

From: Lois Laczko May 5, 2009 9:21:30 AM  
Subject: Planning Commission Minutes 04/14/2009 ADOPTED  
To: SimsburyCT\_PlanMin  
Cc:

ADOPTED

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
April 14, 2009  
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Loomis called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:18 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Charles Houlihan, Julie Meyer, Carol Cole, and Ferguson Jansen. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, as well as other interested parties.

II. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Loomis appointed Commissioner Cole to serve in the absence of Commissioner Post.

CGS 8-3a REFERRAL FROM ZONING COMMISSION FOR A ZONE CHANGE FROM R-40 TO PO ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 499 HOPMEADOW STREET.

Chairman Loomis stated that this application has been withdrawn. Mr. Peck stated that the owner of this property is no longer in conformance with the home occupation regulations. The approach that the homeowner wanted to take was to change the zone. In this situation, they decided not to go through with this; they have located space where this will become a conforming use.

IV. POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF MINUTES from March 24, 2009 regular meeting

Several edits were made to the minutes.

Commissioner Houlihan made a motion to approve the March 24, 2009 minutes as amended. Commissioner Jansen seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

V. STATUS OF THE PROPOSED PLANNED AREA DEVELOPMENT (PAD) ZONE

Mr. Peck stated that he has received approximately 12 individual comments

regarding the PAD regulation. He has been asking Boards and Commissions for their comments as well. He stated that the Town Attorney and he met with the Chamber again today; they made some additional comments.

Mr. Peck stated that he will get all comments to the Town Attorney and will hopefully have a revised draft by the end of the month. He stated that there will be a public meeting in May and a public hearing on the PAD regulation in June.

Mr. Peck stated that the PAD, Incentive Housing Zone and Charrette documents, along with the grants that the Town has received, will all fit together in the final document that will result in the revised Zoning Regulations for the whole Town and the Charrette documents that will pertain to the Center of Town. Mr. Peck stated that he has talked with the consultant regarding integrating existing and new regulations within what they come up with for the Town Center.

Regarding funding, Mr. Peck stated that the Town had \$40,000 for the Town Center Charrette; they have also received grants for the Incentive Housing Zone for \$49,900. Out of the \$49,900, there is approximately \$12,300 left in the grant after the Incentive Housing Zone study. This money can be used for housing related activities; the Town can use this money to look at housing opportunities in the Town Center Zone. There is enough flexibility in the way the grant was written to do this.

Mr. Peck stated that the Town received a grant from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation for \$25,000 that will be used for the Charrette process. They have also received the Farmington River Enhancement Grant from the Connecticut DEP for \$25,000. This grant was written with the focus of low impact development. He stated that when there is increased density, as in the Town Center, there is still a concern with water quality to the River and how to create the density without adversely affecting the storm water quality. The Commission continued to discuss storm water runoff and how this is combined within the Charrette process.

Commissioner Jansen stated that since the goal is to create density in the Town Center, he questioned if the consultants have any prior constraints. Mr. Peck stated that the consultants are aware of the other existing documents, including the POCD and the 1998 Charrette. He stated that the consultants will be listening to the stakeholders and will get feedback from the Town regarding public input. Commissioner Houlihan questioned if the Fire district would have input. Mr. Peck stated that, as property owners in the Center, they should be a part of this process.

Regarding additional grants, Mr. Peck stated that the Town has received \$30,000 to finish the work regarding the historic resource survey, which

was not previously completed, although this applies more broadly to the whole Town.

#### VI. STATUS OF CONSULTANTS' PROPOSALS FOR A TOWN CENTER CHARRETTE

Chairman Loomis stated that the Charrette Subcommittee has unanimously voted to go forward with Code Studio as the consultant to proceed with the Charrette. The consultant will be spending 12 business days on site in Simsbury. Mr. Peck stated that he feels comfortable that the Charrette will be completed this year even if no other money comes in.

Commissioner Houlihan stated that he believes that Mr. Peck may need more support because of the many tasks he has before him. Mr. Peck stated that Mr. Beach and Ms. Charest will be doing more day to day tasks and they will also be involved in the Charrette as well. He stated that although these are not good economic times, they will get by. He stated that they have an intern who, at no cost, has asked to do certain projects at the Town Hall. Mr. Peck stated that she has been working hard and is very helpful.

#### VII. STATUS OF THE INCENTIVE HOUSING ZONE STUDY

This has already been discussed.

#### VIII. STAFF REPORT(s)

Regarding the Meadowood Triangle, Mr. Peck stated that the Board of Selectmen approved entering into a one-year lease agreement, although the BOS will have the option to decide whether to renew the lease. He stated that the high bidder for the property was Gresczyk Farms. They are not organic farmers although they have supplied a list of pesticides that they may use, which have all been approved by the DEP.

Commissioner Meyer questioned if the DEP looked at this from the standpoint of the vernal pool and the runoff from the pesticide use on the portion that will be farmed. Mr. Peck stated he is not sure if the DEP has looked at that. He stated that Mr. Sawitzke and Mr. Robertson are handling most of the issues regarding this property.

Mr. Peck stated that 7 proposals came in for the Meadowood Triangle. The Town is currently looking at other property in Town to accommodate the other farmers.

Regarding the community farming initiative, Chairman Loomis stated that the Board of Selectmen has given a general approval regarding the general direction of this initiative. He stated that the 501C3 is about to be created. The Board of Directors will include Dunny Barney, Chuck Howard, Diane Nash and others. Bill Walsh is the tentative farmer to farm what is

now organically certified farm land. This certification runs out May 1st; Mr. Walsh is working on getting crops planted and the certification renewed.

Chairman Loomis stated that although there are many questions that still need to be answered regarding community farming, there are many motivated people to make this happen. Mr. Walsh remains a central figure. Regarding Phonon, Mr. Peck stated that they are in the process of breaking ground for their expansion. This business needs to rent property to park employee cars during construction.

Regarding Dorset Crossing, Mr. Peck stated that they were before the Design Review Board for two medical office buildings, which conforms to their previous site plan. They are proposing the road into the property and to design the detention structures that are planned for the property; they have already received wetlands approval. He stated that the DRB gave a favorable recommendation for the two buildings, one with a 15,000 s.f. footprint and one with a 10,000 s.f. footprint. The coverage of the site is just over 40%; they will be seeking a special permit for this. He stated that the applicant has already gone through the State Traffic Commission; there will probably be a light at the entrance on Route 10. Mr. Peck stated that the applicant would also like 36 residential units in the back of this property, which will be mixed use.

Commissioner Meyer questioned if this property could be a candidate for the Incentive Housing Zone. Mr. Peck stated that the applicant is interested in applying for the apartment units for the IHZ.

Regarding the Getty station, Mr. Peck stated that the property owners would like to make this into a convenience store with gas. He stated that they would also like to put a nicer looking canopy over the gas pumps.

#### IX. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

There were none.

#### X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Commissioner Houlihan seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

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Gerry Post, Secretary

