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To: SimsburyCT_PlanMin
Cc:

ADOPTED
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MAY 10, 2011
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Tina Hallenbeck, Acting Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Simsbury Planning Commission to order at 7:08 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members and alternates were present: Ferguson Jansen, Mark Drake, Charles Houlihan, Alan Needham and William Rice. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, and other interested parties.

II. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Hallenbeck appointed Commissioner Needham to serve for Commissioner Askham.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of April 12, 2011

Commissioner Jansen moved to approve the Minutes of April 12, 2011 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Needham and passed unanimously, with one abstention (4-0-1). (In favor were Hallenbeck, Jansen, Drake, Needham, and the abstention was Houlihan).

IV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON ANY AGENDA ITEM

Mr. Peck asked the Planning Commission to add a CGS 8-24 Referral to this agenda explaining that this has to do with the Tulmeadow Farm Woodlot. The Board of Selectmen discussed this item last evening. The Simsbury Land Trust is also involved. Mr. Peck said that as this is going to a special referendum he suggested to the First Selectman that the Planning Commission should comment on it as an 8-24 prior to that happening.

Commissioner Houlihan moved to place this item on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jansen and passed unanimously.

A Commissioner asked if this was abutting Flamig Farm. Mr. Peck said that it was located in that area. This is the woodlot as opposed to the farm fields. Mr. Peck said that this is more of a formality than anything else explaining that the Land Trust got involved through a grant program. At some point they found that they are not in fact able to be the Grantee, the Town has to be the Grantee in order to accept federal money for this grant.

Mr. Peck said that everything else is all in place, no change in the dollar, just simply changing the name of the Grantee. The Town's part is \$280,000 out of the whole amount. Mr. Peck said that this appears to be in keeping with the Plan of Development.

Commissioner Houlihan asked what kind of restrictions is put on the woodlot. Could it be cleared and turned into farmland? Mr. Peck said he thinks that it has to remain as a woodlot, and also the Land Trust has a variety of options. They can log it periodically, and as a woodlot it can be thinned and trimmed out. Commissioner Houlihan asked if a woodlot is defined by what the percentage of the trees remain. Mr. Peck said this has historically been used as a woodlot. He said that Tulmeadow would cut wood from it periodically. It will not be logged anymore than it has been in the past.

Commissioner Houlihan said in the Grant Agreement it states to purchase the permit it will be forever retained in its natural and scenic and forested condition. As available for the sustained and cost effective harvesting of forest products in a civil culturally sound manner. A Commissioner said that this is forest management, meaning selective cutting.

Chairman Hallenbeck appointed Commissioner Rice to serve for Commissioner Paine.

Commissioner Jansen moved to approve the CGS 8-24 Referral to the Board of Selectman on the Tulmeadow Farm Woodlot. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Houlihan who said that it is consistent with the Plan of Development, which talks about conserving distinctive land that captures the essence and character of the Town. In particular, it talks of the preservation of the farms and the land surrounding the Farms. The motion passed unanimously, with one abstention (5-0-1). (In favor were Hallenbeck, Jansen, Drake, Houlihan, Needham, and the abstention was Rice).

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V. DISCUSSION

a. Route 10 Corridor Study Status

Mr. Peck said that the Steering Committee is continuing to meet on the Route 10 Corridor Study. They continue to discuss alternatives, both regional and local connections of Route 10. He said that there were some people who felt that they would like to know more about the computer model that CRCOG is using to generate some of the traffic volume information. CRCOG produced a spread sheet that can be looked at. There was some discussion on how the computer model works. Commissioner Needham said that they were shown what was known as a tool that was designed just for Simsbury. It starts out with gross land use susceptible to development or redevelopment. He said that the town is divided up into four zones; northern gateway, southern gateway, town center and Weatogue. For each zone it was stated how much land there is. Commissioner Needham said that there are two pages, and this Commission should go over this at some point. He said, bottom line, if only 50% of the land that is currently available for development or redevelopment was developed in 20 years, Route 10 traffic would increase by 225%. Commissioner Needham said that this is something the Planning Commission should be talking about. He said that the Town is against a four lane Route 10. A Commissioner said that the town is looking for a tax base, and the only tax base that they will ever get is along Route 10. Commissioner Needham said that not everybody is looking to not develop along Route 10. He said that they should develop with things that are as traffic friendly and revenue positive as possible. Commissioner Jansen asked if they had discussed the percentage of traffic increase over the past 10 to 15 years. Commissioner Needham said that it is not big. Commissioner Jansen asked why it would be different over the next 10 years than the previous 10 years. Commissioner Needham said that the reason is because other surrounding towns are developing also. There is also more inclination on Simsbury's part to develop Route 10 now than there was 10 years ago.

The Commissioners continued discussing the Route 10 Corridor Study Status.

Mr. Peck suggested that they come to the Steering Committee meeting. The meeting runs for two hours, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. The best time to come is when the consultants are there as that is when you get the most information.

VI. STAFF REPORT(s)

Mr. Peck said that they had started to talk about potential upcoming provisions to the Subdivision Regulations. He distributed an article to the Planning Commissioners regarding a community that told a developer that they needed to put sidewalks in the right-of-way.

Mr. Peck also distributed an article that has to do with conservation subdivisions. A conservation subdivision can be viewed in a couple of different ways. One is that they do preserve some open space, but he feels that there are better ways to deal with density. Mr. Peck said that he felt that transfer of development rights could be more appropriate rather than having, as an example, a 50 acre parcel of land and then grouping a bunch of houses on a small portion of it. He said why not transfer that density somewhere else and leave that land open. He said that the Town Center is already dense, but a transfer could be done in the outlying residential areas.

Mr. Peck said that he is now in the process of trying to finalize the Low Impact Development Drainage Consulting, and that person will be in Town talking to the Conservation Commission sometime in June. The Planning Commission, Zoning Commission and the Design Review Board will be invited to that Conservation Commission meeting to hear what he has in mind.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jansen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drake and passed unanimously.

Tina Hallenbeck, Acting Chairman