

**Westbrook Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes**

November 9, 2015

**Mulvey Municipal Center, 866 Boston Post Road
Multi-Media Room**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marilyn Ozols, Chair; Bill Neale, Vice Chair; Phil Bassett, Secretary; Joshua Katz, Marie Farrell (alt), Libby Waldron (alt), Bob Furno (alt)

ALSO PRESENT: Meg Parulis, Town Planner; Lisa DeMaria, Recording Secretary

Ms. Ozols called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Furno was seated for Eric Reeve.

SUBDIVISIONS: None

TOWN AND GOVERNMENT AGENCY REFERRALS: None

SELECTMEN REFERRALS: None

ZONING REFERRALS:

1. **ZC2015-016 – 7 Pequot Park Road (Parcel ID 158/023)** – Special Permit application for the construction of three commercial buildings totaling 15,710 sf. The buildings are designed as flexible spaces suitable for a variety of permitted uses.

Mike Harkin, P.E., Agent for the owner, explained the project to the Commission Members.

A Staff Review Meeting was held on Thursday, Nov. 5 with Town Planner, Town Engineer, Building Official, Public Works and Zoning to review technical aspects of application. The Town Engineer provided a punch list of minor items that need to be addressed on the final plans. The Fire Chief has requested installation of three hydrants on the property.

Ms Parulis noted that the requirements for streetlights and sidewalks were waived for the original subdivision and no sidewalks have been required to date for the existing businesses on Pequot Park Road as part of Site Plan Review by the Zoning Commission.

She further noted that Pequot Park Road is served by overhead utilities on the north side of the road. The proposed plan shows 2 new utility poles on the south side of Pequot Park Road serving the proposed development. Sect. 6.20.04 of Zoning Regulations requires that utilities be installed underground on the lot “unless determined to be impractical by the Commission.” She recommended that the utility service from the existing poles on north side of road be installed underground unless it can be demonstrated that this is impractical or would not be allowed by CL&P.

Ms. Parulis also recommended that the exterior building materials and colors be noted on the architectural plans and that the River Birch at the driveway entrance to building B be re-located as recommended by the Town Engineer so as not to obstruct line of sight. Details are also needed on the maintenance drive for the detention basin.

Ms. Waldron asked if there was adequate lighting on the long drive between Building B and Building C. Ms. Parulis noted that the Town Engineer would provide a recommendation on the need for additional lighting.

Ms. Waldron inquired about the signage. Mr. Harkin stated that he will work with the Zoning Enforcement Official to acquire the necessary permits. There could be one sign for each building. Each tenant will potentially have a sign near the doors.

Mr. Harkin went on to explain that the parking has been calculated conservatively to allow for a variety of uses as permitted in the district.

A traffic study will be performed and submitted to the State Traffic Commission for approval.

The IWWC Commission has approved the project with conditions.

The Conservation Commission and Health Department have also reviewed the plans.

Mr. David Milano, owner, explained that there are a total of 15 units in three buildings, approximately 1,000 square feet each. The spaces are intended for small, locally owned, clean use businesses such as artists, personal trainers, hobbyists, internet retailers and small distributors. Mr. Milano explained the design and the layout of the units.

Mr. Furno stated that the plans show parking against the buildings and asked where trucks would park for loading and unloading. Mr. Milano explained that the businesses were small enough that they would park in the spaces provided in front of the overhead doors.

Mr. Furno asked if they had considered using solar power. Mr. Milano stated that they had not but could look into it.

Mr. Furno expressed disappointment in the design of the buildings and asked if the owner would consider having the buildings re-designed by a licensed architect. Mr. Milano responded that the proposed buildings are based on a prototype that was developed by an architect for a similar project in Guilford.

Ms. Ozols stated that for the type and location of the businesses, the design is better than most.

Mr. Furno suggested eliminating curbing where possible and using granite curbing in place of bituminous curbing where it was needed. He also suggested eliminating as much guard rail as possible. Mr. Larry Appleton, Landscape Architect, responded that Cape Cod style curbing could be used in place of bituminous curbing.

Ms. Ozols noted that the Landscape Plans conflict with the Site Plan.

Mr. Furno suggested increasing the height of the windows for better overall scale and to let more natural light into the workspaces.

Mr. Bassett asked where the dumpsters would be located. Mr. Milano stated that each tenant has the responsibility to contract a trash hauler and all receptacles would be stored inside.

Mr. Bassett asked if they would have public water service or be serviced by a well. Mr. Milano responded that the project will be serviced by public water.

Mr. Bassett asked if Building C could be moved back to create more parking. Mr. Harkin responded that the buildings were sited to minimize impact to the surrounding wetlands. Ms. Ozols added that due to the nature of the businesses that will be occupying the units, she felt that the parking provided was more than adequate.

Mr. Bassett inquired about the need for guardrails. Mr. Harkin explained that there will be a small wetlands fill that will necessitate a small guardrail. Mr. Harkin is still discussing the type of guard rail that will be used with the owner.

