



ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, May 10, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room A

DRAFT MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members

Chairman Alan Kerr called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. In attendance were members Erin Bogan, Gary Riggio, and Ralph Monaco (arrived 7:43). Seated for Member George Sexton was Alternate Al Wolfgram. Also in attendance was Town Planner John Guskowski.

2. Application to Amend Subdivision Regulations – Section 7.1, Rear Lots in Alternative Subdivision Design – Applicant: Jared Novinski

Applicant Jared Novinski (via telephone) presented his application to the Commission, discussing his interest in including the River Road Residential (RRR) Zoning District in the list of eligible zones for alternative subdivision design as well as consideration of rear lots in subdivisions of fewer than five lots. John Guskowski clarified that the RRR district did not exist at the point where the Alternative Subdivision Design regulation was added to regulations. Chairman Kerr asked about the wider implications of the proposed change. John Guskowski stated that in theory, it could allow a property owner to submit several small subdivisions (1-2 lot) serially to the Commission to allow for a higher number of rear lots, but that was unlikely for both property and procedural reasons. Gary Riggio stated that the applicants would still have to comply with public health and safety and the remainder of the subdivision regulations. Al Wolfgram clarified the difference between rear lots and shared driveways. He also asked about the ability to waive requirements, and John Guskowski discussed the waiver provision in the subdivision regulations and whether it could apply to this circumstance. The Commission discussed the other regulations concerning rear lots, including the proximity of rear lot access points and the zoning lot size requirements. There was no other discussion or questions from the Commission.

Chairman Kerr noted that there were no members of the public present to comment on the application. He stated that the public notice for this hearing was published in the Valley Courier on

April 26th and May 3rd, 2018. John Guskowski stated that no testimony had been submitted via email or hard-copy delivery.

Motion to close the public hearing by Al Wolfgram, **seconded** by Erin Bogan. **Motion carried unanimously.**

3. Adjournment

Chairman Kerr adjourned the public hearing portion of the Planning Commission meeting at 7:49 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members

Chairman Alan Kerr called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m. In attendance were members Erin Bogan, Gary Riggio, and Ralph Monaco. Seated for Member George Sexton was Alternate Al Wolfgram. Also in attendance was Town Planner John Guskowski.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 11, 2018 Special Meeting

Motion to approve minutes of April 11, 2018 by Ralph Monaco, **seconded** by Gary Riggio. **Motion carried unanimously**

3. New Business

a. Zoning Regulation Amendment Referral – Re-formatted Zoning Regulations with Numerous Amendments

The Commission discussed the comprehensive revision/reorganization proposed by the Zoning Commission following two years of work led by Al Wolfgram and Joe Budrow. Joe Budrow was preparing a guide/synopsis of the revisions that had not been completed yet. The hearing will open on May 21 but would be left open. Chairman Kerr stated that he would prefer to wait for the synopsis before Planning would comment.

Motion to table discussion on this referral by Erin Bogan, **seconded** by Ralph Monaco. **Motion carried, with Al Wolfgram abstaining.**

4. Old Business

a. Application to Amend Subdivision Regulations – Section 7.1, Rear Lots in Alternative Subdivision Design – Applicant: Jared Novinski

Al Wolfgram confirmed that the other regulations related to rear lots, including lot size, distribution of access points and frontage are still in place. The Commission had no further discussion on the matter.

Motion to approve application by Al Wolfgram, **seconded** by Gary Riggio. **Motion carried unanimously.**

b. Ad-Hoc Committee on Housing Options

Chairman Kerr noted that Tuesday's meeting was lightly attended, but the Committee was joined by Lauren Ashe of the HOPE Partnership, who discussed the challenges and process in identifying affordable housing development opportunities, and provided an update on the current status of the Spencer's Corner project. This will be an 18-unit residential conversion with all units being affordable. The Commission discussed the details of this project. Chairman Kerr noted that the promotion and identification of opportunities seems to be somewhat haphazard and challenging. The Commission discussed sidewalk improvement projects that would promote walkability. Chairman Kerr stated that local developer Henry Resnikoff would be invited to the next Committee meeting.

c. PoCD Implementation – Development Node Mapping & Regulations

John Guszkowski presented an overview of the process of converting the vaguely-defined development focus nodes from the PoCD into a potential floating zone process. He discussed the parcels included in each development node and the floating zone process, using the Neighborhood Design District regulation in Stonington as an example. Al Wolfgram stated that Westbrook and other communities have floating zones and special design districts. The Commission discussed the process and potential minimum requirements for eligibility, such as minimum lot size, maximum density, and uses. John Guszkowski will present additional regulation examples and a larger version of the proposed eligibility map at the next Planning Commission meeting.

5. Report of Committees and Officers

a. Report from RiverCOG Representative

Chairman Kerr stated that the regional PoCD process had slowed down because of the primary staff assigned to the project was out on medical leave. He discussed the PoCD survey and requested that John Guszkowski distribute it to the Commission for input.

b. Report from Economic Development Commission Representative

George Sexton was not present for the meeting and had not forwarded a report.

c. Planner's Report

John Guszkowski reported that he had met, along with Chairman Kerr, with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the potential merger of Planning and Zoning Commissions. Both Chairmen of the Commissions and staff, as well as the Selectmen, were favorably inclined toward a merger, which would require a Town Meeting to change the ordinance. The Selectmen had requested that each Commission poll its members for opinions on the merger. Al Wolfgram, Gary Riggio, and Ralph Monaco all spoke in favor of maintaining separate Commissions. Chairman Kerr and John Guszkowski (as staff) spoke in favor of merging.

John Guszkowski also reported that he would be meeting with the Ivoryton Village Alliance in June to discuss parking options in Ivoryton, and that he was working with the RiverCOG to

determine process and potential support for an update to the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, which was due for its five-year cycle in August of 2019.

6. **Correspondence & Invoices**

Chairman Kerr noted correspondence regarding revised telecommunications equipment placements on Methodist Hill (Prospect Street).

7. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Ralph Monaco, seconded by Gary Riggio. Motion carried unanimously.
Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
05/14/2018 at 8:45 A.M.
Gemma M. Riggio
ESSEX, CT - ASSIST. TOWN CLERK