

Special Meeting

The 1557th meeting of the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission was held Tuesday, January 5, 2016 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 Curtis Lynch, Gardner Young, David Rathbun, Frances Hoffman; Alternates Lynn Conway and Shaun Mastroianni, and Town Planner Keith Brynes.

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

First Selectman Rob Simmons addressed the commission and stated that he serves as an ex-officio member of all town boards and committees and will be visiting each of their meetings. Mr. Simmons is also serving on the POCD Implementation Committee and will be working with the new Director of Planning going forward to ensure the tasks are met.

Minutes:

Ms. Hoffman moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2015 meeting, seconded by Mr. Lynch, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Commission Initiatives:

Discussion of process for updating mapping in adopted 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development
Ms. Hoffman will distribute her draft wording to the commission via email for review and discussion.

Discussion of 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Schedule

The commission discussed how to prioritize their assigned POCD implementation tasks. Mr. Lynch suggested separating the 24 tasks into 3 main groups: Conservation, Economic Development, and Zoning Regulations revision, then forming a strategy for implementation. The commission discussed having a site walk at one of the mill buildings in Pawcatuck. Mr. Brynes noted that it would be considered a public meeting, to which the property owners were not agreeable. Mr. Rathbun felt the property owners should accommodate the request. Mr. Brynes said he would present the request again to the mill property owners.

Discussion of requirements for scaled three-dimensional models or computerized graphic equivalents for Special Use Permit applications under Section 6.1.2.6.1

Ms. Hoffman provided commissioners with draft wording for three-dimensional model requirements to be read by the commission and discussed further. The Architectural Review Board will also be providing comments.

Administrative Review:

PZ1132SUP & CAM Clara M. Coogan Trust - Special Use Permit & Coastal Area Management Review applications for phased development of a 245-unit Congregate Living Facility (Masonicare) on 18.02 acres to be created through subdivision of a ±52.07 acre parcel. Phase 1 proposes 125 units and Phase 2 proposes 120 units. Property located at 162 Greenmanville Ave., Mystic. Assessor's Map 172 Block 2 Lot 5. Zones RM-15 & RA-40. **Request approval for changes to site plan and architectural design.**

Mr. Brynes summarized the changes proposed by the applicant. Mr. Prue raised concern about this being an administrative review item considering the depth and amount of changes requested by the applicant. Mr. Lynch stated he was in agreement that he does not feel comfortable with these large changes being in an administrative review item. The commission agreed to have the applicant present the changes that evening but allow public comment at the next meeting.

Richard Strouse, project engineer, presented a site plan with proposed changes, including using natural stone versus modified blocks for one of the retaining walls; changing the tiered retaining wall to a single wall and

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providing two full lanes around the perimeter of both buildings allowing for removal of the circle near the entrance. The sewer line has been relocated to connect to Clara Drive rather than through the protected open space and the WPCA has approved this change. They are currently constructing Phase 1A&B and would come back to the commission for approval for Phase 2. Phasing has changed so that Phase 2 only includes 2 small wings that may be constructed in the future. Mr. Rathbun questioned the changes to amount of trees. A landscaping/planting plan addresses the concern. Trees that had to be removed in the northern buffer due to grading will be replanted in the revised plans. Ms. Conway asked for clarification on the south retaining walls, and commissioners questioned the amount of handicap parking.

Joe Mastronunzio, of Brom Builders, explained that the original approval has 3 times the amount of parking normally required for this type of facility. Mr. Mastronunzio noted that a condition of the original approval was to have the Architectural Review Design Board review the site again once blasting was completed. Ms. Hoffman requested further details on the changes proposed and the stipulations for the original approval. The commission discussed whether input from the public is needed. The applicant agreed to provide further details, and allow commission members to tour the property if desired. Mr. Brynes explained that an approval would not include the proposed Phase 2, as that would require separate approval.

A tour of the site will be arranged and will be open to the public and properly advertised.

Eversource Energy – Request to install a gate to utility easement along a designated Scenic Road. Property located at 243 North Stonington Rd., Stonington. Assessor's Map 146 Block 1 Lot 10. Zone RA-20.