Mr. Neale asked what kind of power would service the units. Mr. Milano stated that each unit would be equipped with a 100 amp, three-phase electrical service and separate gas service.

Mr. Neale asked if each unit would have a private bathroom. Mr. Milano responded that each unit will have a private half bathroom.

Mr. Neale asked how many units are in the Madison and Guilford developments. Mr. Milano stated that there were approximately 150 to 200 units occupied by long term tenants of up to 30 years.

Mr. Neale asked if water flows from the site to Gatchen Creek in the spring. Mr. Harkin stated that it does.

Ms. Farrell suggested adding a window on the west side of Building B to enhance the view when driving into the development.

Mr. Neale made a motion to find Application ZC2015-016 CONSISTENT with the Plan of Conservation and Development goals to *Continue to Promote Business Development in Targeted Areas* and to *Encourage Quality Development* with the following recommendations:

- 1) Exterior building materials and colors should be specified on architectural elevations.**
- 2) Electric service from existing poles on north side of road should be installed underground unless it can be demonstrated that it is impractical or would not be allowed by CL&P.**
- 3) Eliminate bituminous curbing around foundation plantings except where necessary for drainage. Utilize Cape Cod style curbing where possible.**
- 4) Relocate River Birch north of eastern driveway serving Bldg. "B" so as not to obstruct sight line.**
- 5) Show guard rail detail on plans.**
- 6) Show detail of maintenance access to detention basin.**
- 7) Evaluate the need for additional lighting at driveway entrances and along driveway to Building C. Utilize minimum necessary for safety. All fixtures should be dark sky compliant.**
- 8) Consider increasing window size to greater than 7 foot height.**
- 9) Coordinate Landscaping Plan with Engineering Plan.**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bassett and unanimously approved.

BILLS:

| GENERAL ACCOUNTS | | SPECIAL FUNDS | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---------------|----|
| 1. Recording Secretary – L. DeMaria | \$73.20 | | \$ |
| 2. Dues– Meg Parulis | \$545.00 | | |

Mr. Bassett made a motion to pay the General Account bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Katz and unanimously approved.

MINUTES:

1. Regular Meetings – October 19, 2015.

Mr. Bassett made a motion to approve the minutes as amended by Ms. Farrell. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neale and unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Sidewalk Plan – Ms. Parulis suggested that the Members collect photos of pedestrian issues as they observe them to be included in the final report. Ms. Waldron asked if the sidewalks in front of the Oxford Academy would be redone. Ms. Parulis suggested that, in general, the first priority would be to add sidewalks where none exist, but that when the asphalt sidewalks needed replacing, they would be upgraded to concrete. This policy will need to be spelled out in the Plan. There may be areas, particularly in Town Center that it might make sense to replace the asphalt sidewalks as part of construction of new sidewalks. The sidewalk inventory categorizes the sidewalks by material and condition. Once the areas for new sidewalks have been finalized, the need for replacement of existing sidewalks can be evaluated. Ms. Ozols asked the Commission to review the areas where new sidewalks are proposed and email comments to Ms. Parulis.

REPORTS:

- 1. Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission** – No November meeting.
- 2. RiverCOG** – The October meeting was cancelled. Members were encouraged to attend the Economic GrowSmart Summit 2 being held at Camp Hazen in Chester on Nov. 19th. Ms Parulis will send around a flyer. The Summit is being held as part of the development of a Regional Economic Growth Strategy. The regional planning agency is also conducting a Study of Economic Growth from Regional Non-Market Resources (i.e. CT River Basin and tributaries and coves, historical resources, traditional village centers, and network of greenways, trails, state parks and forests. Both initiatives will be used to inform the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.
- 3. Harbor Management Commission** – No Report.
- 4. Town Center Revitalization Committee** – A meeting was held with the Water Pollution Control Commission to present the findings of the Town Center Wastewater Infrastructure Economic Analysis conducted by Woodard & Curran which included a conceptual layout and cost estimate for a wastewater collection system that could service potential build-out of the Town Center as recommended in the UCONN Study. The system proposed is the same system used at Tanger Outlets and Water's Edge and is about the same size as Water's Edge. The cost of the system would be approx. \$6 million including the re-construction of Ted Lane Field. The report also identified some potential funding sources. The next step will be to conduct a Cost-Benefit Analysis based on projected possible increase in tax base due to new development or redevelopment. The Cost-Benefit Analysis will include an evaluation of the current market for projected new development. If the economics make sense, soil testing will need to be conducted to verify the hydraulic capacity of the soils in Ted Lane field to receive the treated wastewater.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A Town Meeting is scheduled for the potential Open Space acquisition of the Toby Hill VII subdivision (84 acres) on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Neale made a motion to adjourn at 8:39 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bassett and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa DeMaria, Recording Secretary