

## Special Meeting

The 1716<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held virtually via WebEx on Tuesday, January 24, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Chairman Ben Philbrick. Also present for the meeting were Commissioners Lynn Conway, Ryan Deasy and Fred Deichmann, Alternates Andy Meek and Marjorie Selinger, and Town Planner Keith A. Brynes. Commissioner Charles Sheehan and Alternate Gary Belke were not present.

**Discussion of Comprehensive Zoning Rewrite Project with consultant, FHI Studio**

Task 1.1 Review relevant plans and documents

Task 1.2 Line by line review of regulations

Task 1.3 Review Use Summary table

Task 1.4 Develop format prototypes and supplemental graphics

Task 1.5 Reformat regulations

FHI Studio Project Manager, Francisco Gomes, presented a preliminary draft of the Zoning Regulations. As part of Phase 1, these changes mainly concern layout, formatting and reorganization. As noted in previous meetings, some minor changes have been made to comply with State Statutes and case law and eliminate conflicts. Additional work will be necessary during Phase 2 on parking lot dimensional requirements and a graphic will be helpful. Consensus of the Commission was that the minimum loading requirements are excessive and can be modified to 1 tractor trailer sized loading zone for developments up to 25,000SF and 2 for developments over 25,000SF. Signage regulations will be holistically addressed under Phase 2. Signage regulations must be amended to conform to U.S. Supreme Court decision *Reed v Town of Gilbert*, which mandates that regulations must be content and speaker neutral.

The thresholds for triggering an application Architectural Design Review Board need clarification. That board should be consulted prior to any changes. The Commission discussed getting input at this stage from other boards that are advisory to the permitting process. Consensus of the Commission was that the fee schedule should remain as an appendix. Mr. Gomes stated that ideally prohibited uses should have their own section in the definitions. Mr. Meek recommended deleting reference to "design" in the definition of "boat fabrication." Ms. Conway recommended clarifying the definition of Boarding/Tourist House to better differentiate them from typical short term rental properties. Zoning Use Tables are now updated to clarify that permitted uses in commercial zones require Site Plan Approval from the Commission.

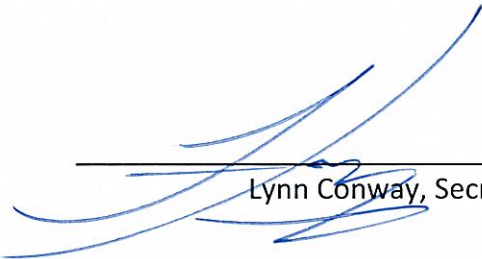
Mr. Gomes asked for clarification on current Section 6.6.16.2 regarding restaurant expansion. Regulations technically require a new Special Permit even for name changes or new kitchen equipment which appears to go beyond typical understanding of "expansion." Consensus of the Commission was to reword this section to require a new Special Permit for increases in seats or physical expansions of the restaurant. Mr. Gomes introduced the topic of buffer requirements in the current regulations. When displayed in table form, the requirements vary significantly

## Special Meeting

from zone to zone with little logic. Screening requirements should also be clarified. Modifications should mostly be proposed in Phase 2 since these requirements could impact many properties. The Commission recommended using the table format during Phase 2.

Next virtual workshop meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 2/28/23 at 6:30PM. FHI will focus on modifying the draft, adding graphics.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42PM.



---

Lynn Conway, Secretary