

PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 9, 2006 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Munn, Pritchard, Roper, Sherrard, Steinford
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald, Kane
Staff present: Cullen, Goodrich, Murphy, Stanowicz

Chairman Sherrard opened the meeting with roll call at 7:05 p.m.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Colonel Ledyard Estates, 0 Colonel Ledyard Highway

Chairman Sherrard opened the public hearing at 7:50 p.m.

Paul Hallisey, a civil engineer with Hallisey, Pearson & Cassidy Engineering Associates, represented the applicants, Fairway Estates Ltd. Partnership. Mr. Hallisey reviewed the location of the project. The proposal is for a 15 lot, open space subdivision on 17 acres zoned RU-40. More than 8 acres are dedicated as open space. The subdivision will tie into Deerfield Ridge Drive. Only one lot will have a driveway on Colonel Ledyard Highway. All other lots will have a driveway on Deerfield Ridge Road or the new cul-de-sac. The Inland Wetland Agency approved the project in 2004. The Inland Wetland Agency required a 4 ft. sidewalk with no snow shelf along a portion of Colonel Ledyard Highway to avoid the wetlands. The history of the State sewer avoidance designation was explained. The project will now be allowed to be tied to public sewer. The intersection with Colonel Ledyard Highway and Quakertown Road would be realigned. The location of existing trees that can be saved was reviewed. Grading rights from the abutting property owners will be required for the road construction and intersection realignment. Sidewalks will be installed along the frontage and throughout the property and tie to sidewalks in Deerfield Ridge. Mr. Hallisey reviewed the lot sizes and setbacks. All lots are a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft. A playground area for small children will be installed. An access road constructed of mat grass has been added to the plan to provide access to the open space and allow maintenance of the drainage structure.

Steve Eckhouse, the managing partner of Fairway Estates, reviewed the history of the previous application. Mr. Eckhouse explained that the major outstanding issue from the previous application was the sewer. At that time the property was part of the sewer avoidance area. The property is now in a sewer permitted zone. No waivers are being requested.

Staff explained that the revised plans were received the day before this meeting. The Public Works Department and the Police Traffic Authority

previously reviewed the intersection of Deerfield and Quakertown. They requested that the intersection be realigned into a straighter line. Public Works and the Police are reviewing the newest plan. The Fire Marshal's concern is that the Fire Department will need to have access to the site once construction begins. The Town environmental planner is reviewing the plan for compliance with the Inland Wetlands permit. Staff explained the sidewalk plan. The location of open space parcels in the area was reviewed. There will be a connection from existing Town-owned open space to the open space on this site. The play equipment for the recreation area is being reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Dept.

Munn asked if the wetlands were intermittent watercourses. Staff said there are vernal pools and spotted salamander egg masses. Munn asked if there is any opportunity for a trail system. Staff said there are no other trails nearby, but there is a connection between the open space parcels. Munn asked about the snow removal on the sidewalks. Staff explained the removal of snow on the sidewalks is the responsibility of the abutting property owner. Munn asked about the traffic control. Staff said there would be stop signs at the Quakertown Road intersection.

Kane asked about the proposed special "road mat" access road off of Deerfield. Staff said it will be used to get to the drainage area, and will blend in attractively without jeopardizing safety. Kane said he is concerned with people "off-roading" with vehicles through the wetlands. Staff said they will investigate vehicle control measures.

Steinford asked if the frontage sidewalk on the southern end of Colonel Ledyard Highway would have a connection to any sidewalk beyond this property. Staff said yes. Steinford asked if there would be railings between the sidewalk and road at the wetlands crossing. Staff said there will be railings. Steinford asked if the 4 ft. sidewalk in the cul-de-sac meets regulations. Staff said yes.