Mr. Brynes explained that commission approval is required for changes to a Scenic Road. Chris Rice, construction representative from Eversource Energy, explained that they would like to remove 16 feet of stone wall to install a gate for access to transmission lines. They have obtained permission from the property owner. Alan Chapman, Eversource Energy, explained the need for this location as there is no alternative to access the area. Following installation of the gate, the existing rock wall will be repaired, and any rocks removed shall be reintroduced into the remaining wall.

Ms. Hoffman moved to approve the request, seconded by Mr. Lynch, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

The meeting recessed at 8:36pm and reconvened at 8:41pm.

Public Hearing/;

PZ1524 Andrew Rogers (Micro Brewery_Brewpub) - Regulation Text Amendment application to add Micro Brewery/Brewpub as a use allowed by Special Permit in DB-5, LS-5, and M-1 zoning districts.

Applicant Andrew Rogers presented his vision for the town to become a destination for craft brewing. Mr. Rogers explained that the zones proposed have the appropriate character and similarly allowed uses. Mr. Rogers put forward an application for the three zones because he sees that it will be beneficial for the town. Mr. Lynch questioned whether it would be similar to a restaurant with liquor sales. The only zone proposed that does not allow food service currently is the M-1 zone which is primarily manufacturing. Mr. Rogers noted that since wineries are permitted in the M-1 zone, how are they substantially different from breweries? The commission discussed where the M-1 zones are located. The amendment includes a 3,000 square foot limitation for the production area. The restaurant space would not be limited but would have to fit into its environment. Ms. Conway questioned the sale of related items. Mr. Rogers explained that t-shirts, pint glasses or other retail items are planned for sale, as is historically customary.

Mr. Brynes explained that this is a regulation amendment, and anyone proposing a micro-brewery at one of these properties would have to come back before the commission for approval by Special Use Permit. The

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amendment was modeled after the winery definition. Mr. Prue raised concern with no limitation on restaurant size. Mr. Brynes stated that restaurant size is typically restricted by parking limitations and presented proposed parking standards for Micro-breweries/brewpubs, noting the difference for production area versus public use area. Mr. Brynes stated that the application fits general principles of the POCD.

Public Comment in Favor:

Blunt White, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, stated that the applicant would like to move quickly and would be open to removing the M-1 zone if that is a detriment to the application. Mr. Prue raised concern with additional changes to the zone without looking at it as a whole. Mr. White explained that the economic benefit would be great for downtown businesses. This is a growing profitable business segment that Stonington is currently missing out on.

Tricia Walsh, President of the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the application on behalf of the chamber and on behalf of Lisa Konicki, president of the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce. Letters of support were submitted by both Chamber representatives.

Mystic resident, Ben Tamsky, spoke in favor of the application as it stands and as a neighbor to the potential location. Mr. Tamsky read the commission a letter sent to neighbors by the applicant that addressed questions regarding the proposed business. Mr. Tamsky recommended removing brewpubs from the definition since restaurants are currently allowed in the LS-5 and DB-5 zones. Mr. Tamsky also recommended restricting the application to the LS-5 zone.

Resident, Bill Schur, spoke in favor stating that microbreweries bring people to the area and this will be a good business.

Charles Buffum, Cottrell Brewing Company, explained the definition of a brewpub being a restaurant that makes and sells its own beer. Microbreweries brew beer for retail and corporate sale. Growlers are allowed by state statute to be sold by restaurants or microbreweries.

Chris Regan, spoke both as a resident and on behalf of the Olde Mystic Village and spoke in support of Microbreweries but is not in favor of brewpubs.

Public Comment Against:

Robert Hartley, spoke against the application believes that there are enough businesses that sell beer and liquor. Mr. Hartley raised concern over possible odors from the brewing process. Mr. Hartley is a neighbor to the proposed location at 40 Washington St. and is concerned with the proximity to his property.

