

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 25, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Pritchard, Steinfeld, Kane, Munn, Zod
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Tarbox (7:03)
Absent:
Staff present: Glemboski, Silsby

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. September 13, 2016

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of September 13, 2016

Motion made by Steinfeld, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously, as amended.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Joan Smith, 37 Island Circle South, a member of Groton Open Space Association (GOSA) expressed concerns about granting an extension for Start of Construction for the Four Winds at Mystic project, on tonight's agenda. Background information was given about when this project was granted site plan approval. She spoke about Active Senior Housing and Residential Life Care regulations. Ms. Smith pointed out stipulations previously made by the Wetlands Agency. She recommended that the Planning Commission take into consideration the most current zoning regulations and not approve this request for extension of Start of Construction.

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. East Farm Subdivision, Noank Road – Acceptance of Public Improvements and Reduction of Bond

Staff stated that the Town engineer has reviewed the site. He noted that improvements are not ready to be accepted, though the bond could be reduced to 10%.

MOTION: To reduce the East Farm Subdivision performance bond to the 10% maintenance amount of \$5,830.

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Kane, so voted unanimously

V. SITE PLANS

1. Four Winds at Mystic, 0 Noank Ledyard Road – Request for Extension for Start of Construction

Clinton Brown, DiCesare Bentley Engineers, representing the applicant, explained that Mr. Bonvie and Attorney Londregan were slated to attend tonight's meeting but have not arrived. Mr. Brown reviewed the request for a 1-year start of construction

extension. He stated that the project was approved in 2004 and has not begun due to economic difficulties. Information was given about the Army Corp of Engineers' permitting process and the problems that have arisen. He stated that the latest permit was granted by the Army Corp of Engineers in August 2016. He appreciates Mrs. Smith's comments, but added that her concerns were dealt with prior to site plan approval in 2004. Mr. Brown understands that this property is quite unique. He apologized for the absence of Mr. Bonvie and Attorney Londregan.

Staff reviewed the discussion held during the last extension that was granted in March 2016, noting that at that time, the Planning Commission decided to grant an 8 month extension to get their plans recorded and start construction. At this point in time, their plans have not been recorded. The applicant is requesting a one-year extension until November 26, 2017.

Inquiries were made about what changes have been made to the zoning regulations since this project was first approved in 2004. It was noted that public safety and utility considerations were reviewed at the time of approval. Specifics were given about the Army Corp of Engineers involvement and its permitting process.

In regards to Munn's inquiry, Ms. Smith gave information about how the new active senior housing regulations differ from residential life care facility regulations.

Discussion followed about the pros and cons of not granting an extension. It was noted that the actual site plan is valid until March 26, 2020. Tarbox expressed concerns that the plans have not yet been filed and this project has not begun. Additional information was given about what the Army Corp of Engineers requires and the process that they follow. Staff stated that the Wetlands permit is valid until April 19, 2019.

A suggestion was made to delay making a decision until the next meeting on November 22, 2016. Discussion followed about the pros and cons of waiting.

Staff stated that the zoning regulations have changed. The applicant would meet the density requirements but may not meet the product type requirements under the current zoning.

Mr. Brown noted the potential of having the maps recorded within six months.

A suggestion was made to consult with the Town Attorney about the extension.

MOTION: To grant a six-month start of construction extension until May 26, 2017 for the Active Adult LLC (Four Winds at Mystic) site plan, Noank Ledyard Road

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Referral from the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Public Hearing on November 9, 2016 – ZBA#16-14 – 25 Amherst Court, William and Susan Parsons/Owners, Advanced Improvements, LLC/Applicant

Staff reviewed the project and noted the setbacks.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

2. Adoption of 2017 Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Munn, seconded by Zod, so voted unanimously

3. Report of Commission

Steinford inquired about trucks and work being done on the sidewalk in front of Central Hall. Staff will inquire with the building official.

Steinford inquired about 420 Long Hill Road and wood chips being on site.

Fitzgerald referred to an article about an Airport Development Zone wanting to extend the manufacturing area within 2 miles of the airport. Discussion followed about the radius and spot zoning. He feels that the Planning Commission should be told what part of the town would be affected by this change. Staff will gather information from the Economic and Community Development Manager and report back to the Commission. She noted that the zoning will not change and this is a tax incentive program.

An inquiry was made about the high speed rail being proposed in this region and concerns were expressed about the impact to area properties and businesses. Staff stated that there is a federal preliminary plan for this project. She will address this concern with the Economic and Community Development Manager, who has been working on this project. Fitzgerald feels that the Planning Commission should have been given plans and information on this proposal.

4. New Applications - None

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Pritchard attended an FOIA presentation. All are welcome to attend the upcoming Council of Governments regional planning meeting scheduled for November 7, 2016. In regards to the federal rail association, he inquired if there is a policy for Planning staff sharing information with the Planning Commission.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff stated that an advertisement has gone out for the vacant position of Code Enforcement/Planner I. In regards to the Water Resource Protection District regulations, the Zoning Commission has been reviewing them with the consultant. A referral for the Water Resource Protection District (WRPD) zone text amendments will be made to the Planning Commission at a meeting in December. The Capital Improvement Plan will be added to a December meeting. She reminded the Commission that the only meeting in November will be held on the 22nd. She stated that

an Administrative Site Plan was submitted for renovations to Wendy's on Long Hill Road.

An inquiry was made as to what involvement Town Staff has in the selection of trees that are being planted at the shopping center at Aldi's in Groton.

Kane shared that he took a boat tour out of Newport recently, whereby he visited five wind turbines that are being installed off Block Island. He referred to the planning process that was needed to get these constructed.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm was made by Steinford, seconded by Zod, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinford, Vice Chairman/Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin M. Silsby
Office Assistant II