Roper asked if there is any potential for a north-south trail through to Ledyard. Staff said not at this time, but the possibility to connect in the future is not restricted. Roper asked if there was any possibility of a loop trail. Staff said there is nothing shown on the Town Master Trails Plan. Roper asked if there is a phasing plan. Mr. Hallisey said no, it will not be done in phases. The road will be opened when the binder course is laid. Mr. Hallisey reviewed the conservation easement placed on the back yards of the lots. No grading or tree cutting will be allowed there.

Pritchard asked about the utilities. Mr. Hallisey said the sewer and water have been brought to Deerfield, and they will connect. Hydrants and underground utilities will be installed. Light poles will be installed. The drainage plan has been approved by Public Works. Catch basins have been added to the plan. Mr. Hallisey reviewed the Fire Marshal's requirements during construction. All construction vehicles will enter the site from Colonel Ledyard Highway. Pritchard asked if there would be any shared drives. Mr. Hallisey said two lots will share an 18 ft. wide common drive in the cul-de-sac.

Fitzgerald asked who is responsible for snow removal from the sidewalk along the open space. Staff said if the sidewalk is along the Town's open space, snow removal is the responsibility of the Town.

Sherrard asked if there are any stone walls on the property that will be preserved. Mr. Hallisey said there are none on the property. Sherrard asked if the sewer and water tie-ins from Deerfield were sized for additional users when built. Mr. Hallisey said yes. Sherrard asked how long the road connection to Route 184 will be once Deerfield Ridge is completed to Colonel Ledyard Estates. Mr. Hallisey said about 2,000 feet. Munn said he believes a stone wall runs north - south on the property.

MOTION: To continue the public hearing for Colonel Ledyard Estates, 0 Colonel Ledyard Highway, to the next regular meeting on May 23, 2006.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of April 25, 2006.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of April 25, 2006 as amended.

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

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Steinfeld said a resident of the Route 184 area called him about the number of large commercial projects being proposed on Route 184, and the impact on traffic on I-95 and King's Highway.

Roper stated he received a phone call from Sidney VanZandt regarding notification of abutters of subdivisions.

Staff announced that Barbara Goodrich has accepted a position as a full-time planner in the City. Barbara's last day with the Town will be May 24, 2006.

Staff submitted an approval from the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for a floating dock at 27 Essex Street.

Dave Cote, President of Cote Real Estate Partnership, 1101 Noank Ledyard Road, requested to be added to the agenda to review a sidewalk agreement signed by Mr. Cote and the Town on May 17, 2001.

MOTION: To add the Cote Real Estate Partnership sidewalk agreement review to the agenda.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Roper. Motion passes, 4-0-1, 1 abstention (Munn).

Sidney VanZandt, 3 Front Street, Noank, said she spoke to Ann Nalwalk, the president of Avalonia Land Trust, who is upset because she did not receive notification of the Library Hill Subdivision application.

V. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Colonel Ledyard Estates, 0 Colonel Ledyard Highway (15 lots)

The public hearing was continued to May 23, 2006.

2. Groton Highpoint Subdivision, 245 Hazelnut Hill Road (33 lots)

A public hearing for Groton Highpoint Subdivision, 245 Hazelnut Hill Road, was scheduled for June 13, 2006.

3. Candy Lane Subdivision, 0 Bonnie Circle (11 lots)

A public hearing for Candy Lane Subdivision, 0 Bonnie Circle, was scheduled for June 13, 2006.

VI. SITE PLANS

1. Marine Science Magnet High School Sewer Line (CAM), 155 Thomas Road

MOTION: To table the Marine Science Magnet High School Sewer Line until the next regular meeting on May 23, 2006.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

2. Cote Real Estate Partnership, 1101 Noank Ledyard Road

Munn recused himself from the discussion.

Chairman Sherrard seated Kane for Munn.

Mr. Cote explained to the Commission that on May 17, 2001, a sidewalk agreement was entered into for sidewalks on the Flanders Road side of his property at 1101 Noank Ledyard Road. The agreement deferred construction of the sidewalk for five years. Mr. Cote requested the sidewalk agreement be extended for an additional 5 years. Staff said the final site work has been

completed. Staff suggests the Commission extend the agreement for up to 5 years, to May 17, 2011. A new but similar agreement will be written.

