

## Regular Meeting

The 1579<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at the Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Avenue, Mystic, CT. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Rathbun at 7:03pm. Also present for the meeting were Commissioners Curtis Lynch and Shaun Mastroianni; Alternate Harry Boardsen, Town Planner Keith A. Brynes, and Director of Planning Jason Vincent. Commissioners Gardner Young and Frances Hoffman and Alternate Lynn Conway were absent.

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

**Minutes:**

Chairman Rathbun waived the approval of meeting minutes.

**Commission Report:**

Chairman David Rathbun announced to the audience that the agenda item regarding the Economic Development Commission's report on Short Term Rentals would not be discussed this evening; a community discussion would be scheduled for the 12/20/16 PZC meeting.

**Administrative Review:**

Proposed modifications to special use permit/site plan for solution to McQuade's appeal of PZC's approval of Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center application PZ1418SUP & CAM.

Town Planner, Keith Brynes, presented the proposed settlement to the appeal regarding the parking concerns related to the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center trailheads on Clara Drive, noting that the hiking access will be deleted from the site plan and the existing fence along the DPNC road frontage shall remain.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the settlement conditions, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, all in favor 4-0.

**16-267ZON Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc.** – Zoning permit application to construct a 10' x 5' deck and dormer for new doorway for egress to adjoining building. Property located within 75 Greenmanville Ave. site. Assessor's Map 173 Block 1 Lot 1. Zone MHD.

Mr. Brynes explained the request stating that it conforms to the bulk requirements of the MHD Master Plan, it will not equal FEMA's definition of Substantial Improvement, and the Mystic Fire Marshal has no issues with the proposal at this time.

Ken Wilson, Mystic Seaport president, explained that the egress/deck connection is to permit easier access from the pub to the dining area, stating that no food for the dining area is prepared on site, it is all brought in from the restaurant.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the application with one stipulation, seconded by Mr. Boardsen, all in favor 4-0.

**Stipulation:**

1. Construction shall conform to all relevant flood hazard regulations.

**Old Business:**

**PZ1621BR Toll Bros. Old Mystic Estates**– Bond Reduction/Release application for off-site drainage work associated with PZ0360SD, SUP & GPP Meehan. Request full release of E&S Bond 15-005 (\$25,400.00) & a reduction of Performance Bond 15-006 from \$336,979.00 to \$43,954.00). Property located at 12 Michelle Lane, 102 Whitehall Ave. & 6 Whitehall Pond. Assessor's Map 165 Block 3 Lots 1A & 2 and Map 148 Block 3 Lot 3B; Zone GC-60.

## Regular Meeting

Mr. Brynes explained the application request, noting that the E&S Bond can't be released until a year after completion of the work, and provided comments from Town Engineer Scot Deledda, ZEO Candy Palmer, and CT DEEP OLISP, noting that Mr. Deledda is agreeable to the performance bond reduction.

Mr. Lynch asked if the remaining funds would be sufficient to finish the work if the applicant fails to do so, and whether anything had occurred over the past year that would change the bonding. Mr. Brynes replied that the funds were sufficient and there had been no changes.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the request to reduce the Performance Bond from \$336,979.00 to \$43,954.00, and retain the \$25,400.00 E&S Bond, seconded by Mr. Boardsen, all in favor 4-0.

In response to Mr. Lynch's request for an update of the Blight Ordinance, Director of Planning Jason Vincent explained that in order to centralize blight/distressed property concerns, First Select Simmons directed that all such complaints will go to the Planning Department for tracking and inspection to determine whether it reaches a valid level of blight where enforcement action can be taken. Mr. Vincent noted that some cited properties have been cleaned up and a lien has been filed against another. The ordinance permits a \$100.00 a day fine to be levied for failure to comply.

The commission took a 5-minute recess at 7:25pm, reconvening at 7:30pm.

**Public Hearing:** Mr. Mastroianni read the call at 7:30pm:  
**PZ1619SUP & GPP TOS West Vine Street School** – Special Use and Groundwater Protection Permit applications for additions and renovations to Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grades school. Property located at 17 West Vine St., Pawcatuck. Assessor's Map 2 Block 1 Lot 3. Zone GBR-130. *Continued from 10/18/16*

Staff explained that the public hearing was opened on 10/18/16 and immediately continued.

Project Architect, Anwar Hossain, gave a brief presentation of the proposal, explaining the rationale for both the West Vine and Deans Mill school projects, and presented the elevation drawings of proposed addition and renovations.

