

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 24, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Cardin, Chair  
Marilee Beebe, Vice Chair  
Sue Errickson, Secretary  
Jack Scavone, Regular  
Dave Barrow, Regular  
John Hughes, Alternate

MEMBERS ABSENT: Benjamin Stanford, Alternate

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Farmer, AICP, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Applicants & their representatives  
Sudhakar Nagardeolekar, Design Advisory Board Chair  
Kimberly Rogers, Design Advisory Board Vice Chair  
Jim Gorman, Design Advisory Board  
Bill Byers, Design Advisory Board  
Cheryl Nicholas, Design Advisory Board  
Vikas Nagardeolekar, Design Advisory Board

1. **Call to Order:** Michael Cardin called the meeting to order at 7:35p.m. in Council Chambers.
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Public Hearing:** None
4. **Action on Public Hearing:** None
5. **Other Agenda Items**

5.1 **Conceptual Plan Discussion** – 31 Kingsbury Avenue: Ms. Farmer provided an overview. She said Troy Drazen, a local businessman, has property on Kingsbury Avenue that has been subject to zoning enforcement in the past. He runs a landscape business from there which necessitates review and approval from the PZC.

Attorney Wendell Avery representing Mr. Drazen provided conceptual drawings of the property. Mr. Cardin asked if the proposed business is appropriate for this zone. Ms. Farmer said the applicant is considering a landscape storage and equipment use, which is an approved use in a Commercial Industrial Zone and which this area is in. She noted that during the enforcement process there was a fabric membrane structure toward the rear of the property.

Attorney Avery said Mr. Drazen has been a businessman in Tolland for the past 18 years and currently rents 3,000 sq. feet for his equipment further down the road on Kingsbury Avenue. The property he owns is adjacent to the Moose Lodge and across the street from the Italian club, a cabinet shop and truck repair business. Mr. Drazen would like to establish a wholesale storage use on his property in this CIZ-A zone, which would be subject to site plan approval. Attorney Avery also noted this property is in the Aquifer Protection Zone and

will be subject to some restrictions. He said the property is basically a two-tiered lot with the back of the property having a several foot drop in elevation. He is proposing in this back area to put in bins that will hold mulch, stone, and sand for his commercial use. It would not be for retail sale. He also wants to install an approximately 28' x 44' hoop structure in back and dress up the façade facing the road on Kingsbury Avenue with wood siding in the front. The hoop structure would be for storage of his payloader, his bobcat and for bagged mulches. Attorney Avery said there will be no salt, fertilizers, pesticides or any other products that are prohibited in an Aquifer Protection Zone stored on the property. Mr. Drazen said fertilizer and pesticide work is subbed out to an East Hartford contractor.

In the back south corner, the applicant is proposing a retention basin as this is the area where water runs to on the property. They are not yet sure of the required design. A proposed driveway would be installed in the middle of the property and wind around to the back. Attorney Avery said future development of the property is proposed to have a larger metal building up in front for equipment storage.

Attorney Avery said they would be asking for a couple of waivers, including a reduction of the 25' setback on the side property lines to 15. He said the back area is buffered with pine trees and is well-screened right now. A possible second waiver would be the requirement for a paved driveway. The applicant is proposing a paved bituminous entrance, then changing over to a gravel driveway for the remainder to help handle some of the runoff. Ms. Farmer said this proposal will go before the Economic Development Commission next Wednesday.

Attorney Avery said the property has been perk tested and the engineer has told him it is ready to complete the B100 with the Health Department. Ms. Beebe asked if the applicant has access to the sewers on this property. Ms. Farmer said they do not, but sewers are nearby. Ms. Beebe also asked if the applicant would expect vehicles to be going to and from the property intermittently throughout the day. Attorney Avery said he expects just the applicants own truck, as needed.

Mr. Scavone asked where the closest residential neighbors were located and how much vegetation separated them. Mr. Drazen said he estimates there is about 40' between his rear property line and condominiums. He said there is about 25' to 30' of heavily treed vegetation, but would expect it might be necessary to add some evergreen plantings for the winter months when the leaves have fallen.

Mr. Drazen said he expects his long term goal to be to operate his business from his own property rather than renting storage space. Mr. Cardin asked how the PZC looks at hoop structures. Ms. Farmer said they don't address temporary structures in their regulations and would need to look at hoop structures as permanent. Attorney Avery said the proposed hoop structure, which has been left on the property without the fabric so the PZC can get an idea of its size, is a bit less than 13' in height. He said the contours from the property line to where the structure is sitting is about 8'. Mr. Drazen said his hoop structure is similar to one that is on the Colonial Gardens property.

Ms. Errickson asked Mr. Drazen how he plans to mitigate problems with bin-stored materials on windy days as well as runoff on the property. Attorney Avery said he would expect the topography of the property to help mitigate the wind situation. As for run-off, their engineer will need to address this.

