

Special Meeting

The 1554th meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held Wednesday, November 4, 2015, 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 Frances Hoffman, Curtis Lynch, Gardner Young; Alternate Shaun Mastroianni, and Town Planner Keith Brynes.

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

Minutes:

Ms. Hoffman moved to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2015, seconded by Mr. Young, all in favor 4-0-1.

Roll Call: Prue - approve, Hoffman - approve, Lynch - approve, Young - approve, Mastroianni - abstain

Administrative Review:

Commission interpretation of the Town's Groundwater Protection Regulations in regards to a request from Amerigas to operate a propane dispenser station at Tractor Supply store located at 331 Liberty Street, Pawcatuck. Assessors Map 17 Block 3 Lot 3. Zone HI-60.

Mr. Brynes explained the request, noting that the Regulations do not permit storage and distribution of oil and hazardous material groundwater protection districts in order to prevent contamination of the aquifer. Information provided by the applicant states that being a gas, if propane were to leak, would not disturb the aquifer. Responding Town fire departments and water companies have stated they do not have any issues with the propane distribution being located here. Commissioners discussed the form the propane would be stored, gas or liquid. Some commissioners requested the applicant be present to answer questions regarding the propane form and possible contamination. Mr. Brynes explained that if allowed, Amerigas would be required to submit a Groundwater Protection Permit application and site plan for the proposed propane tank filling station.

Mr. Lynch moved to continue the review item to the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni. Motion approved 4-1.

Roll Call: Prue - approve, Hoffman - approve, Lynch - approve, Young - deny, Mastroianni - approve

Economic Development Commission request to the PZC that they act as applicant for a Zoning Regulation Text Amendment to allow Micro Breweries and Brewpubs.

Blunt White, Economic Development Commission (EDC), stated that adding Micro Breweries to the Zoning Regulations would contribute to business in Pawcatuck's downtown and complement Westerly's active restaurant and nightlife scene. Currently, the regulations do not permit the use, and EDC asks that the PZC submit a text amendment that adds Micro Brewery as a use by Special Permit in the DB-5 and LS-5 zones. Drew Rogers of Cottrell Brewing plans to submit such a text amendment application, but solely for the LS-5 zone. Downtown Pawcatuck, primarily zoned DB-5, would also benefit from having Micro Breweries as an allowed use by Special Permit. As such, the EDC asks that the commission submit the regulation Amendment to include both zoning districts.

Drew Rogers, Cottrell Brewing Company, hopes to open a small Micro Brewery allowing the sale and consumption of special small draft brews. There will be limited operating hours and will provide a great business for the area. Mr. Rogers hopes to open micro breweries in both Mystic and Pawcatuck.

Special Meeting

Mr. Prue asked Mr. Rogers to explain why the commission should forward this application ahead of current commission priorities. Mr. Rogers explained that this is a growing business and Stonington will fall behind other towns in Connecticut. Mr. Lynch recommended that Mr. Rogers apply for a text amendment and subsequent application, leaving the commission to expand it to other zones at a later date if they chose. Ms. Hoffman stated that she would like to see micro distilleries added to any micro brewery amendment. Mr. Prue raised concern with this going ahead of the work and prioritization of the POCD Implementation Committee. Mr. Mastroianni and Ms. Hoffman expressed the desire to move quickly with this need and to help the business community. Mr. White spoke to the priorities voted on thus far and said that this should be added to their top list of priorities. Mr. Young stated that the commission can make it a priority without going through the Implementation Committee. Mr. Prue stated that other applicants have had to go for the text amendment and then apply for a special use permit on their time, rather than being the commission's application.

Paul Sartor, neighbor to Cottrell, raised concern that if it is done by the commission it is generally more assumed that it will be approved and is in favor of having the business owner apply and go through the typical hearing process.

Carlene Donnarummo, stated that if the applicant would like to go quickly, they should apply for the text amendment by hiring an attorney to write up the amendment and then the commission can weigh in and a public hearing will be held.

The commission will make a decision at a later time.

The meeting recessed at 7:57pm and reconvened at 8:03pm

Public Hearing:

PZ1520RA Town of Stonington PZC (SD Regs) – Regulation amendment for the rewrite of the Town's Subdivision Regulations to provide clarification, conformance to State Statutes, and consistency with the Town's Technical Standards.

Mr. Brynes introduced the application and explained the purpose of the application. Several definitions have been added, the procedure has been spelled out, updated language on waivers, update of State Statutes, new process for conditional approvals which is in the state statutes to regulate open space transfers, update to application contents, update to subdivision design standards, "complete streets" policies added, would eliminate regulations that conflict with the zoning regulations, updates to bonding and insurance chapter to match zoning regulations and state statutes, added a chapter on technical reports, and updates to open space requirement chapter.

Comments have been received from the Town Engineer, Conservation Commission, EDC, DEEP, and private engineering firms that have performed work on recent subdivisions in Town. Commissioners discussed the process for accepting additional comments and putting together the final draft. After receiving public comment, Mr. Brynes will put together a new draft which the commission will go through chapter by chapter.

Public Comment:

Carlene Donnarummo, provided testimony regarding her recommended changes to the subdivision regulations. A written copy of her testimony was submitted to the commission.

Special Meeting

Mr. Brynes recommended having a draft ready for discussion at the December 15, 2015 meeting.

Ms. Hoffman moved to continue the public hearing to the December 15, 2015 meeting, seconded by Mr. Lynch, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Ms. Hoffman recommended the commission make a decision on the Administrative Review item regarding Micro Breweries and Brew Pubs. The commission discussed who should make the application for the text amendment and the role of the POCD implementation committee. Mr. Mastroianni recommended that the applicant submit an application if they are under time constraints. Mr. White spoke saying that Mr. Rogers will apply for his single business and recommended the commission look at adding other zoning districts in the future.

Mr. Lynch moved that the Planning & Zoning Commission not act at this time, as applicant for a Regulation Text Amendment for Micro Breweries and Brew Pubs, seconded by Ms. Hoffman, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

The commission agreed to move the discussion of regulations concerning consumption of alcohol on brewery premises to Commission Initiatives.

Mr. Lynch moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Young, all in favor 5-0. the meeting adjourned at 10:03pm.