

## Special Meeting

The 1613<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held Tuesday, May 1, 2018, at the Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Avenue, Mystic, CT. The meeting was called to order by Commissioner David Rathbun at 7:00pm. Also present for the meeting were Commissioners Ben Philbrick, Curtis Lynch, Shaun Mastroianni, and Gardner Young; Alternates Robert Hannon and Lynn Conway; Town Planner Keith A. Brynes, and Director of Planning Jason Vincent. Alternate Fred Deichmann was absent.

Seated for the meeting David Rathbun, Shaun Mastroianni, Ben Philbrick, Curtis Lynch, and Gardner Young.

**Minutes:**

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2018 meeting, seconded by Mr. Philbrick, all in favor 4-0-1, motion approved.

Roll Call: Rathbun – approve, Mastroianni – approve, Philbrick – approve, Lynch – approve, Young - abstain

**Administrative Review:**

**18-076ZON P. Fleming & Scott Nye (D. Ceneviva)** – Zoning Permit application for the reduction & relocation of 3 static billboard signs: reduce three 300 SF billboards to two 180 SF billboards. Property located at 786 Stonington Rd., Stonington. Assessors Map 75 Block 2 Lot 2. Zones GC-60 & RC-120.

The applicant is requesting to replace three static billboards with newer and smaller signs. These would conform to flood standards and reduce non-conformities. The signs would also be moved out of the State right-of-way. The applicant has been denied two different variance applications for a digital billboard as a replacement for the existing ones. This application is not requesting a digital billboard. There is a height maximum that must be satisfied and it is recommended by staff that this be included as a stipulation. Ms. Conway asked if the current signs are lit. They are not and the commission would like it to remain that way. Ms. Conway questioned whether the signs should be allowed at all. Mr. Brynes explained that they are an existing non-conformity and they are allowed to keep the signs and rebuild if the State allows.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the application with the two stipulations that were discussed, seconded by Mr. Philbrick, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

**Stipulations:**

1. Height of billboards as measured from average finished grade shall not exceed 17' tall.
2. Billboards shall be unlit.

**18-078ZON Joyce O. Resnikoff, Trustee** – Zoning Permit application to convert a portion of an existing retail space into restrooms, closing existing restroom to repurpose at a future time. Property located at 27 Coogan Blvd., Building #19B, Mystic. Assessors Map 164 Block 3 Lot 1. Zone TC-80.

Mr. Brynes presented the application.

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

The meeting recessed at 7:17pm and reconvened at 7:30pm.

**Public Hearing 7:30pm:**

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**PZ1808RA CME Associates (J. Guskowski)** – Regulation Text Amendment to add the TC-80 as an eligible zoning district to Zoning Regulations Section 7.21.3.3.1 Neighborhood Development District (NDD).

John Guskowski presented the application, explaining the proposal to add the TC-80 zone as an eligible zoning district for the Neighborhood Development District (NDD). The current TC-80 district regulations do not allow for the flexible and innovative development and redevelopment that the NDD provides. Allowing NDD would allow developers to use this tool in the TC-80 zone for new projects. Mr. Lynch questioned the risks outlined in the staff report of overdevelopment of the zone and too much commission discretion. Mr. Guskowski stated that the master plan process is labor intensive and deliberate, factors that will limit the overuse. Ms. Conway questioned why they feel the TC-80 zone is appropriate for the NDD overlay district. Mr. Guskowski explained that this is a commercial district in need of updating and this tool would allow for more flexibility to propose a project, additionally satisfying goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Mr. Guskowski noted that, out of the dozens of properties that are currently eligible to use this floating zone, only one is using it, which is an indication that it is unlikely it will be overused. Mr. Lynch stated that its goals align well with the POCD but is looking for it to align to the vision of the Town as well.

**Public Comment in Favor:**

Dave Hammond, chair of the Economic Development Commission stated that this is thoughtful and will contemporize the development possibilities. Mr. Hammond also stated that there are many tasks of the POCD that this change could satisfy.

**Public Comment Against:**

Carlene Donnarummo submitted a letter for inclusion into the file. Mr. Brynes read key points from the letter.

**No General Comment**

Mr. Brynes discussed which zoning districts the NDD is allowed and why they were chosen. The NDD is allowed in the HI-60, which is the counterpart to the TC-80 zone, which has similar potential. Mr. Brynes reviewed the benefits and risks, noting that the tool gives more potential for great master plans, and if the commission is dissatisfied with what is presented, they can reject the master plan. Mr. Vincent clarified that the POCD has village areas and non-village areas, it does not identify a core. The HI-60 and TC-80 are very vehicle-focused but are village areas and new development tools can bring the focus away from parking, making it more pedestrian-friendly and walkable. The current regulations can force bad design in instances due to setback requirements.

Ms. Conway questioned what has changed since the NDD was first developed. Mr. Vincent explained that they did not see it as a village possibility at the time, and a decade later, based on the underperforming properties in the zone, they are seeing the effects of not having more flexibility in the TC-80. Ms. Conway stated that she does not feel this zone is in the spirit of the NDD.

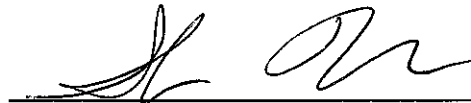
Mr. Lynch moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the application and its conformance with the POCD, seconded by Mr. Young. Mr. Lynch stated that staff and the chair of EDC gave a great overview on the goals satisfied by

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the amendment. Mr. Lynch stated that the thinking of the POCD has changed significantly since the 2005 version and this aligns with the vision well. The vote was taken all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Mr. Mastroianni moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Lynch, all in favor 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mastroianni', is written above a horizontal line.

Shaun Mastroianni, Secretary