Ryan Chmielewski, Milone & MacBroom Lead landscape Architect, stated that all comments from Town Staff, K-12 Building Committee, and Jacobson & Associates, the 3<sup>rd</sup> party engineering review firm, have been responded to and addressed. He presented the site plan, including layout for bus/auto pickup, drop off, and parking, sidewalks, and ADA compliancy, noting that a variance had been acquired to reduce the non infringement area to allow for emergency access. Mr. Chmielewski stated that the project meets all of zoning district bulk and landscaping buffer requirements.

Mr. Lynch asked about the groundwater protection permit and some previous comments, including lighting.

Mr. Brynes explained that, as detailed in the latest response from Town Engineer, Scot Deledda, many of the comments have been addressed.

Dave Sullivan, Milone & MacBroom Traffic Engineer, described the methods employed to project traffic data, using information such as school operations, traffic counts, and accident data. He noted that student pickup is the most site-challenged time and 180 parking spots will be available, stating that all

## Regular Meeting

directional signage will be addressed, and sight lines and turning requirements for all vehicles expected to be on site will be met.

Mr. Mastroianni questioned why staff parking was near the abutting residential lots and not in the back of the building. Mr. Chmielewski explained how that area is used for student play and gym but is available for additional parking if required.

Dan Kroeber, P.E., Milone & MacBroom Civil Engineer, described the stormwater system designed to accommodate the increase in stormwater runoff. The design includes underground retention ponds, rooftop infiltrators, GPP requirement for cleaning of the stormwater, redirection of the watershed to the rear property detention pond, ultimately reducing the volume of the watershed to West Vine by 25%. Mr. Kroeber noted the Town's repair of the pipe to the pond on West Arch St. was successful. In response to Mr. Lynch's question regarding storm level drainage system design, Mr. Kroeber stated that the system is designed for a 100-year storm event.

There was no public comment in favor.

Public comment in opposition:

Tom Fiore, 7 West Vine St., stated that the proposed amount of parking spaces is excessive, noting that the average for comparable schools is 84 and proposing 180 encourages turning green space to parking lots. Mr. Fiore also feels that the proposed gymnasium is oversized.

Jean Fiore, 2 Cannon Square, felt it was wrong that the focus of development is all in one area rather than being creative to the rear of the building, and stating that the character of the neighborhood will be changed. She suggested the Town purchase nearby properties and was concerned with the cost of the retention basins.

Mr. Mastroianni asked whether Ms. Fiore's concern with the parking lot was the lot material or location. Mr. Fiore responded that gravel would be preferred.

It was stated that both Tom & Jean Fiore attended the K-12 Building Committee meeting and expressed their concerns but had not received any response.

General Comment: None

Staff:

Mr. Brynes explained the required Commission action for decisions on the groundwater protection permit, special permit waivers, and the special use permit, reading comments received from reviewers and the 2 stipulations in the staff report. He noted that the Wetlands application has been approved and unpaved parking lots are not permitted in a groundwater protection zone.

Rebuttal:

Mr. Chmielewski explained that the site design is a result of the K-12 Building Committee requirements and function over form, noting that a site access control gate is required for the parking area in the back of the building, and the property has a steep slope to the north of the parcel which would limit a parking area to the left rear.

## Regular Meeting

Commissioners discussed their concerns regarding the excessive amount of parking, close proximity of the parking area to the Fiore property, and the oversized gymnasium. Mr. Rathbun felt school staff could park up the hill behind the school and asked whether the K-12 Committee had considered buying additional property. Mr. Mastroianni asked what the State's parking requirement is, suggesting the applicants return with alternatives, either reducing the amount of parking or relocating it.

Dave Sullivan explained the parking rationale, explaining that staff requires 90-100 spaces and the after school pick-up requirement is to meet projected need, noting that the State requirement is 180 spaces.

Dan Kroeber explained that safety issues, topography, State funding time restraints, and budget issues limit changes. He stated that the side parking lot will not be visible from the school entry; there will be a berm with 8'-10' evergreen plantings. Mr. Kroeber stated that they would inform the Building Committee of the Commission's concerns and return to explain the constraints they are under and the need for the additional parking spaces.

The applicant requested a continuation of the public hearing to the 12/6/16 meeting. Mr. Brynes reminded the applicants that any new information would need to be submitted 5 days prior to the public hearing.

Mr. Lynch moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, all in favor 4-0, the meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

  
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Frances Hoffman, Secretary