

Planning and Zoning Commission

February 15, 2022 – 7:30 PM

Regular Meeting Minutes

Note: This meeting was held online

A. Call to Order.

W. Parsell called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

B. Roll Call/ Seating of Alternates

Members Present:

Walter Parsell

Doug Roberts

Joe Hall

John Tehan

Rebeca Sinosky

Also Present

Mike D'Amato - Land Use Agent

Rachael Burstein - Tyche Planning & Policy Group

Chris Roberts - Assistant Land Use Agent

C. Applications to be Received

a. PZ-22-4 Proposed Zoning Regulation Section 12.5: (new) Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)

Applicant: Planning and Zoning Commission

M. D'Amato explained that this was to be received and there is a public hearing scheduled for the March 1st meeting.

D. Public Hearing

a. PZ-21-24 Special Permit for signage at Loves Travel Stop. 3 Polster Road Applicant: Betty

Torstenson Owner: Love's Travel Stop & Country Stores Inc. (continued from 2/1/22)

G. McCracken explained that some progress has been made and that land use staff had received a memo from the sign manufacturer ESKO including illumination data from their signs,

showing 21-foot candles for red graphics, 82 for yellow, 115 for white. He explained that he had also received data from CAT scale sign manufacturers which would comply with dark sky requirements. He further explained that he was having trouble getting data from the sign manufacturers for the fuel product pricing signs and would work on getting those. G. McCracken said that Fuss and O'Neill overlayed the site plan for signage and landscaping and noticed some conflicts in location of these elements, which they are working out. He suggested continuing the hearing until March 1st and that he should have those items by then.

W. Parsell asked M. D'Amato if they should continue this meeting.

M. D'Amato said it was up to the Commission and that the other option would be make these items conditions of approval.

W. Parsell stated that he would like to see these items and would like to continue the meeting. He asked the commission for their opinions, the commission agreed.

John Tehan motioned to continue the hearing to March 1st. R. Sinosky seconded. **All in Favor. Motion Passed.**

E. New Business

None

F. Unfinished Business

a. Affordable Housing Plan: Front End Narrative Review

M. D'Amato explained that the Commission should have received the first draft of the Affordable Housing Plan and that they could go through it and answer any questions.

W. Parsell asked for clarification that the town was currently at 7.5 percent affordable housing. M. D'Amato confirmed.

D. Roberts asked if there was any incentives or relief provided to the town regarding affordable housing due to the lack of sewer and water. He asked if they were held to the same standard with that factor coming into play.

R. Burstein agreed that that was a disadvantage but stated that the State did not modify the criteria because of it.

D. Roberts asked if the state makes any concessions for towns without this infrastructure in place.

R. Burstein answered that they did not.

M. D'Amato pointed out that this was not well addressed in the statutes.

D. Roberts added that maybe some kind of disclaimer regarding the town's lack of sewer and water be added into the plan pointing out that this is a disadvantage that the town faces.

W. Parsell asked what the penalty is for not hitting the 10 percent affordable housing requirement.

M. D'Amato explained that one thing that could happen if the town doesn't have 10 percent affordable housing stock is that if a developer proposes an affordable housing project, they would be exempt from zoning requirements and anything that doesn't directly correlate to health and safety. He explained other than that there is no established penalty for not meeting the ten percent mark.

R. Burstein went through the draft of the Affordable Housing Plan for the Commission.

M. D'Amato explained what the term "cost burden" meant and why it was an important statistic. He explained that if someone is spending more than thirty percent of their income on housing, then this is then point where they stop spending on other things like groceries, childcare, going out to eat, etc.

R. Burstein pointed out that from all the towns she's worked in Willington had one of the highest rates of renter cost burden.

J. Tehan asked if the town's college student renters could factor into that number. R. Burstein said that that could be a contributing factor. M. D'Amato stated that they would make it clear in the plan that the data is skewed to an extent because of UConn students living in town.

