

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
March 10, 2014 Meeting Minutes

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

Commission Members Present: Alan Gannuscio, Jim Szepanski, Peter Juszczynski, and Alexa Brengi

Commission Members Absent: Vincent Zimnoch, and Curtis Ruckey (Alternate)

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

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Gannuscio called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

II. Roll Call

Commission roll call was taken.

III. Approval of Minutes from the February 10, 2014 Regular Meeting

It was **MOVED** (Gannuscio) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the February 10, 2014 minutes.

IV. Public Hearings (none)

V. Reviews

A. Site plan modification for 107 Ella Grasso Turnpike for construction of a drive-thru lane

Mark Smith of To Design addressed the commission. He stated that the following modifications have been made to the site plan: a longer drive-thru lane was put in to accommodate 14 cars in the queue line; sidewalks are shown all the way to Halfway House Road; a larger basin area was created so they could re-run the drainage model and show there would be no increase in run-off; evergreen plantings are shown to screen their closest neighbor and to buffer the menu board; and an area light was added and photometrics provided. To clarify, the foot candle readings that were submitted are based on a 14-foot pole even though it was labeled as a 16-foot pole. The label was wrong, not the photometrics.

Mr. Steele discussed his revised report dated March 7, 2014. He stated that all of his previous concerns have been addressed. He suggested five conditions of approval. The first condition dealing with a grease trap has been addressed through the WPCA and can be eliminated.

Ms. Rodriguez discussed her revised report dated March 7, 2014.

Mr. Steele noted that there are some guide wires that may be in conflict with the sidewalk that may need to be raised up or relocated, and details should be worked out with the state. He suggested that this be added as a condition of approval.

A discussion took place regarding increased congestion at the site and possibly making an Entrance Only access. Mr. Steele commented that the traffic report addressed vehicles exiting the site during peak hours, and the level of services were within the A to C range.

A second discussion took place regarding putting in additional landscaping toward Halfway House Road. The applicant stated the budget is already extremely high with some of the things they've already had to do to get all of this to work. Mr. Szepanski also commented that he would like to see sidewalks along Halfway House Road. Mr. Gannuscio felt that what is on the plan now is a considerable amount of sidewalk. Mr. Szepanski suggested that the commission ask for a deferred sidewalk agreement.

It was **MOVED** (Gannuscio) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the site plan modification for 107 Ella Grasso Turnpike, which shall include items 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Town Engineer's report dated March 7, 2014; the condition that any guide wires shall not conflict with the sidewalks; and a deferral that should the adjacent property be developed at some point in time, additional sidewalks will be brought up to the boundary of the property to the east. The applicant will also file an agreement on the land records.

Mr. Gannuscio commented that this application was handled well and there was good cooperation, but he wondered whether this was the right process for this type of application which had a substantial change to the existing business. For a situation like this, where there is a major change in the use of a site and there is a significant increase of new traffic, maybe the commission should require a special use permit rather than just a site plan review, especially since some of these sites on Route 75 are pretty tight. Mr. Gannuscio suggested having an informal discussion at some point regarding this. Mr. Szepanski commented that this application went quickly because the commission received it last month and also provided comments at that time, which cut the whole cycle down by one meeting.

VI. Action on Closed Public Hearing Items (none)

VII. Old Business

A. Discussion with Commission and Staff regarding:

i. T&M and North Group, LLC request for acceptance of roads

Mr. Steele stated he has not heard back from the Town Attorney. One of the residents emailed Ms. Rodriguez asking about the status. She sent a copy to Attorney Storms, who replied that there had been no movement, and she asked at what point we take this further, and what are the next steps. She has not heard back yet from Attorney Storms.

ii. Zoning regulations—*Form based code*

Ms. Rodriguez stated that form based code is something that was recommended as part of the DOT study, and there were a lot of suggestions as to what to add in a code four town like Windsor Locks. A lot of the applications would be reviewed administratively versus coming to the commission. Mr. Gannuscio suggested coming back to this topic.

iii. Subdivision regulations (none)

VIII. New Business

B. Receive New Applications

i. Amendment to zoning regulations, Section 409C, 4E

Ms. Rodriguez stated she met with Gary Merrigan and offered some housing terms, he agreed to them, and then he submitted them with his application. Mr. Merrigan said they needed clarification of the definitions to properly word the amendment change, so he didn't mind including them in his application. Ms. Rodriguez looked at definitions from local towns that did not seem to have any issues with their terms and also looked at housing definitions from the American Planning Association that they used in their glossary. She commented that they seem so simple, but they can be very different.

