

From: Lois Laczko December 15, 2008 12:09:21 PM
Subject: Planning Commission Minutes 11/25/2008 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_PlanMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
November 25, 2008
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Loomis called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Ferguson Jansen, Gerald Post, Carol Cole, Mark Drake, Julie Meyer and Susan Bednarczyk. Carl Eisenmann arrived at 7:35 p.m. 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 Houlihan.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of October 28, 2008

The Commission made several edits to the minutes.

Commissioner Post made a motion to approve the October 28, 2008 minutes as amended. Commissioner Jansen seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF 2009 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Chairman Loomis suggested that the Planning Commission hold one regular meeting on the first Tuesday of August and that they not meet on December 22 2009. After some discussion, the Commission decided to not schedule a regular meeting for August and to also eliminate the December 22nd meeting.

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve the 2009 Regular Meeting Schedule as amended. Commission Bednarczyk seconded the motion, which was

unanimously approved.

V. PRESENTATION BY Margery Winters, Vice Chairman, Conservation Commission / Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency and Sally Rieger on the status of the Farmington River / Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study

Ms. Winters stated that she, Sally Rieger and Eileen Fielding were here to present a status report regarding the Wild & Scenic Study.

Sally Rieger, Chairman of the Wild & Scenic Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook stated that in 2006, the Feasibility Study Act was signed into law. She stated that much community involvement is needed to make this study work. The Wild & Scenic Act was passed in 1968 to protect the nation's best Rivers and to keep them free flowing. The program for the Upper Farmington River has been successful since 1994.

The presentation regarding the Farmington River / Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study included:

- " The collaboration process (advisory only)
- " Fundamental principles
- " Rivers on the East Coast (designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers)
- " Wild and Scenic Benefits
- " Who is Conducting this Study
 - o Representatives from ten Towns
 - o DEP
 - o Stanley Works
 - o Connecticut Forest & Parks Association
 - o Farmington River Watershed Association
- " What does designation involve?
 - o Eligibility
 - o Support
 - o Planning
- " The process to get the designation
 - o Community interest
 - o Congress authorize study
 - o Study eligibility plus a management plan (public input)
 - o A management plan considered by the Town
 - o Study report to President and Congress
 - o Congress introduces designation legislation
 - o River becomes member of Wild and Scenic River System

Chairman Loomis questioned what impacts the Upper Farmington River designation has on other parts of the River. Ms. Fielding stated that it either enhances the chances for designation or does not make a difference.

Commissioner Meyer questioned how all of the Towns worked together regarding the Upper Farmington River. Ms. Fielding stated that each Town has their own representative; they get together to discuss the River projects at their meetings.

Ms. Rieger discussed the outstanding resource values of the Farmington River, which included:

- " Geology
 - " Water quality
 - " Biodiversity - The Farmington River has fresh water muscled diversity. They harbor the endangered Dwarf Wedge mussels.
 - " Cultural Landscape
 - " Recreation - recreational pursuits in and along the River including biking/hiking, fishing, bird watching and paddling opportunities
- Chairman Loomis asked if the Planning Commission could make a recommendation of endorsement, and if so, when. Ms. Rieger stated that they would like an endorsement prior to going back to Congress, although she thought that the Commission should review the Management Plan first.

Ms. Winters stated that the Commission members should check the website for further updates. The Boards and Commissions in Town would also be receiving newsletters for updates.

VI. ACCEPTANCE OF WHITNEY LANE CONSTRUCTION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Mr. Peck stated that Whitney Lane was constructed approximately 4-5 years ago; it is part of a subdivision that was approved by all of the Land Use Commissions. The formal adoption of the road never took place. This is a procedural matter. He recommended that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of Selectmen the adoption of Whitney Lane into the Town road system as it is currently constructed with no changes.

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to accept Whitney Lane, Gillette Farms Subdivision as presented and so recommend to the Board of Selectmen. Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VII. STATUS OF CHARRETTE INITIATIVE

Mr. Peck stated that the Charrette Sub-Committee met yesterday and discussed the consultant's presentations and their responses to the additional questions. They also discussed the issue of funding. Mr. Peck stated that the Town does not have the full amount of money that is needed to proceed with the Charrette at this time. There is \$40,000 that is currently available. The Sub-Committee decided to refocus on the Town

Center and will be asking the consultants to structure a workshop proposal to focus on the Center. This workshop for the Town Center would have some public input and a great deal of work by Town staff. The hope is that the outcome of this will be specific recommendations for focusing on the Center and sketch plans for alternatives.

