

Regular Meeting

The 1561st meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held Tuesday February 16, 2016 at the Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Avenue, Mystic, CT. The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Prue at 7:00pm. Also present for the meeting were Commissioners Curtis Lynch, Gardner Young, Frances Hoffman, and David Rathbun; Alternates Lynn Conway and Shaun Mastroianni, Town Planner Keith Brynes and Director of Planning Jason Vincent. Alternate Harry Boardsen was absent.

Seated for the meeting were John Prue, David Rathbun, Gardner Young, Curtis Lynch, and Frances Hoffman.

Minutes:

Ms. Hoffman moved to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2016 meeting, seconded by Mr. Young, Ms. Hoffman recommended amendments to the minutes. All in favor 4-0-1, motion approved.

Roll Call: Young – approve, Prue – approve, Hoffman – approve, Lynch – approve, Rathbun – abstain

Administrative Review:

16-017ZON Chateau Jaune, LLC – Zoning Permit application to permit canoe / kayak path access with stairs through the RC-120 non-infringement area. Property located at 51 Latimer Point Rd, Stonington. Assessor's Map 154 Block 1 Lot 2. Zone RC-120.

Project engineer Clint Brown presented the application, explaining that the two sets of stairs will be constructed of wooden ties and gravel, and providing an overview of the erosion and sedimentation control plan. The applicant proposes to mow the grasses closest to the water as recommended by DEEP to avoid removal of the vegetation. The commission discussed the storage of boating equipment in the tidal wetland area.

Mr. Rathbun moved to approve the application, seconded by Mr. Young, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

16-019ZON Ravie, LLC – Zoning Permit application to permit change of use from personal services (hair salon) to retail (retail bakery) and enlarge first floor apartment. Property located at 21 East Main St., Mystic. Assessor's Map 174 Block 2 Lot 5. Zone DB-5.

Mr. Brynes summarized the application for change of use from a hair salon to a retail bakery and the enlargement of the first floor apartment. Mr. Brynes reviewed the recommended stipulations in the Staff Report, and suggested an additional one regarding the rear building use as professional office space.

Ms. Hoffman moved to approve the application with stipulations recommended by staff, seconded by Mr. Young, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Stipulations:

1. This approval includes the incorporation of the following areas into an existing dwelling unit as noted on the submitted plans entitled "Proposed Building Floor Plans" dated 1/26/11 prepared by John Patrick Walsh, A.I.A.: 101, 103, 401, 105, 106 & 107.
2. This approval includes the conversion of the following areas from office or personal services uses to a retail/restaurant (bakery) as noted on the submitted plans entitled "Proposed Building Floor Plans" dated 1/26/11 prepared by John Patrick Walsh, A.I.A.: 102, 108, 109 & 110.
3. This approval does not include any additional dwelling units.

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4. This approval does not imply conformance with Building or Fire Codes. These reviews will take place during the Building Permit process.
5. 2nd floor of the rear building is approved for use as professional office space.

The meeting recessed at 7:29pm and reconvened at 7:32pm.

Public Hearing:

PZ1526SUP & CAM Ocean Community YMCA - Special Use Permit and Coastal Area Management applications for construction of a 12,500± sq. ft. addition to structure and the creation of additional parking to the rear of the building. Properties located at 1 Harry Austin Drive & Harry Austin Drive, Mystic. Assessors Map 160 Block 6 Lots 11 & 14. Zone RC-120. *Public Hearing continued from 1/19/16.*

Attorney Theodore Ladwig introduced the application, noting that the applicant is requesting a waiver for the endangered species survey as to the area has been developed and used for the past thirty years. Williams Beach will remain in its current character and the applicant does not plan to have unrestricted access to the beach.

Maureen Fitzgerald, President & CEO of the Ocean Community YMCA, gave an overview of the YMCA's programs. The proposed new space will provide for mentoring programs and an increase in the number of children able to be served in the summer day camps. They anticipate an increase in membership and look forward to providing a better facility for the community.

