

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marilee Beebe, Chair
Sue Errickson, Vice Chair
John Hughes, Secretary
Dave Barrow, Regular
Bill Eccles, Regular
Mike Tuley, Alternate
Dave Fluckiger, Alternate

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Farmer, Director of Planning & Community Development
Joshua Freeman, Town Council liaison

1. **Call to Order:** Marilee Beebe called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m. in Council Chambers.
2. **Public Comment:** None.
3. **Public Hearing(s):** None
4. **Action on Public Hearing(s):** None
5. **Other Agenda Items**

5.1 Discuss options for bonding regulations – Ms. Farmer provided some additional information to the packets including information from a seminar to evaluate PA No. 11-79 and an article from the Connecticut Law Tribune.

She said Public Act 11-79 presents a complicated situation and different towns are addressing it in different ways. Some towns are not issuing bonds at all. Several town attorneys are researching this in addition to Rick Conti. There are some concerns about how to handle subdivisions under this new Act, and some towns are instituting moratoriums. Surety bonds are also a concern, and the town does not want to use them because they are difficult and costly to call for the funds. For now, the town will need to push off acceptance of any roads until one winter season has passed to ensure the proper maintenance has been done.

Ms. Beebe asked how this might affect current projects before them. Ms. Farmer said right now they cannot issue a Certificate of Occupancy until everything is completed. This includes any kind of public improvements like drainage easements. They may not, however, have to require this for landscaping, but will look into this further.

Mr. Eccles said he feels the town might be able to accept a surety bond if the company issuing it has a demonstrated good track record. Ms. Farmer noted that this Act came out in part because developers are often working on shoestring budgets. She said she will continue

to research this and hopes to have a proposal by the next meeting that can be brought to a Public Hearing.

- 5.2 Discuss TEDC Action Plan – (updated 2002 plan adopted 10/2011) – Ms. Farmer said the plan adopted in 2002 came out of a stakeholders’ committee. She said Brian Miller worked on this with Jim Mahoney, the Economic Development Director out of Berlin. She said this new plan was adopted by the Economic Development Commission and will be going to the Town Council tomorrow evening. Ms. Farmer suggested they look at the updated vision and, like the POCD, the implementation tasks.

Ms. Beebe said she feels the TEDC did a very good job on this, and she finds it accessible, readable, and concise. There was also discussion that once this has been endorsed by everyone that it should go up on the town website. Ms. Beebe said that the plan mentions obtaining certain town services via the internet and she said it would be good if the PZC could help facilitate that. Ms. Farmer said residents can now get building permits on-line. She added that Steve Lowrey may be able to work on on-line mapping information for properties that are for sale.

Ms. Beebe asked if people can currently pick up a to-do list for special permits. Ms. Farmer said Steve Lowrey had developed one for a recent special permit application and this would be a good thing to make available on-line. Ms. Beebe added that the report emphasizes the 195 corridor review and should mention multi-modal transportation possibilities since the EDC has previously encouraged extending bus service from UConn to the Tolland Village Area and on to Hartford.

- 5.3 Discuss PZC goals – Ms. Beebe said she organized the remaining goals from 2009 plus those previously discussed into broad categories and put them together in draft form. She said the draft is not intended to be in any order of priority. There was consensus that in most cases the broad ideas do not need to be person specific. Ms. Beebe also suggested that rather than working on sign regulations all together, that they should address them piece meal as they look at various zones in town, such as the proposed Technology Zone. The PZC reviewed the draft making suggested changes as follows:

Item 1 – “*Redefine the zone boundary*” should be at the top of this item. Also, 1.1 should be revised to read: *Follow-up on ideas on possible inclusion of multi-family where appropriate*. Also, pedestrian access should be addressed in 1.4.

Item 2 – “*Redefine zone boundary*” should also be added to the top of this item. The first sentence in 2.1 should be reworded as: *Implement vision for technical office uses combined with residential and complementary retail*. The numbering also needs to be corrected throughout Item 2. An additional sub-item should be added to read: *Meet with Planimetrics and the Economic Development Commission to discuss possible development patterns and the potential in the Technology Zone*. Item 2.4 (previously 2.2) should also address pedestrian access. Item 2.7 (previously numbered 2.5) – Discuss Route 195 Corridor may need to be made a separate item.

Item 3 – Item 3.1 should be reworded to read: *Meeting with Planimetrics and EDC, TC representatives in January. Discuss invitation to State representatives to explore avenues for state assistance....*

Item 4 – The Commission discussed that they might want to add an item that addresses discussing with the Conservation Commission areas of interest for connectivity of trails. Ms. Farmer noted that they are starting to see some interest in large scale wind turbines in the area, but that she does not see Tolland as the best place for this.

Item 5 – POCD – Ms. Farmer said one big goal they will need to address is opportunities for income-qualified senior housing, and she said she and Beverly Bellody are working on this. She also said that one thing not yet addressed is that all items that require a permit should meet LID standards. Ms. Beebe suggested they could start on this by targeting critical areas such as aquifer protection areas. She said this could be cross-referenced under Section 4.