Mr. Cardin asked what the enforcement issues were on this property. Ms. Farmer said the applicant had started a use without a site plan approval and also started a use as an accessory use. She said there were also some concerns about the hoop structure on the property, which required a building permit. She said the Cease and Desist order was issued, calling for Mr. Drazen to come in and obtain the appropriate permits. Attorney Avery said that addressing some of the aesthetic concerns, the natural topography of the land will hide a good portion of the hoop structure.

Mr. Cardin said speaking as an individual, he feels the hoop building is an appropriate way to get the equipment out of view. He said he would ideally like to see the application and site plan by April 15. Ms. Beebe said it would be helpful when they bring in a site plan to clearly delineate Phase I of the plan for them. Ms. Farmer added that it will be important to address drainage on the site. Ms. Errickson said her main concern is the view from the neighboring condominiums. Ms. Farmer noted there is a fairly extensive buffer between the properties.

## 5.2 **Joint Meeting with Design Advisory Board** –

Tolland Village Area – Mr. Cardin noted that he sent DAB members copies of the Visual Preference Study results from Planimetrics, and that the PZC also wants to do some modifications to their sign regulations. He said they have a developer that is interested in moving forward on residential development adjacent to the Mobil station, and the PZC is looking for comments and feedback on the Visual Preference Study results.

Vikas Nagardeolekar said this study goes a long way to capture the feel of Tolland and addresses all of the things they tend to look at in the Design Review such as green space, materials, and scale.

Mr. Cardin said the Tolland Village Area will be one of the densest residential areas in town with ultimate connectivity to parks, to the village on the other side of the street and even to the town center.

Mr. Byers said he has watched this process unfold in other small New England towns and finds clapboard buildings fit nicely into Tolland. He did have a concern about the amount of buffer area for hosting snowplow berms, saying they will need to be able to address what to do with large snow pile-ups. He said he liked the image of outside seating and would like to see the town foster an attitude for restaurant development of this type, other than just pizza houses. Ms. Beebe said density will be key for this type of development to be sustained. Mr. Byers said they will need signage to be able to draw outlying people to the Village area. Ms. Farmer said they have always been trying to juggle the signage issue to try to find a balance in drawing people in without becoming over-inundated with signage that becomes ineffective.

Mr. Cardin said a goal is to try to make the TVA a “destination point.” Mr. Byers said they will need to ask themselves what is the attraction? What will draw people in? Mr. Cardin said the residential component again will be important here. He cited the example of the Highland Park Market, which did not survive in the Evergreen Walk development, quite possibly because there is no residential component in that development.

Mr. Byers said the marsh area behind the Big Y has some remarkable ecological features. He said he envisioned that they could build trails and connectivity, even creating an opportunity for seniors to use golf carts to drive down to the Crandall Park area. Ms. Farmer said it would be good to have multi-use pathways for connectivity. Ms. Beebe said the pathways plan is something they have been working on for some time with limited success. She said it would be great to resurrect linkages with seniors in mind, possibly connecting the senior center with senior housing areas.

Ms. Beebe said integral to the TVA for a draw is some sort of public space for the arts or for performances. She said this would be a way to foster a café environment. She said there has sometimes been a negative backlash on the idea of drawing in “outsiders” to the community that is not always in the town’s best interest. Mr. Barrow concurred saying the Big Y as well as many businesses in town, including his own bike shop, could not survive if their customer base was from Tolland only.

Ms. Farmer said one of their goals is to provide more housing stock options for a variety of people and that they need to recognize that the I-84 interchange is a positive the town can benefit from. Mr. Scavone added that they want to capture the business of people who come off the highway for gas or to stretch their legs from a long driving trip. He said they need to capitalize on the location they have.

Mr. Byers asked how they would plan to deal with existing businesses in the TVA. Mr. Cardin said they heard loud and clear that they need to try to create the TVA around these existing businesses, meshing them together.

Sudhakar Nagardeolekar said he would be interested in the DAB having a preliminary discussion with the residential developer on housing design. Mr. Scavone said he has read in the Hartford Business Review that the State needs to speed up approvals of economic development projects if they want to survive in this new economic climate. He said they should not move too slowly.

Mr. Gorman asked what the developer’s priority is in housing types—town homes, condominiums, or single family? Ms. Farmer said Mike Taylor is probably focusing on town homes. Mr. Gorman agreed that he feels this is what many people—younger people, older people and also those in their 40’s and 50’s are looking for, especially condominiums.

Mr. Byers asked what the PZC sees as the “look” for Tolland. Mr. Cardin said he would expect they would want to lean heavily on the results of the Visual Preference Survey—with elements of colonial and Victorian structures. He said it is often much more easy to point out what is undesirable in development. Vikas Nagardeolekar said he would expect the DAB’s role to be to cue developers in on some things they might not have thought about such as considering scale, parking, and practicality.

Ms. Rogers said it would be nice to be able to park in one spot in the TVA and enjoy the area for a day. She said design features, walking trails, and other elements all create an environment and that the way you “sell” a vision is by creating a feeling and appealing to emotions.