Derek Hug, traffic study consultant gave an overview of the study. Traffic counts were completed during the peak tourism time, July 2013. They used the projected increase in membership numbers to guide the study. The YMCA anticipates their membership increasing to 7500 members, an increase of 36%. This calculation is actually higher than the ITE trip manual calls for based on increase in square footage. Level of Service at the intersection of Rt. 1 and Masons Island Road would remain fairly consistent at level B with a 2 second increase in wait time. Parking was analyzed in comparison to membership as well and they are recommending 126 parking spaces. The site plan allows for 165 spaces in case of conservative estimates. Mr. Lynch raised concern with the focus on membership numbers rather expanded programming. Mr. Hug explained that the schedule of programs will remain similar to the existing schedule. Ms. Fitzgerald clarified additions to programming and that they will be outside of peak hours. The largest classes are 25-30 people. Camp drop off in the summer is spread from 7am to 9am. Ms. Fitzgerald explained that there is a steady flow of traffic throughout the day and anticipates that continuing. Ms. Conway asked for clarification on number of members versus memberships. Ms. Fitzgerald explained that 5300 is the number of individuals regardless of membership class. Ms. Conway raised concern over the basis of the traffic study on membership increases when the YMCA accepts non-members. Ms. Fitzgerald explained that in their professional experience from renovating the Westerly property the amount of non-members is very small. Mr. Prue asked for clarification on the basis for projected membership increase seeing that Westerly almost doubled their membership. Ms. Fitzgerald explained the demographics and similar businesses here projected a lower increase. Mr. Rathbun questioned whether the timing on the light at Masons Island Road and Route could help the traffic. Mr. Lynch asked for clarification on the increased wait time, which is projected to be 2 seconds. Mr. Prue requested copies of the traffic report.

Doug Annino, project architect, presented the architectural plans. The secondary entrance will become the primary entrance in the rear of the building. Mechanical equipment will be removed from the flood plain. The addition will be two stories on the rear of the building. There will be extensive landscaping

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added. Shade trees in the parking area, rain gardens around the parking area. From the front parking lot the rear peak is no higher than the current roof peak. Peter Gardner, project surveyor, spoke about the proposed parking lot. The parking will be pulled back from the water. Ms. Hoffman clarified that she is looking for the view from the water due to it being a highly traveled waterway. There is a rain garden prior to the waterfront to infiltrate run off from the parking area. There will be landscaping throughout the parking area. The islands in the parking area will not be curbed to provide additional rain gardens. Mr. Annino provided an addition view of the building from further back.

The meeting recessed at 9:00pm and reconvened at 9:07pm.

Mr. Prue left the meeting due to illness. Mr. Mastroianni was seated.

Public Comment in Favor:

Todd O'Donnell, member of the YMCA and has served on their board of directors. Mr. O'Donnell stated that they have become a substantial contributor to the community and that the facility is need of updating to make the facility better. There is a great need of modern updates and expansion of childcare and better handicap accessibility. This will allow the YMCA to provide necessary services to the community.

Mark Ginsburg, member of the YMCA and current board member. He attested to the renovations in Westerly and how it has greatly improved the community and stated that the Mystic location is in great need of these renovations.

Martin Rutchick, a recent resident of Mystic, formerly from Norwich, stated that fears with the traffic problem can be resolved and should not prevent the enhancements of the YMCA and what it can bring to the community.

Michael Planeta, resident of Ledyard owner of Acme Wire, current board chair of the YMCA. The board is in full support of the proposed plans and spoke to the success of the renovations of the Westerly branch.

Jeffrey Schneider, Stonington resident and business owner spoke in support of the application.

Rob Valenti, member of the YMCA and has served on their board of directors, spoke in favor of the application. Mr. Valenti stated that there is a large amount of community support to keep the YMCA in its current location. To do so, they must update the facility.

Chris Regan, resident of Stonington and business owner in the town, stated his support of alternatives to keep local children occupied and that this will alleviate idle time. Mr. Regan serves on the board and property committee and commended the building design.

Rona Rutchick, explained that the YMCA in Norwich could not survive because the community was not behind it. She stated it will take the community to support the YMCA and these improvements will support it.

George Sylvestre, member of the YMCA spoke in support of the application and spoke to the services that the YMCA provides that benefit the community.

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Jan Chamberlain, resident of Stonington and business owner in Westerly spoke about the positive effects of the renovations in Westerly engaging the community. She stated that renovating the Mystic location can increase the community spirit and engagement.

Anna Schneider, spoke in support of the application and stated that she is happy to see traffic in the town as it attributes to a positive economy.

John McHugh, member of the YMCA spoke about the quality of service provided by the YMCA and outweighs the proposed increase in traffic.

No Public Comment Against

General Comments:

Rick Newton, resident of Mystic, spoke about the endangered species and stated that this study is easy to do and recommended having the applicant complete one. Mr. Newton spoke about the timing of the traffic signal and stated that the State DOT were responsive to his inquiry and believes they will adjust the timing if requested. Mr. Newton stated concern with accounting for sea level rise.

Jim Stanton, resident of Masons Island Road stated he was in favor of the building design and spoke about the fact that there are a core group of 500 members that use the facility on a daily basis. Mr. Stanton raised concern with access to Williams Beach in the future.

Mr. Lynch addressed some areas for further clarification, traffic, ecological impacts and parking. Ms. Hoffman spoke to the specific concerns with the drainage plan and recommended getting input from the University of New Hampshire's Institute. Ms. Hoffman would also like to see the plan for lighting. The public hearing will be continued at the March 1, 2016 meeting.

Mr. Lynch moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.



Frances Hoffman, Secretary

John Poae