It was **MOVED** (Gannuscio) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission schedule a public hearing on the amendment to the zoning regulations and definitions, Section 409C, 4E, for the April 14, 2014 meeting.

ii. Center Street subdivision (applicant--Angelo Daleo)

It was **MOVED** (Gannuscio) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission schedule a public hearing on the Center Street subdivision application for the April 14, 2014 meeting.

It was noted that this is not a re-subdivision and does not require a public hearing, but there are many interested property owners abutting this property.

A. Public Input

Gary Merrigan asked if the amendment to zoning regulations Section 409C, 4E had to go to CRCOG. Ms. Rodriguez responded no.

C. Informal Discussions

Mr. Gannuscio mentioned that Chairman Zimnoch would probably not be present for the April meeting and asked if Ms. Rodriguez wanted to give a brief synopsis now of Form Based Code and then Chairman Zimnoch could read about it in the minutes.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that the Transit Oriented Study that was prepared by Fuss & O'Neill and presented to the town last year offered a really good section of pages, not just a general recommendation, of what a form based code could look like for Windsor Locks. Rather than paragraph after paragraph of text, it was more like this is the form, and this is the scale. The description of what should be developed looked at everything from a paved street all the way to a building in the rear of the lot, so you have more of a public realm, you have wider sidewalks, and you have street furniture. If the developer can design it to fit this picture, then a developer can often get an approval from staff, and that is a big change. It can offer a lot of enticement for developers because a developer doesn't necessarily have to go through a public hearing; rather, the town has taken on this code for that section of town, so the public in general has approved this way of development. Ms. Rodriguez stated that she is familiar with form based code and has been to a lot of seminars, but she has not been formally trained on that. It's something that is fairly new. Not every town has done this, but she would probably want to shadow a town like Simsbury who has done a large form based project with Fuss & O'Neill very similar to what they've recommended for Windsor Locks. She said, "It can be very transforming, from what I've heard, and I'm comfortable doing it, but I really want to know how much staff time it takes. This is a much smaller town than some of the others that have adopted a form based code. It would be different but it would offer a lot, too. What I would like to be able to do is make copies of the section of the study to share with everyone, and bullet out what the pros and cons could be. It would be a big process to undertake, but we're hearing again and again from the professionals that when you want to make change, sometimes you have to take a little bit of a leap if you want to do that safely and be as prepared as possible. The MSOZ has some flexibility for

development, and it has some design standards which the town didn't have before, so I don't feel like there are all these applications coming in for redevelopment downtown and the town's not prepared, but it is something that could take a long time to implement, and the discussion has to start somewhere." She has a lot of things in the office to shuffle and would like some guidance from the commission on what to prioritize.

Mr. Steele commented that this sounds very strange to him. He is not sure what type of uses would be deterred from submitting applications. Ms. Rodriguez replied, "Very few. It's not about the use, it's all about how it's designed and if it fits this." Mr. Steele commented that maybe there are uses out there that say I just don't want to bother with a complicated process, but he believes it's more if the dollars make sense, and is this something they want to put dollars into pursuing because they have to hire architects, engineers, and surveyors to put together concepts and feasibility studies to figure out if this can work, and those are the determining factors. But, he said if other towns are doing it there must be something to it, so he would like to hear more about it.

Mr. Gannuscio said he can see where something like this could have a benefit for both ends of town. Ms. Rodriguez stated this is a major recommendation, so she feels compelled to have a discussion about it. Mr. Gannuscio would like Chairman Zimnoch to be in on this discussion also. She said she would make sure she shares her thoughts with him. Mr. Gannuscio asked if revisions to the Plan of Development would be very involved this time around. Ms. Rodriguez said it doesn't need a lot of revision, and many sections could be handled with a sentence being replaced. Mr. Gannuscio suggested leaving this item on the agenda for next month's meeting.

Mr. Steele suggested that the commission also consider a text amendment for deferring sidewalks. There is nothing in the regulations really defining what the process is, or when it can be deferred. Some towns have a fee in lieu of sidewalks and then use this money to build sidewalks in another area. Mr. Steele stated there are some loopholes in the regulations that need to be tied up. Mr. Gannuscio asked if he would have time to look at this and come up with some suggestions. Mr. Steele said he would.

It was **MOVED** (Gannuscio) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission add for discussion at the April 14, 2014 meeting Sidewalks and Sidewalk Deferral in the Zoning Regulations under Informal Discussions.

IX. Communications and Bills (none)

OTHER

There was some discussion regarding the situation of the deeds that need to be signed by T&M. As soon as the signed deeds are received back from them the town can proceed with putting in the playscape.

X. Adjournment

It was **MOVED** (Gannuscio) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission adjourn the March 10, 2014 meeting at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Debbie Seymour
Recording Secretary*