

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission  
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on September 25, 2023  
Police Station Department Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

**1. Call to order** - Chairman Stuart Cole called the meeting to order at 7:24 pm. Members present were Frances Hoffman, Ben Baldwin and Jennifer Herbst. Members Stephanie Hayes-Houlihan, Michael Schefers and Jim Friedlander were not present. A member of the public was present.

**2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals**

**a. PZ2318RA Paul & Sharyne Cerullo** – *Zoning Regulation Text Amendment to clarify Agricultural Heritage District (AHD) ZR 7.24.3.2 definition of contiguous parcels of land in common ownership divided by street. PH Scheduled for 10/17/23.* The original AHD application was reviewed by the Conservation Commission on 4/24/2023. It was noted that the application's Master Plan was confusing, did not appear to be professionally prepared as required by zoning, excluded one farm parcel and did not note that another parcel is subject to a restriction preventing development. It does not seem unusual that farms are sometimes on opposite sides of the road, such as the White Oak Farm on Al Harvey Road. MOTION: We have no comment except that this should be reviewed by the Town Attorney (Frances Hoffman, Jennifer Herbst). Passed unanimously.

**b. PZ2321ZC & CAM Pawcatuck Riverview, LLC (M. Kepple, Esq.)** – *Zoning Map Amendment to IHRD-5 & Coastal Area Management Review applications for the rehabilitation of a historic mill building for 58 residential units and one detached residential unit. Property located at 21 Pawcatuck Ave., Pawcatuck. Assessor's Map 5, Block 5, Lot 2. MC-80. PH Scheduled for 10/3/23.* Discussed whether there is a proposed single-unit residence in addition to the 58-unit multifamily. The potential future development area at the south end of the property might be retained as open space and also buffer adjacent single-family neighborhoods to the south and west from the Thread Mill. Public access from Pawcatuck Avenue to River Road south of the Tread Mill for pedestrians and cyclists will help connect the neighborhoods, but care should be taken in parking lot layout as this could become a shortcut for automobiles. This reuse appears to be a sustainable development, especially with solar on the roof. The preceding comments were approved unanimously. Fran Hoffman was not present for this item's discussion.

**c. Discussion of the new Zoning Regulations pertaining to open space set aside regulations.** Ben Baldwin submitted a proposed change to the Open Space Development (OSD) regulation (proposed 5.3.19, previously 6.6.22) from "Contain a percentage of wetlands no greater than the percentage of wetlands found on the entire site under existing conditions" to "The percentage of upland open space must comprise at least the same percentage of uplands of the total parcel." Subdividers have said the current wording limits their ability to add additional land to open space set-asides. Ben Baldwin noted that some towns require the OSD be used for large subdivisions. Phase I of the zoning rewrite was formatting and a reduction of the number of pages. Phase II will address other proposed changes. The Phase I draft regulation was reviewed in regard to the OSD and open space. Fran Hoffman said constructed features like drainage can still be included within open space areas. It was noted that attached or multifamily housing is permitted in commercial zones and that the residential zones are single-family. Stuart Cole suggested a meeting with the planner regarding changes to zoning and will coordinate. Members should review the draft zoning.

**3. Old Business**

**d. Discussion of 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development.** Fran Hoffman attended the POCD Implementation Committee meeting today. The previous POCD is being reviewed, the status of each issue evaluated, and measurements established. She suggested that the Conservation Commission do the same and that a new grant writer was hired. She said the Climate Change Task Force had mentioned needing grants to complete their plan's objectives and the Conservation Commission will also benefit. Ben Baldwin said the 2019 Shoreline Interventions for Coastal Resilience report (<https://www.stonington-ct.gov/planning-department/pages/mystic-coastal-resilience-solutions>) includes potential sites for a coastal wetland park near Sailor Ed's (29 Old Stonington Road). The town already has a waterfront easement at Sailor Ed's and two adjacent marshland parcels are listed for sale. He mentioned a marsh parcel, 175-1-2, on Roseleah Drive is being

foreclosed on and should be acquired to prevent its use to increase FAR at an abutter. Jennifer Herbst suggested the Open Space update committee meet again to go over the proposed format.

**5. New Business**

**a. Review 2024 Regular Meeting Calendar.** Meeting schedule to remain the same except that the May meeting will be on the 3rd Monday instead of the 4th. No meeting in December.

**6. Review of draft minutes – 8/28/23.** MOTION: Minutes of accepted (Frances Hoffman, Jennifer Herbst). Passed unanimously.

**7. Adjournment -** MOTION: To adjourn the meeting (Jennifer Herbst, Ben Baldwin). Passed unanimously at 9:20 pm.

Minutes submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Baldwin', is written over a horizontal line.

Ben Baldwin

Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission

Minutes approved at a regular meeting on 2/26/2024