Brengi, and Luis Valdez

Commission Members Absent: Alan Gannuscio, Cindy Cooper (Alternate), and Kayleigh Royston (Alternate)

Town Staff Present: Jennifer Rodriguez (Town Planner), and Dana Steele (Town Engineer)

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Zimnoch called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

II. Roll Call

Commission roll call was taken.

III. Site Plan Modification Review: Waterside Village Parking Lot Pavement Project

First Selectman Chris Kervick, 100 Paul Drive, addressed the commission. He explained that there remains some money from a 2012 STEAP Grant for the replacement of sidewalks. The idea is to redesign Waterside Village so that the sidewalks lead the pedestrians to the shops. They would like to get through the process of selecting contractors so the work can be completed before winter. He thanked the commission for making time for a special meeting.

Dana Steele, Town Engineer, stated that he has been working with the Selectmen's Office and the Building Department on a plan for relocating the sidewalks at Waterside Village. The revised plan is dated August 21, 2017. He went on to describe the existing site which has some limitations such as no access from Main Street, and a steep grade coming down Church Street, making it not wheelchair accessible. They are proposing eliminating the sidewalk along Main Street and providing a connectivity up to the walks in the front of the stores. The landscape architects are aiming for a design to look like a railroad track with actual reclaimed railroad rails. This is an innovative and unique solution not found anywhere else in Connecticut. This design will hopefully continue with the rest of Main Street. The owners of this property will be giving the town an easement across the front of the property since this will become the public pedestrian way. The town will be responsible for maintaining this area. The proposed curb cut on Main Street will be a right IN only off Main Street just past the Spring Street intersection. This has to be approved by the DOT. With this configuration there will be a few less parking spaces but overall for the site there will be one extra parking space. This seems to be a plan that everyone is comfortable with and will be a great improvement for a key property in town.

Mr. Steele answered some questions from commission members which included closing off Church Street, areas maintained by the town and liability, angles of parking spaces, date of completion, and size of the sidewalk and the green strip. Mr. Szepanski suggested that the owner put a fence in front of the dumpster to make it look nicer.

Mr. Steele reiterated that this is an application for a parking expansion and site improvements. The work should take about a month to complete but the businesses will remain open. This is a great opportunity to use the grant money so the town can improve pedestrian access and the visual appeal of this area.

Mr. Kervick stated that the town has a separate grant that is at least \$10,000 from Eversource for an energy efficient lighting plan. The new fixtures will be a traditional style fixture that will match the fixtures going in all the way down Main Street. Mr. Steele said there may be additional lights on the side of the building, and they would like to put a light on each green island, but for now the lighting will be as it is now.

There was some discussion about eliminating the sidewalk along Main Street. Mr. Kervick commented that a lot of time was spent discussing this. One school of thought was that in order to buy into the concept of making this as pedestrian friendly as possible and encourage increased foot traffic to the storefronts, we have to have buy-in ourselves. He believes that people will get used to it and that it's safer for pedestrians.

Mr. Kervick introduced Steve Henderson from Classic Management. They have been working closely with him on the project, and Mr. Kervick thanked him for his participation on the project.

Jennifer Rodriguez, Town Planner, stated that her report is dated August 21, 2017, but to discuss her report would be redundant. She did comment that she does not yet have the Lighting Fixture Detail, but it's a traditional style and mimics what will be at the train station. There are no formal comments from the Fire Department or Police Chief because of the short timeline.

Ms. Rodriguez asked Mr. Steele how the storm water will be handled at the road. He replied that they have had discussions with DPW about doing some type of water quality treatment and have been going back and forth. They need some more time to come up with something that makes sense.

Vice Chairman Zimnoch commented that the site plan could change quite significantly if the curb cut is not approved. Mr. Steele responded that they tried to present what they think is going to happen and point out some things that could change, so the commission could tell them, if certain things happen then they need to come back to the commission. If the commission feels comfortable with some of the variables that were described, then this could be approved administratively by staff. Mr. Szepanski remarked that he would like to be informed if they get feedback from DOT. Mr. Kervick stated that with the landscaped median it matches more what the DOT wanted (having some separation between parking and the travel lane), so he believes the DOT will agree with this concept.

It was **MOVED** (Zimnoch) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission approves the site plan modification for the Waterside Village parking lot paving project as presented in the August 21, 2017 plans, with minor changes being approved by staff and major changes going back to the commission for approval.

IV. Discussion: Air BnB

Ms. Rodriguez briefly explained what Air BnB is (people renting out their places for short-term) and stated that people in the planning and zoning field have been talking about this more and more. Her office has received its first inquiry about this and a Proposed Use Form has been filled out. She would like to know how to direct this person as there is nothing right now in the regulations that permits them expressly; however, in Section 402 there is a line that says if something is not expressly permitted, the commission can consider similar uses. She asked if the commission would like her to gather some research from other towns.

There was a brief discussion regarding how to proceed. Some commission members wanted the person to come to the commission and provide more details, and some members felt this was not necessary.

OTHER

Ms. Rodriguez informed the commission that an application for a site plan review has been received for the RISE Academy for 2 Industrial Road. She explained that they are going to the Zoning Board of Appeals to be approved first. The regulations allow the commission to receive this application now and schedule it for review at the next meeting.

It was **MOVED** (Zimnoch) and **SECONDED** (Brenge) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission schedules a site plan review for RISE Academy at 2 Industrial Road for the September 11, 2017 meeting.

V. Adjournment

It was **MOVED** (Valdez) and **SECONDED** (Zimnoch) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission adjourns the August 21, 2017 special meeting at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Debbie Seymour
Recording Secretary*