J. Tehan pointed out the word "Consider" in the PoCD goals sections and pointed out that they had discussed changing this language and using stronger verbiage that commits harder to goals.

R. Burstein explained that these were just goals that were pulled right from the PoCD and that they would be using this to build new goals with stronger language.

M. D'Amato explained the road map going forward for finishing the plan.

W. Parsell asked if the Commission would be included in coming up with the final sections.

R. Burstein answered that yes, the Commission would be involved. She explained that she had a list of different strategies that they've used in other towns that the Commission could use to build on and see what other towns are doing, in terms of goal and implementation.

W. Parsell pointed out that this topic is certainly not one size fits all.

R. Burstein explained that this list can just be used as a guide and for the Commission to get ideas, they don't necessarily have to use what's on the list.

M. D'Amato added that there are a lot of non-conventional ways to create affordable housing.

G. Approval of Minutes

a. February 1, 2022

J. Tehan Moved to approve the minutes. D. Roberts seconded. **All in Favor, Motion Passed.**

H. Correspondence

I. Public Comment:

R. Tulis stated that he did not feel his comments at the previous meeting were captured correctly in the previous minutes. He asked if it would be appropriate to bring up at the next meeting during the continuation of the hearing. W. Parsell said that would be ok.

J. Staff Report/Discussion.

a. 2018 PoCD Implementation Update

M. D'Amato explained that C. Roberts was in the process of going through the 2018 PoCD.

C. Roberts explained that over the next few meeting that staff and the commission would go through section by section and evaluate goals set in the PoCD and gauge where the commission was at in terms of achieving these goals. He explained that this plan was halfway through its ten-year life span and that some of the goals set might not necessarily apply anymore and it was ok if the commission didn't find them all still appropriate for the town. The goal of this process was to pick some relative goals to put on the to-do list in the near future. He began going through the goals with the commission.

C. Roberts asked M. D'Amato where we were at with implementing low impact development (LID) strategies.

M. D'Amato stated that this was something being looked at in the new regulation, but it is something that is one size fits all. He said that they were looking at ways to promote treating and cleaning water on site, but while being sensitive to the fact that not all sites are created weekly.

J. Tehan asked if any of these steps that used language stating the "Willington will..." had been completed.

M. D'Amato stated that from his knowledge since he has been in Willington it is hard to tell what was done before his time, he went on to add that the PoCD is developed with goals in mind that overtime don't make sense for the town or development anymore. He explained that this is the purpose of going through these goals so that commission and staff can work together and decide what is still relevant and what needs to be achieved and prioritized.

C. Roberts stated that one goal that could be checked completed is adding Natural Diversity Database (NBBD) information to the permitting process.

J. Tehan asked if there was a copy available.

W. Parsell stated that it is online.

M. D'Amato added that the NBBD database could be added to the permitting system so that all properties in these areas would be flagged for review. He added that the goals regarding vernal pools could be something the wetland commission looks at. He further explained that a lot of these goals are fluid, and they are always changing. He added a lot of this stuff can be completed through the approach of the land use process, rather than adding to the regulations. He added that FEMA flood zone mapping will be added in the GIS update.

M. D'Amato added that the Commission was on the right track in moving in the direction of these goals.

b. 2022-2023 Budget

M. D'Amato asked if anyone wanted to discuss the budget. W. Parsell asked what the budget looked like. M. D'Amato stated that he would get a copy of the budget out. He explained that the only increase was related to the document storage system which increased \$1,800. He explained further that because of COVID, staff implemented an option for all the land use document to be accessed online through the GIS system. Additionally, the server the stored this data crashed and this new system allows all the documents to be stored safely on the cloud. M. D'Amato explained that everything else was flat.

W. Parsell asked needing hard copies when meetings go back into in person was being anticipated into application costs.

M. D'Amato stated that it is a requirement that applicants provide necessary hard copies.

K. Adjournment

W. Parsell adjourned the meeting at 8:28 PM.