Ms. Beebe said she would also like to see any development to tap into energy efficiencies and green building techniques. Ms. Rogers said there are multiple advantages in talking to

developers about green technologies. She said she is working on a LEED project in her firm and finds that publicity for LEED developments create a great deal of free advertising. Additionally, she said when you do a LEED development, you can apply for any number of awards which creates additional positive press, so that the LEED development is not just a benefit to the individual building but to everyone around it.

Other Design Issues - Moving into a discussion on sign regulations, Mr. Cardin said there is consensus on the Commission to change some components of the existing sign regulations to create guidelines that allow for more flexibility. For example, he said the existing regulations don't allow for logo colors in signage. There are also some size restrictions that could be loosened. He said they might also allow for businesses to use their own logos. He said they are asking the DAB to help them with visualizing guidelines, creating some "Do's" and "Don'ts."

Ms. Farmer said Coventry has some good design guidelines for signage designed in conjunction with the Green Valley Institute. She will provide a link to this for DAB members. Mr. Scavone said right now their sign regulations are a "one size fits all" and he would like to look at flexibility in regulations based on the particular zone a business is located in town. He said the distance a business is located from the road should also impact the size of the sign allowed.

Ms. Farmer said they are looking for receiving draft design guidelines for the TVA from their consultant in mid-February which they will need to get quickly to the Town Council so they can have 65 days to review them. There was consensus for the DAB to review these guidelines on February 17.

### **5.3 Tolland Village Area –**

Draft Schedule – The PZC reviewed the schedule of deliverables from Planimetrics. Mr. Cardin said he has been working with Linda, Heidi and Glenn and are planning for a March 7 Public Workshop date to unveil the computerized model and guidelines to the town. Ms. Farmer said it is an ambitious schedule but that Planimetrics has been very responsive throughout the process.

Draft Language for POCD Amendment – Ms. Farmer said the goal is to have this finalized by February 28 to send out the draft language for the POCD amendment.

Tolland Village Area Bubble Map – the Commission reviewed the map with the legend created by Planimetrics. Mr. Cardin confirmed that this map will become part of the amended Plan of Conservation and Development.

### **5.4 Sign Discussion –** Mr. Cardin said he expects to do adopt regulation changes in late spring or early summer. He asked Ms. Farmer if anyone has filed for a sandwich board permit. Ms. Farmer said not in a long time. She said Steve Lowrey was doing some research on signs and Simsbury has some good pre-approved sign regulations whereby if the applicant meets certain requirements, their sign is pre-approved. She said the Coventry sign regulations are similar. She said Avon has minimum letter sizes for readability, and has regulations geared toward distances from the street. She said Glastonbury regulates the number of businesses that can be put on a sign.

Ms. Farmer said it would be good to create language, possibly by special permit, which allows flexibility in sign size due to topography and other circumstances. Dave Barrow said he would also like to see something that allows some sort of signage “amnesty” allowing retailers to put out signs on their big days (possibly Thursday, Friday, Saturday) so long as they bring them back in at the end of the weekend.

6. **Approval of Minutes** – Approve minutes of January 10, 2011 Regular Meeting. Jack Scavone/Dave Barrow motion to approve the January 10, 2011 minutes. Mr. Cardin noted that the minutes cited Ms. Beebe saying that Big Y sells both alcohol and tobacco, when he had said it. There was some discussion that both Mr. Cardin and Ms. Beebe made that comment. A vote was taken on the motion. Mr. Cardin, Ms. Beebe, Mr. Scavone, and Mr. Barrow voted to approve. Ms. Errickson abstained. Motion passed.

7. **Activities & Updates** – None.

8. **Town Staff Comments**

8.1 **PZC Budget** – Fiscal year 2011/2012 Budget – update. Ms. Farmer said she is working on getting Steve O’Neill to provide a consultant estimate for budgeting.

8.2 **Report from Steve Lowrey** – Page Property, 431 Gehring Road and Re-Max signs – There were no comments on the memo from Steve Lowrey.

8.3 Town Council discussion on Tolland Village Area – A meeting to discuss this has not been scheduled.

8.4 Ms. Farmer said the Rockville Fish and Game Club has a sportsman’s club on Fish and Game Road and they want to add a shooting range. She said it is already a special permit use that is established on the property and she feels this request can be handled administratively. The Commission concurred.

9. **Announcements – Upcoming Meetings**

9.1 February 7, 2011, 7:30p.m. – Tolland Village Area Workshop with Planimetrics

10. **Reading of Correspondence**: None

11. **Communications and Petitions from Commission Members** – Ms. Errickson said there was a presentation on smart growth development in Windsor at the last CRCOG meeting. She said the Combustion Engineering/ABB site is being cleaned up and there are plans to add multi-family development, a bandshell, and a bird sanctuary. She said brownfields are being bought up by a developer in Windsor and there are plans to add a busway station, mixed use development, and walking trails, and preservation of open space.

Ms. Farmer said the Town is sending her to the National Planning Conference this April, which will be held in Boston.

Ms. Errickson said the Historical Society’s Antique Show is being held February 6 and encouraged everyone to attend.

12. **Public Participation**: None.

13. **Adjournment**: Jack Scavone/Marilee Beebe motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 9:40 p.m. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile  
Clerk