

Special Meeting

The 1647th meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held Monday, November 4, 2019, at the Stonington Middle School, formerly known as Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Avenue, Mystic, CT. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Rathbun at 7:00 pm. Also present for the meeting were Commissioners Gardner Young, Lynn Conway, Ben Philbrick, and Fred Deichmann; Alternates Ryan Deasy and Charles Sheehan; and Town Planner Keith Brynes. Alternate Peter Chomowicz was not in attendance.

Seated for the meeting David Rathbun, Ben Philbrick, Gardner Young, Fred Deichmann, and Lynn Conway.

Election of Officers:

Mr. Young moved to appoint David Rathbun as Chair, seconded by Mr. Deichmann, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Mr. Deichmann moved to appoint Gardner Young as Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Philbrick, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Ms. Conway moved to appoint Ben Philbrick as Secretary, seconded by Mr. Deichmann, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Minutes:

Mr. Young moved to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2019 meeting, seconded by Ms. Conway, motion approved 3-0-2.

Roll Call: Rathbun – approve, Young – approve, Conway – approve, Philbrick – abstain, Deichmann - abstain

POCD Update Committee:

Mr. Brynes passed on correspondence from Curtis Lynch regarding his position as liaison for the Planning & Zoning Commission on the POCD Implementation Committee as his term on P&Z has ended.

Mr. Young moved to appoint Curtis Lynch to the POCD Implementation Committee, seconded by Mr. Philbrick, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Administrative Review:

PZ1720SPA & CAM Greylock Property Group (Edgewood Mac, LLC) – Request for modifications to Site Plan Approval & Coastal Area Management Review applications for the approved development of 42 residential townhouse units in 7 individual structures. Property located at 16 (2) Harry Austin Dr., Mystic. Assessor's Map 160 Block 4 Lot 8. Zone IHRD-2.

Mr. Brynes summarized the modification request. Greg Fedus, project engineer, presented the revised site plan. They are requesting a two-foot addition to the units to be able to allow an optional elevator for the units. It is about a 5% increase overall and is largely imperceptible.

Mr. Deichmann moved to approve the application with stipulation recommended by staff, seconded by Mr. Philbrick, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Stipulation:

1. Plans shall be reviewed to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.

Special Meeting

PZ1408SUP Spruce Meadows, LLC – Request for modification of emergency access material for Special Use Permit application for construction of two multi-unit residential structures, a community building with caretaker unit on top floor, parking, and associated improvements. Total number of dwelling units proposed is 43. Property located at 86 & 88 South Broad St., Pawcatuck. Assessor's Map 25 Block 1 Lots 3 & 4, Zone LS-5.

Mr. Brynes summarized the modification request. The Fire Marshal is requesting that the material for the emergency access between Spruce Ridge and Spruce Meadows be able to support emergency vehicles. A catch basin will be added to address run-off increases. Ms. Conway asked the visual difference between the grass pavers originally approved as compared to the request. Mr. Wenke explained that it would be a reinforced turf, however the Fire Marshal has experienced difficulty with them in other developments and does not feel comfortable with using them. It will look like a regular paved driveway. Ms. Conway expressed concern with the lack of greenery and landscaping. Mr. Wenke explained that the plantings have not occurred yet and grass will be installed along the slope.

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

Stipulation:

1. Plans shall be reviewed to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.

Public Hearings:

PZ1923ZC 1189 Pequot Trail, LLC (R. Valenti) – Master Plan Zone Change application from the existing GBR-130 zone to the Agricultural Heritage District (AHD) zone. The proposed master plan seeks to preserve the farm and buildings and to stimulate economic activity by creating a campus for agriculture, livestock, equestrian activities, education, and events. The subject site, the former Dean's Mill Farm, is located at 1189 Pequot Trail, Stonington, CT. Assessor's Map 135 Block 2 Lot 1. Zone GBR-130.*PH continued from 10/1/19.*

Rebuttal:

Rob Valenti stated that the police commission has now met and unanimously approved the application. Rich Cody, attorney for the applicant, addressed comments on the history of the property regarding its operation as a farm. Bill Middleton, former resident of the home, explained the history of foresting on the property, noting there was harvesting as recently as 2008. Mr. Cody discussed the mission of the AHD zone and the applicant's desire to augment the use of their property as well as the requirements of the zone that are compatible with property.

