



ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, May 14, 2015
7:30 p.m.
Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room A

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members

Chairman Danyliw called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Members Linda Herman and Carla Feroni. Seated for Member Alan Kerr was Alternate John Ackermann. Also in attendance were several members of the public. Participating via teleconference was Town Planner John Guskowski. Member Ralph Monaco arrived at 8:25 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes: April 16, 2015

Motion to approve Minutes of April 16, 2015 by John Ackermann, seconded by Tom Danyliw. Motion carried unanimously, with Carla Feroni and Linda Herman abstaining

3. New Business

a. Subdivision Road Name Change – Taber Tooker Court to Book Hill Woods

John Guskowski explained the circumstances of the original subdivision approval of this property and stated that the approval in the early 1960's did not indicate a name of the road to be developed. The road was later approved by Town Meeting as "Taber Tooker Court," though the name was never used. The Post Office, the residents, the police and emergency workers all use "Book Hill Woods Road," and would like to formalize this. Though the Planning Commission never acted on the name of the road, this request would technically be a modification of the approved subdivision map. Accordingly, Planning Commission action would be appropriate and helpful to the Traffic Authority's process. Chairman Danyliw confirmed that there would be no public safety concern with the name change.

Motion to approve change of name of road from Taber Tooker Court to Book Hill Woods Road by Linda Herman, seconded by Carla Feroni. Motion carried unanimously

b. **Zoning Commission Referral – Amendment to Section 81.HG-1.F (Heritage Gateway)**

John Guskowski explained the request by the Witch Hazel facility to create a new driveway directly to Main Street rather than continuing to have to use an access through the Steam Train property and across the rail tracks. The way the Zoning Regulation for the Heritage Gateway Zone was written, specific site plan documents are cited. Because the proposal for the driveway will update a site plan, the revision date will change, and thus so must the Regulations. He noted that the addition of this driveway was a specific recommendation of the Centerbrook Visioning Group and is included in the draft PoCD. Attorney Bennet on behalf of the applicant reinforced this interpretation, and distributed a memo prepared by the Economic Development Commission expressing strong support for this regulatory change. He then offered to share the proposed new map of the driveway location with the Commission. Susan Marquardt, PE, on behalf of the applicant provided an overview of the driveway and the sight-line analysis that had been done. Traffic reporting had been undertaken in 2005 and would be updated. The sight-line demonstration showed the minimum distance of 500' in both directions, though some clearing would be necessary. Peter Decker on behalf of the applicant discussed the improved traffic flow.

Linda Herman asked about the traffic report and the recommendations. John Guskowski stated that this was a State Road and the driveway suitability and analysis would be approved by both Zoning and the DOT. Susan Marquardt pointed out the recommendations from the 2005 traffic study by BL Companies included adding a stop sign at the driveway, stop bar striping, and vegetation clearing; all of these recommended steps are included in the application for the driveway. Linda Herman stated that she believed it was very important to consider these traffic improvements as part of the application review. Chairman Danyliw stated that this was just a regulatory referral, not a development application. John Ackermann stated that the proposed driveway improvements were very much critical as a gateway to the Centerbrook study and the connectivity through Main Street in Centerbrook and would improve pedestrian and vehicular access.

Chairman Danyliw polled the Commission and confirmed that by consensus, the Planning Commission finds the proposed Zoning Amendment in harmony with the existing and draft Plans of Conservation & Development. Linda Herman added that she believed it was important for the specific traffic improvement recommendations to be followed. Carla Feroni noted that the RiverCOG, with some interest in this corridor, should be kept apprised of these developments. She further stated that the Tree Warden should be involved in the plans to remove the large tree as part of the vegetation clearing. Attorney

Bennet updated the Commission on the environmental compliance and cleanup plan as part of this redevelopment process. John Ackermann stated that this development was a very positive step that should be supported by the Commission.

Chairman Danyliw thanked the Commission and the applicants for their participation.

4. **Old Business**

a. **PoCD – Plan and Map Discussion**

John Guskowski updated the Commission on the changes made to the draft PoCD, and discussed the proposed map of development focus areas that overlaid existing Zoning Districts with the development nodes, as well as connecting them with strong corridors of design and multi-modal access. Chairman Danyliw and John Ackermann noted that this map reflected well the goals of the discussion from the prior map. The Commission suggested cartographic improvements, including legend and color clarification that would better explain the purpose of the map. John Guskowski stated that he would make the proposed changes as well as adding narrative.

The text of the draft was discussed briefly as well, and Chairman Danyliw stated that the Incentive Housing section should be tightened up and would propose edits. John Guskowski will distribute updates of the text via email, and explained the Implementation Matrix that would be added, as well as clarifying timeframes. The Commission agreed that the document was on the right track.

b. **Ivoryton MSIF Grant Update**

John Guskowski stated that work was underway in Ivoryton and the Playhouse is in hiatus, so the majority of the construction work would be taking place in the next several weeks. Carla Feroni asked about the art element, and John Guskowski stated that the final decision of the piece had not been made, but both flat, seal-type designs and three-dimensional installations were being considered.

c. **Centerbrook Village**

The Town is still awaiting word on the STEAP grant, though John Guskowski noted that the addition of a Main Street driveway for the Witch Hazel complex was a major goal of the Centerbrook Vision.

d. **Foxboro Point Subdivision Easement Enforcement**

John Guskowski reported that he visited the Foxboro site with Zoning Officer Joe Budrow, owner's attorney Terry Lomme, and landscape contractor Drew Finkledey. It appeared that the only clearing within the conservation easement area was of a dead tree.

An additional pine was removed last year, but that was outside the easement area in order to accommodate a scenic vista. Attorney Lomme agreed to provide a written report of work done, as well as keeping Planning and Zoning informed prior to future landscape maintenance in the easement area.

Chairman Danyliw and John Ackermann inquired about the trees and shrubs planted alongside or near the view corridor. John Guskowski stated that these were essentially boundary markers providing privacy for the adjacent residences. Chairman Danyliw stated that if the plantings were on or immediately next to the view corridor boundary, overhanging branches could compromise views, and John Ackermann stated that they already created some obstruction. The Commission requested that John Guskowski provide a report of the site visit including a marked-up aerial photo for clarity, to which he agreed and further stated that Attorney Lomme would be joining the Commission at their June meeting for further discussion.

5. Report of Committees and Officers

a. Report from Inland Wetlands Representative

The Commission has no active representative to Inland Wetlands

b. Report from RiverCOG Representative

Representative Alan Kerr was absent.

c. Report from Economic Development Commission Representative

Representative Bob Laundry was absent.

d. Chairman's Report

Chairman Danyliw had no further report.

e. Planner's Report

John Guskowski noted that the Walnut Street bridge preliminary design is underway, and the Town would be submitting for State funding assistance to replace the two bridge spans on Ivory Street through the State-Local Bridge Program, which ideally would allow Ivory Street bridges to be replaced prior to Walnut Street in order to better facilitate the necessary detours during Walnut Street construction.

6. Correspondence and Invoices

There was no correspondence. John Guskowski noted that there was a recent monthly invoice

from CME Associates, and Chairman Danyliw stated that this would be paid by the Commission's contracted budget and confirmed that the Town was up-to-date on payments.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by John Ackermann, seconded by Linda Herman. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
05/15 2015 at 11:07 A.M.
Charmen Rozal
ESSEX, CT TOWN CLERK @assist