

Planning and Zoning Commission

June 7, 2022

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

Walter Parsell

Joe Hall

Andy Marco

Doug Roberts

John Tehan

Bob Shabot

Becky Sinosky (absent)

C. Applications to be Received

D. Public Hearing

a. PZ-22-9: Text Amendment Application pertaining to the Regulation of Cannabis Establishments:
Applicant: Planning & Zoning Commission

M. D'Amato explained the background on the regulations, laws on cannabis and where they were currently in the process of drafting regulations. He explained that the cap on the number of cannabis establishments for towns had been removed from state statute. He went on to explain that in response to that he added similar language to the draft regulations. J. Tehan asked what happens when this language repeals. M. D'Amato said that he really added that for a point of consideration, but yes if it was left in as is it would be repealed per the date in the regulations.

K. Demers reviewed a list of questions and concerns that she had with the draft regulations.

M. D'Amato responded to her questions and concerns.

W. Parsell asked if the land use attorney reviewed the regulations. M. D'Amato answered they had not, and that the language had been pulled from similar language from other towns and regarded by the regional planning agency. W. Parsell also brought up her question regarding how a town wide prohibition would be implemented. M. D'Amato explained that if a prohibition was to be implemented it would have to be done via an ordinance. B. Shabot noted that a greenhouse could not be used for security reasons. Doug Roberts asked if any towns had approved regulations the take into account response times from law enforcement, seeing that this is a cash business. M. D'Amato said that he hadn't seen this in his experience. W. Parsell asked what the feeling is from the board of selectmen. M. D'Amato answered that he had nothing formal but had made Erika aware of what the Planning and Zoning Commission was considering.

Ralph Tulis of 47 Village Hill Road reiterated K. Demers concern about having the regulation reviewed by the Land Use attorney. R. Tulis continued through his list of comments. He again seconded K. Demer's concern about buffer distances between cannabis establishments and said that we should mirror the alcohol regulations.

D. Roberts asked if the school boards had weighed in on these regulations, noting that they had a lot of challenges with vaping, and wondered if there had been any dialogue with the school board. M. D'Amato noted that that's where a lot of towns are adopting ordinances banning it from town property.

Erik Wolfgang-Pinto of 41 Sunset Ridge Drive, East Hartford introduced himself to the commission. He explained that his family is part of a group that is receiving eight retail licenses from the state. He explained that Willington is appealing to them, and he wanted to introduce group to the commission. He answered one of R. Tulis's questions regarding confusion with the definitions. He presented a case in favor of cannabis establishments and offered to provide the commission with literature to support his case.

K. Demers added that there was nothing in the regulation that would limit the number of cultivators and asked the commission to consider this.

J. Tehan noted that the signage requirements in the regulations seemed a bit restrictive. M. D'Amato said that there was a provision in the bill allowing towns to regulate signs for these businesses differently. The commission discussed signage in relation to cannabis establishments.

B. Shabot noted that most grow facilities use a drip irrigation system so that water use is regulated. He explained how the fertilizers are implemented into these facilities. He noted that they can't use toxic chemicals on something that is being consumed. He added that one thing the commission should consider is not allowing facilities to compost their spent soil balls on site.

M. D'Amato said he would prepare tweaks based on what they spoke of and brought up the regulations regarding the buffer distance and the cap on number of facilities. The commission had a conversation on discussing the changes they wanted to see made to the draft. M. D'Amato said that he would prepare changes and provide the commission with them ahead of the meeting. W. Parsell asked if the Land Use Attorney could look at the regulations.

W. Parsell made a motion to keep the public hearing open until the next meeting. J. Tehan Seconded **All in Favor. Motion Passed.**

E. New Business

F. Unfinished Business

a. Affordable Housing Plan

M. D'Amato explained where in the process they were at and that if the commission was ready then they could discuss, otherwise they could discuss it later in time. He added that there was no deadline for them to complete this.

D. Roberts said he would email his questions to M. D'Amato.

M. D'Amato suggested they discuss at the first or second meeting in July. W. Parsell said he thinks it should be the first meeting in July. The commission agreed.

G. Approval of Minutes

a. May 17, 2022

J. Tehan motioned to approve the minutes of May 17th, 2022. B. Shabot Seconded. **W. Parsell Abstained, All Others in Favor, Motion Passed.**

b. Review of March 1 and March 15, 2022, Minutes

M. D'Amato explained that the minutes from these meeting were correct and that the public hearing had been closed on the meeting of March 1st and subsequently held again at the next meeting. He noted while it was a mistake the only consequence was that there was more public comment on the Commission's application and that no decisions had been published until after the March 15th meeting.

H. Correspondence

a. Town of Mansfield Referral

M. D'Amato explained that the town of Mansfield was implementing a new zoning regulation to create a Mixed-Use Center Transition Zoning District.

I. Public Comment: The Commission will hear brief comments at this time from anyone wishing to speak. No business can be conducted here, nor can any comments be made about any items on the agenda

R. Tulis again reiterated his concern for running new regulations by the land use attorney.

J. Staff Report/Discussion

a. Hybrid Meetings

The commission had a conversation regarding transitioning to in person/ hybrid meetings. W. Parsell advocated for in person/hybrid meetings. M. D'Amato noted the views that the YouTube videos got and said that it was an important and that we could continue to do that by running meetings as hybrid. The commission agreed to doing hybrid meetings. M. D'Amato noted that the application currently before the Commission had been noticed as virtual so it had to remain but after the application had been acted upon, the Commission could transition into hybrid meetings.

K. Adjournment

W. Parsell adjourned the meeting at 9:06 PM