Mr. Deichmann asked if they could agree on a reasonable limit to the number of activities so that the primary use remains a farm. Mr. Valenti explained that their primary use will always be a horse farm, they are unsure of an exact number at this stage, and stated that past zone changes have not required a limit. It would be difficult to predict exact numbers for a new business. Mr. Rathbun stated he sees there being a limit for large events, but not on smaller 50-person events or similar. Mr. Valenti had submitted a plan for lessening impact, but has not come up with a precise number. Mr. Philbrick discussed a potential number of a dozen events for more than 100 people. Mr. Philbrick discussed limiting music to indoors or non-amplified. Ms. Conway asked about any thoughts of a micro-brewery. Mr. Valenti stated it was more of a consumption venue rather than production.

Special Meeting

Mr. Brynes stated that the protest petition submitted does meet the requirements forcing a super-majority vote of the commission. Mr. Brynes reviewed the master plan process.

Mr. Deichmann moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Conway, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Mr. Deichmann moved to approve the application with a stipulation to limit events outdoors with more than 100 people to 24 per calendar year, seconded by Mr. Young, Ms. Conway expressed her concern with that allowing them to have weekend outdoor events all summer. Ms. Conway proposed to amend the motion to allow 8 outdoor events from June – September. Ms. Conway stated she feels some sound amplification would be needed for an outdoor wedding or event. Mr. Philbrick stated he would like see no sound amplification for outdoor events. Ms. Conway stated she is most concerned with outdoor events to protect the neighbors. Mr. Young stated that the primary use of a horse farm will be limiting to the operation of events as it is for noise and events. Mr. Deichmann moved to amend his motion to limit outdoor events of more than 100 people to 12 events, no more than two a month per year with a maximum of 250 people. Mr. Brynes reviewed the motion and stipulations for the commission. The vote was taken on the amended motion, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Stipulations:

1. Number of indoor events is unlimited.
2. Number of outdoor events of under 100 people is unlimited.
3. Number of outdoor events of 100 or more people shall be limited to a maximum of 12 per year with a maximum of 2 per month. Maximum number of people shall not exceed 250.
4. Amplified music shall be limited to no later than 10:00PM.
5. All events shall end by 11:00PM.
6. The applicant shall work with the Office of State Archaeology to locate any historic cemeteries on the site; any such cemeteries shall be depicted during the Site Plan Application.
7. Master Plan shall be recorded in the Town's Land Evidence Records along with stipulations of approval.

The meeting recessed at 8:05pm and reconvened at 8:20pm.

PZ1924ZC, SPA & CAM Mystic Seaport Museum (C Frost) – Master Plan Zone Change, Site Plan, & Coastal Area Management Review applications for construction of a 60' x 100' 1.5-story building for a Science & Exploration Center that will house operations for the Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration. Property located at 50 Greenmanville Ave., Mystic. Assessors Map 173 Block 5 Lot 4. Zone MHD.