Carlene Donnarummo, raised concern over bringing people into a local shopping zone intended for residents. Ms. Donnarummo expressed that at the previous meeting the commission suggested moving forward with a microbrewery wording application and the applicant has expanded their request. Ms. Donnarummo recommended Mr. Tamsky's proposal for restricting this to the LS-5 zone and to microbreweries, expressing concern with where the LS-5 and DB-5 zones lie in Pawcatuck, particularly related to the prevalence of residences in the area. Ms. Donnarummo presented her written statement for the commission.

General Comment:

Suzanne Moore, owner of the property at 40 Washington Street, spoke about the definition of the LS-5 and DB-5 zones. The zones currently allow restaurants, retail, and processing of agricultural products, noting that microbreweries combine these uses.

Blunt White spoke to clarify the basis of the definition proposed.

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Rebuttal:

Mr. Rogers stated that he would like the commission to consider the regulation amendment separately from the Special Use Permit application he would submit in the future. Mr. Rogers also stated that the definition was designed to better the town, not try to get restaurants in the M-1 zone. Mr. Prue questioned the smell from the brewing process. Mr. Rogers stated the aroma released when brewing is akin to bread and the amount depends on the size of the brewing. Mr. Prue questioned the difference between a brewery and microbrewery.

Ms. Hoffman moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Lynch. Mr. Mastroianni stated that before removing brewpubs from the definition the commission should decide whether they are including the M-1 zone. Ms. Conway recommended that the definition for a microbrewery place a maximum limit on production. Ms. Conway recommended excluding the M-1 zone. Mr. Rogers answered questions regarding size of local breweries and production rates. All in favor, motion approved.

Mr. Lynch moved that the commission has considered the POCD, seconded by Mr. Rathbun, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the application with 2 modifications, seconded by Ms. Hoffman, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Modifications:

1. Remove the M-1 zone from the amendment language
2. Add parking requirements language as recommended by Staff:

7.10.4.4 Minimum Off Street Parking Requirements. (Table)

See Section 7.10.8 for properties in the Downtown Pawcatuck Parking Overlay District.

USE/ACTIVITY SERVED	PARKING SPACES REQUIRED	
	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Manufacturing: Assembly/Fabrication/Packing	1 per 1000 SF or 1 per employee (whichever is greater) +1 per 5000 SF	No maximum
Micro-breweries/brewpubs:	1 per 1,000 SF for production areas Plus 1 per 100 SF floor area or 1 per 3 seats (whichever is greater) for public areas such as taprooms, tasting areas or brewpubs	No maximum

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The commission agreed to look at the M-1 zone comprehensively in the future.

PZ1525SUP Mall, Inc, (Chris Regan) - Special Use Permit Application for Vault Coffee Roasters coffee shop with 52 indoor seats and 10 seasonal outdoor seats in former retail space. Property located at 27 Coogan Blvd., Building 26A & B., Mystic. Assessor's Map 164 Block 3 Lot 1-8. Zone TC-80.

Mr. Regan explained that the current tenant will be relocating to another property to expand the restaurant. With the expansion the village can still accommodate parking with 955 existing and 903 required. Signage will be updated to reflect the new tenant. The hours of operation will be similar to the village. Mr. Brynes stated that the only question is currently signage which will be reviewed with staff.

No Public Comment

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

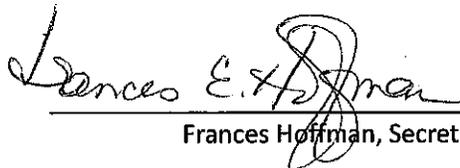
Ms. Hoffman moved to approve the application, seconded by Mr. Young. Ms. Hoffman amended her motion to include the stipulation recommended by staff, all in favor 5-0, motion approved.

Stipulation:

1. New signage must comply with Section 7.12 of the Zoning Regulations.

Ms. Hoffman spoke about the conversation regarding the Incentive Housing Zone. Ms. Hoffman raised concern with selecting specific properties prior to public input. The commission discussed the feasibility of changing the scope of the approved proposal. The commission discussed holding a special meeting with public comment on the proposed properties. The commission decided to add the item to the February 2, 2016 agenda and advertise it to the public.

Mr. Rathbun moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Young, all in favor 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 10:50pm.



Frances Hoffman, Secretary