Mr. Peck stated that subsequent work, if funded, would focus on other areas, including the north and south gateways and the Route 10 corridor and possibly other areas of Town. This scaled down Charrette would also provide a solid base for establishing follow up activities, including a full-blown Charrette and it would also establish public confidence in the Charrette type process.

Chairman Loomis questioned what the time period for this would be. Mr. Peck stated that the Workshop would be conducted in February or the first week of March. The Charrette Sub-Committee has decided that they would like Dover Kohl to conduct this Workshop, although they are not sure they will accept this responsibility. Mr. Peck stated that this process should be in the next budget cycle.

Commissioner Cole questioned how this Charrette would be different from the last Charrette for the Town Center. She stated that she agrees with Mr. Peck that this smaller process will help people in Town understand the process. Mr. Peck stated that they would be targeting the stakeholders, which is very important to have them involved in the process. Mr. Peck stated that the 1998 Charrette was a vision document. This Charrette will be more detailed and the quality of input into this process will be critical.

Commissioner Cole recommended that a newsletter go out to all Simsbury households to educate residents regarding this process. Mr. Peck stated that many things will be done to notify people in Town, including postings on the Town's website and broadcasts on SCTV.

Commissioner Post questioned if the Charrette Sub-Committee would ask another firm if Dover Kohl did not accept this smaller request. Mr. Peck stated that it would be up to the Sub-Committee to decide that. Dover Kohl could accept the smaller proposal as written or they might make some changes to it.

VIII. STAFF REPORT(s)

Meadowood Closing - Mr. Peck stated that the Town owns the Triangle as of this afternoon. They will be putting together a list of groups that will come together to discuss what the possible uses for the property might be.

Proposed Changes to Zoning Regulations - Mr. Peck stated that several changes are being proposed to the existing Regulations. The Zoning Commission will be considering definitions for the following because there are currently, no definitions for: mixed use development, mixed use building, Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) and Conceptual Master Plan. Mr. Peck stated that if these definitions are accepted, there will be a public hearing set in January.

Mr. Peck stated that he is also asking that the Zoning Commission consider including, in the allowed uses in their Regulations, a CCRC with accessory uses. There has been a group who might possibly want to apply for development on a portion of the Northeast Utilities property. Without these changes, an application cannot go forward. In addition to making it a use that is allowed in the Regulations, it also allows such a use to come in under the Conceptual Master Plan so they can phase the process.

Mr. Peck stated that it is important to move forward without delay for projects that want to come to Simsbury. He stated that there are two potential projects that might want to develop in Simsbury.

Nancy Haase, One Stone Hedge Drive and member of the Economic Development Commission, stated that she is putting together an economic net impact of these potential projects in hopes of conveying to the public regarding the return of the investment.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

CRCOG Update - Commissioner Meyer stated that the results of the first CRCOG roundtable will be available on their website. The second roundtable will be held on January 8, 2009, which will be open to the public. The focus will be to build on the first roundtable results. They will compare the respondent's perceptions to reality. They will also compare the obstacles the region faces to opportunities that exist when it comes to improving the life in our region. The third roundtable will be regarding strategies; it will be scheduled for sometime in the spring.

Commissioner Meyer stated that David Fink, from Home Connecticut, was a presenter at CRCOG. He discussed the affordable housing grants. Simsbury is 1 of 16 communities that have received the grant. One interesting fact he gave was that most of the housing stock built in Connecticut since 2000 is 55+ or 4-5 bedroom homes. Simsbury is 46th in the State for units built per capita as far as affordable housing.

Commissioner Meyer stated that she did question if any other Towns were working on form-based codes in their communities. She stated that Tolland will be hiring a consultant to craft a form-based code for their gateway.

Commissioner Meyer stated that the DEP has a Farmington River Enhancement Grant. She questioned if Simsbury was applying for this grant. Mr. Peck stated that they were in the process of applying for this.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jansen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meyer and unanimously approved.

Gerry Post, Secretary