Steve White, President/CEO of Mystic Seaport Museum, presented the mission and vision of the museum as well information about their operations. Mr. White explained the museum's partnership with the Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration. Dave Lovalvo, president of the Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration, presented information about their organization and mission. The applicant presented a video of their organization. Chad Frost, landscape architect, presented the site plan for the Science and Exploration Center. The applicant is requesting a single 1.5 story building at the rear of the south parking lot. They will be removing one building and replacing with the new center. The area is currently being used for material storage. The building will be adjacent to the Williams Mystic building at the end of the current drive. There will be a drive for the crane to come in and out with equipment. This will not be part of the visitor experience, but will be available to students on scheduled trips. Material

Special Meeting

storage will be consolidated and moved to the south. They originally had screening for the storage with evergreens but the ADRB recommended removing it stating it so as to fit the heritage of the property. Stormwater management controls will be installed. The project has been approved by the WPCA as there will be an exchange in restrooms on site. Mr. Frost reviewed the planting and landscaping and traffic plans. The operation has ten employees which are already partially accommodated and will be moved to the new site, making a net loss of two parking spaces. Mr. Frost reviewed the comments received from other reviewers. Mr. Sheehan asked about the drainage pipe size for the output. Bart Ferrante, Stadia Engineering, stated the pipe is 18". Mr. Philbrick asked if they considered solar hot water on the roof. Stephan Nousiopoulos, project architect reviewed the floor plan for the building. The building design was mostly based on the use needed. There will be a mezzanine for private offices. The exterior of the building is designed to match the adjacent building. The angle of the roof does not allow for solar panel use because it would cause it to be oddly oriented. The building is just above the flood plain. The applicant clarified the height for the commission.

Public Comment in Favor:

Bob Rodgers, resident of Stonington and Trustee for the museum spoke in support of the application.

Steve Coan, resident of Stonington and President of Mystic Aquarium, spoke in support of the application and its benefit to the community. Mr. Coan stated the building is thoughtful and low impact for the area.

Peggy Roberts, President of the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support of the application and its benefit to the town and education community.

Mr. Philbrick asked if the GFOE's primary client is NOAA. Mr. Lovalvo explained they work with several offices in NOAA and are funded by the National Science Foundation and private entities.

Matt Beaudoin, resident of Mystic and small business owner spoke in favor of the application.

Public Comment Against:

Ed Novak, abutting property owner is concerned with the building's industrial look and potential traffic associated with the project.

Ms. Conway asked the applicant how often the trucks would be coming in and out of the building. Mr. Lovalvo stated that they operate eight months of the year and the equipment goes out at the beginning and comes back in at the end for updates and repairs. There will be no tractor trailers parked on site.

General Comment:

Carlene Donnarummo, resident of Stonington expressed her concern with the ADRB's comment that the storage not be buffered with trees.

Mr. Frost submitted proof of abutter notice.

Rebuttal:

Mr. White explained how the project fits into the mission of the Mystic Seaport Museum and how it will benefit the public. Ms. Conway asked the applicant to address the original mission of the museum. Mr. White stated the mission as created in 1929 is to, "create a dynamic, educational institution to preserve

Special Meeting

America's maritime culture—and turn the achievements of a past era into an inspirational force for the future.”

Mr. Brynes explained the decisions to be made by the commission regarding the Master Plan Zone Change and Site Plan Application, as well as the recommended stipulations. Ms. Conway asked about lighting on site. Mr. Frost explained there will be minor exterior lights on the walkway and no new parking lot lighting. Mr. Philbrick asked about the current trees around the existing storage area.

Mr. Philbrick moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Conway, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Ms. Conway moved to approve the master plan and site plan application with the stipulations recommended by staff and those added for screening the storage area, seconded by Mr. Young, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Stipulations:

1. Final plans shall be recorded prior to the issuance of any Zoning Permits.
2. Final plans shall be reviewed to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.
3. The applicant shall post an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Bond prior to the issuance of any Zoning Permits per the requirements of Section 8.6.3 of the Zoning Regulations. The bond amount shall be established by the Town Engineer after an estimate of the costs of installing and maintaining appropriate erosion and sedimentation control measures is provided by the applicant and approved by the Town Engineer. Work shall remain bonded for a minimum of one year from the date of completion.
4. Screening originally proposed for outdoor storage area shall be maintained on the plan.

Mr. Young moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Philbrick, all in favor 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 9:14pm.



Ben Philbrick, Secretary