Item 6 – Public Relations – Under 6.2, Ms. Farmer said they could also utilize Facebook and Twitter. Ms. Beebe said they could provide to media outlets a truncated version of PZC items that come out of the manager’s meeting. Jamie Kunze from Patch News was at this meeting and said she would welcome a blog that came out of the Planner’s office. Ms. Beebe said any type of communications would need to be both official and coordinated. Ms. Farmer said she found that the previous Town Council had developed but not adopted a social media policy. Josh Freeman said the policy is in its final stages, and they are awaiting it from the Town Manager. He said the Town Manager has expressed the desire to funnel all communications through the town e-blast system with coordinated messages.

The Board agreed to review the changes for the next meeting when a second draft will be submitted.

5.4 Discuss Route 30/74 and other NCZ zones – Ms. Farmer noted that they have been working on regulations and she hopes to have something for the Commission to look at for the January 9, 2012 meeting. She provided a new map that was drawn based on the comments from their previous meeting. She included the Xtra-Mart in the Commercial Industrial Zone, and Los Barlow-Cox’s land along with a large piece of the Bach property have been rezoned into the Residential Design District. Mr. Eccles suggested that the two CIZ lots north of Tolland Stage Road remain part of the Neighborhood Commercial Zone and there was consensus that this was a good idea.

5.5 Discuss Tech Zone and visualization – Ms. Farmer said the Commission had previously talked about asking the Economic Development Commission to get involved with them when Planimetrics comes in. Ms. Beebe said they had talked about the possibility of the PZC and EDC sharing some funds on this for Planimetrics’ services, but George Mantak, EDC Chair, said some money had been encumbered to work on the TEDC Action Plan, so that may not be possible.

The Commission considered including the PZC, the EDC, Town Council representatives, and possibly State representatives in the meeting and discussing how they might link in to the UConn initiative. Ms. Errickson said she thought it might be too early to include State representatives before we know what we want. Ms. Beebe said State representatives, however, may be able to suggest possible grant money and other funding opportunities the PZC is not aware of, so it might be important to get them involved on the ground floor.

The Commission briefly discussed including this in the January 9 regular meeting, but concluded that agenda may already be too full. They discussed having a meeting from 7:00 or 7:30 P.M. on Wednesday, January 18 or Thursday, January 19 with Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics. Ms. Farmer said she will check with him to see if he could be available on either of those dates. Ms. Beebe said they should consider if they want to extend the invitation to elected officials for this meeting.

6. **Approval of Minutes** – Approve minutes of November 28, 2011 Regular Meeting. Sue Errickson/John Hughes motion to approve the November 28, 2011 minutes. Motion was unanimously approved.

7. **Activities and Updates**

- 7.1 Regional Economic Development staff grant – Ms. Farmer said a \$400K Regional Economic Development grant has been approved, which will allow the towns of Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland to hire consultants that will assist the three towns to possibly piggyback on the UConn initiatives. The three town managers and town planners have been working together on this. Ms. Beebe said she feels this would be a great initiative and hopes that we can establish a good relationship with the various planners so we don't end up in a competitive environment.

8. **Town Staff Comments** – Ms. Farmer noted that the Commission had adopted fairly stringent signage regulations three or four years ago and there is an issue with the new signage at the Walking Shoe Store which just came in at Fieldstone Commons. She said their Route 195 facing sign is halo lit, but on the other side, they want to have a channel lit sign. The question is whether this should be considered a grandfathered sign or a new sign. The sign will not be any larger than the previous sign there. There was consensus that this is a grandfathered signage and to allow the channel lit sign.

Ms. Farmer updated the Commission that she met with Art and Judy Gottier and their attorney. She reminded the Gottiers that they have a very small staff that will be reviewing their application and the town is currently under the statutory time clock, so she emphasized that she will need to provide all of the information for this review as soon as possible.

Ms. Farmer noted that she received a quote back from Steve O'Neill on the traffic study for the Baxter/Anthony Road/Route 195 intersection and on multi-modal transportation. She said the town will be working with engineers in Manchester and will meet next Wednesday. The engineers will avail themselves to the Water Commission and WPCA.

Ms. Farmer said she attended the CRCOG transportation meeting and the \$2.5 million funding grant was approved for the Town Green. These monies will be available at the end of 2013 or beginning of 2014. She noted that during another part of the CRCOG transportation meeting, Canton expressed an interest in looking for funding for electric car charging stations at town hall and this might be a good regional initiative. She said CRCOG is currently pursuing this.

9. **Announcements** – Upcoming Meetings – None.
10. **Reading of Correspondence** – None.
11. **Communications and Petitions from Commission Members** – None.
12. **Public Participation** – None.
13. **Adjournment** – Bill Eccles/Dave Barrow motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 9:25 P.M. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile
Clerk