Roper said the Town may want the sidewalk in the future, so an extension makes sense. Pritchard said the Town should be proactive with tracking agreements. Staff said the agreements are currently being inventoried. Fitzgerald asked what would happen in three years if the Town decides the sidewalk is necessary. Staff said it would be brought to the Commission at that time.

Sherrard said he would consider a new agreement longer than five years. Staff recommended staying with five years to maintain consistency.

MOTION: To extend the sidewalk agreement for Cote Real Estate Partnership, LLC, 1101 Noank-Ledyard Road, for five years to May 17, 2011.

Motion made by Roper, seconded by Steinfeld, so voted unanimously.

Chairman Sherrard reseated Munn.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Commission

Roper said the Transportation Strategy Board will be meeting in Norwich on May 16, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. A meeting between the Interstates 95-395 Destination Area Committee and the Chairman will precede the board meeting at 8:00 a.m.

Roper said the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development survey results have been collated into a report. They received 59 responses. There will be two public meetings for public input in June. No dates have been established.

Steinfeld watched the film of the latest RTM meeting. He reported the funding for the Thomas Road sidewalk project was approved. The Route 215 sidewalk to Esker Point was cut.

Munn said the last meeting of the Economic Development Strategy Plan Steering Committee will be on Monday, May 22, 2006, at 6 p.m. in Room 2 of the Annex.

2. Discussion of Notification of Abutters for Subdivisions

Steinfeld said he feels that the Town and the Commission should have a better way of notifying the public when there is a project proposed that abuts their property. Fitzgerald said he would like to see a certified letter sent to abutters within 150 ft. in the RU or RS zones, or development within 100 ft. of residential

properties. Roper agreed he would like the public to be aware, but feels it is the developer's responsibility. Kane said he is concerned that improper notification could create a legal problem for the Town. Kane expressed dissatisfaction with the legal ads in The Day.

Sherrard feels there is an obligation to the public to let them know what the Commission is doing. Pritchard and Sherrard asked what other towns do. Staff reviewed the current process and proposed changes in state law. Sherrard asked staff to make a recommendation to the Commission in a month regarding a process for the notification of abutters.

Sidney VanZandt, 3 Front Street, Noank, spoke in favor of additional notification.

3. ZBA Referral for May 10, 2006 Public Hearing

Staff reviewed the application for a variance of the front yard setback for ZBA #06-04, Barker Residence on Skyline Drive. Hank Steinfeld recommended the Planning Commission comment to the ZBA about their concern that approving this variance will set a precedent for other properties on the street for front yard setbacks. Sherrard seconded. The Planning Commission concurred, 4 – 1, with Roper voting no.

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Sherrard expressed concern that the Planning Commission is no longer being covered by the local newspapers. Staff explained that a monthly report, which includes all of Planning and Development's divisions, is sent to the Town Manager each month. The Town Manager also distributes a weekly Town Council update. Discussion ensued on how the Commission can get more information out to the public by way of the local newspaper.

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff has been notified by the State of Connecticut that they have tentatively approved the extension of sewer up to Route 117 and Route 184 in Center Groton.

Staff received Notification of a Tentative Determination to issue a permit for UConn Marine Sciences, Avery Point, to discharge aquarium waste water into the Sound. This is the reapplication for a lapsed permit.

Staff stated that the Town Clerk received a grant and is studying the legality and storage of agency minutes back to 1957. Beginning with the 2006 minutes, the amendments to all minutes will be made on the actual signed minutes. The Planning and Development Services budget has been approved by

Planning Commission

May 9, 2006

Page 7

all agencies. The Route 215 sidewalk connector to Esker Point was cut from the CIP.

Staff reviewed the Source Water Protection project, a regional water study being conducted by Groton Utilities. This is funded with a \$200,000 grant.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:32. Motion made by Roper, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Margil Steinfeld