

Regular Meeting

The 1555th meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held Tuesday, November 17, 2015, at the Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Avenue, Mystic, CT. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Curtis Lynch at 7:00pm. Present for the meeting were Commissioners Curtis Lynch, Gardner Young, and David Rathbun; Alternates Shaun Mastroianni and Harry Boardsen, and Town Planner Keith Brynes.

Seated for the meeting were Gardner Young, Curtis Lynch, David Rathbun, Harry Boardsen, and Shaun Mastroianni.

Commission:

Discussion of the Town's application for funding under the CT Department of Housing's CDBG-DR Program to develop a Municipal Coastal Resiliency Plan

Staff is submitting an application for a grant to hire a consultant to create a Coastal Resiliency Plan.

Mr. Rathbun moved to submit a letter of support for the grant, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

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 St., Pawcatuck. Assessor's Map 17 Block 3 Lot 3. Zone HI-60.

Aimee Carlson, Amerigas District Manager, stated that propane is stored as a liquid until dispensed, and would freeze instantly if it were to leak. Were it to leak as a gas, it would dissipate into the air, and would not contaminate the groundwater. The system has an emergency shut off system as well.

Mr. Young moved that the commission interprets that a propane dispenser station could operate without causing damage to the groundwater, seconded by Mr. Rathbun, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

PZ1515SD & GPP Cynthia & Louis DiCesare – Subdivision and Groundwater Protection Permit applications for a 3-lot re-subdivision of a 10.1 acre parcel & 0.19 acre ROW parcel. Properties located at 1223 Pequot Trail and off Jacobs Way, Stonington. Assessor's Map 135, Block 2, Lots 1B & 1F. Zones RA-40 & GBR-130. SD approved 8/18/15. **Request 90-day extension to file final mylars.**

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

The meeting recessed at 7:15pm at reconvened at 7:30pm.

Mr. Lynch recused himself from the public hearing.

Seated for the public hearing were Gardner Young, David Rathbun, Harry Boardsen, and Shaun Mastroianni.

Public Hearing:

PZ1521RA LCS-Westminster Partnership (Stoneridge)- Regulation Amendment to allow medical and/or nursing facilities, clinics for prospective occupants/residents of Congregate Living Facilities.

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Richard Kisner, Executive Director of Stoneridge, stated that they are requesting to amend the regulations to allow prospective residents to use on site medical and/or nursing facilities. He noted that healthcare has changed since 1999 when the congregate living facility regulations were adopted. Hospitals are now asking that more chronic care to be done within the home. Stoneridge would like to bring a geriatric facility to the campus to allow for treatment of non-residents in addition to residents. They propose to primarily conduct home visits but require an office for small procedures, anticipating minimal volume, impact, and traffic. The practice would be located at the far end of the campus and access would be from an outside entrance. Mr. Kisner verified Mr. Rathbun's request for clarification on the outside entrance. Mr. Mastroianni asked for clarification on the projected volume of the practice and number of employees. Mr. Kisner replied that, due to the concierge service of this practice, the doctor anticipates 600 patients annually with 6-10 patients per day, employing a staff of three.

Mr. Brynes noted that the zoning official stated that the term "prospective" is difficult to enforce and recommended using the word "public." The police commission stated that they do not believe there is public safety issue but asked that the commission consider both traffic and parking. Mr. Brynes presented possible changes to the amendment language to ease enforcement.

Public Comment in Favor:

Stoneridge resident Rick Petrocelli, stated the importance of geriatric care and the increasing aging population in the town. An onsite practice will decrease the need for transportation for those to get the care they need. Since it will consist primarily of home visits he does not see traffic and parking being an issue.

Stoneridge resident Dick Guftason, stated that after suffering a stroke he signed up for geriatric care and it has exceeded his expectations. He supports expanding geriatric care in Stonington.

Stoneridge resident Terry Hall, stated that his parents had this care and it allowed them great comfort. Mr. Hall expressed his issues with mobility at this age and stated the need for onsite facilities. Mr. Hall submitted written notes with several reasons to approve the amendment.

Geriatrician Michael Feltes, the doctor for the proposed practice, stated that the unique opportunity will provide special care, provide home visits, hospital visits, and provide high-end care. Dr. Feltes has spoken with residents regarding potential concerns and will work to make this suitable for all.

Public Comment Against:

Stoneridge resident Gloria Bradley, disagrees with adding the public to the practice's care, though she is in favor of the practice. Ms. Bradley raised concern with parking in the area.

June Strunk, a PZC commissioner when the original Stoneridge application was approved, noted that, at that time, it was deemed important that this care be provided for the residents only. She asked for careful consideration regarding language and location, noting concern with the unmonitored entrance.

Stoneridge resident Bernice Feldman, has concern with bringing in a business and commercial entity to the community. Ms. Feldman lives in Building 6 and struggles with sufficient parking.

General Public Comment:

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Stoneridge resident Katharine Garfield, stated that opening a practice to the public is a concern as the fees are steep, possibly causing affordability issues for both residents and the public.

Stoneridge resident Thomas Weschler, stated that this is a place for residents and not for business, and would like to see a free standing building.

Stoneridge resident Martin Duke, agrees with the idea of having a physician on campus but has concerns with atmosphere and the wording of the proposed amendment. Mr. Duke also stated the fee must be paid for services to be rendered. Mr. Duke recommended placing the facility on a different part of the campus.

Stoneridge resident Anne Cagnuna, raised concern with the word prospective and believes the office should be moved to a central area after growth.

Rebuttal:

Mr. Kisner submitted a map of the proposed office and parking, stating that the building is secure and an outside entrance to the office apartment has been created, making access through the residential part unnecessary. The office would be accessed by appointment during normal business hours from the outside entrance.

Stoneridge resident Elaine Magland, raised concern with the fees for concierge service.

Rick Petrocelli reminded the commission that they are deciding on medical practice not a commercial business.

Mr. Rathbun moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, all in favor 4-0, motion approved.

The meeting recessed at 8:48pm and reconvened at 8:51pm.

Mr. Rathbun moved to approve the application, seconded by Mr. Boardsen, Mr. Mastroianni raised concern with adequate parking and neighbors, Mr. Boardsen does not want to impede offering the care but raised concern with security and living conditions for neighbors, Mr. Rathbun stated that it should be a separate building, 0-4-0 motion did not carry.

Roll Call: Young - deny, David Rathbun - deny, Harry Boardsen - deny, Mastroianni - deny

Mr. Young moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, all in favor 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.


Frances Hoffman, Secretary