

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 28, 2011

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

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. The Commission discussed adding P&Z App. #818 to Item 3. Bill Eccles/Dave Barrow motion to add P&Z App. #818 to Item 3 on the Agenda. Motion was unanimously approved.
2. **Public Comment:** None.
3. **Public Hearing – P&Z App. #818 – Tolland Planning and Zoning Commission** – Proposed revisions to the Zoning & Subdivision Regulations concerning bonding to comply with Public Act 11-79. Ms. Farmer said Public Act 11-79 was proposed by the Home Builders Association, but it does not appear the Act will achieve what it had set out to do. She said this may be removed during the next legislative session, but until then, they need to determine how to handle the new Act, which went into effect October 1, in the short term. Ms. Farmer said there are two main differences between the requirements of the Act and how Tolland has been doing things. The first is that the Act does not allow the town to hold a maintenance bond of any type. The second is that the town would be required to accept surety bonds, which are difficult and costly to call for the funds. Right now the only pending application they have is the Gottier application.

Ms. Farmer said new information regarding implementation of Public Act 11-79 has been received and the Connecticut Planners will be holding a seminar in about 1-1/2 weeks on how to handle this. She said she will get the information on what is discussed. In the meantime, Attorney Conti has suggested withdrawing this application for now. The Commission will plan to add this item back to the agenda in another meeting or two.

John Hughes/Bill Eccles motion to withdraw P&Z App. #818. Motion was unanimously approved.

4. **Action on Public Hearing:** None.

## 5. Other Agenda Items

5.1 Discuss Route 30/74 and other NCZ zones. The Commission discussed how they might modify the Neighborhood Commercial Zone (NCZ) at Routes 30 and 74 and turn it into two zones. Ms. Farmer said she and Steve Lowrey discussed areas where parts of the NCZ zone in this area that abut other zones could be merged into those zones and she reviewed the Draft Zoning Map Revision that shows some possibilities. In some cases, parts of the NCZ zone could become part of a Commercial Industrial Zone or part of a Residential Design District. In another area a lot the town sold to CNC Software is in the Tolland Business Park, but could become part of the Commercial Industrial Zone.

Ms. Farmer said there are three places in town where zone boundaries do not follow property lines and one of them is in this NCZ zone on a portion of the Query and Bach properties. The Commission discussed some possibilities for redrawing the zone line; however, before redrawing any lines, they noted that they need to make some determinations on the impacts to Lots 31 and 61.

Mr. Eccles asked if the portion of the Tolland Business Park that might be merged with the CIZ would impact the house at 641 Old Post Road. Ms. Farmer noted that the topography would preclude a road being added to this area, and that portion of land was zoned as part of the TBP simply because it was part of the land that was purchased when the town bought the Tolland Business Park land. After some discussion, Ms. Farmer said she will bring back a revised map that addresses their discussion and which will also show topography.

The Commission discussed Article VIII – Draft changes to the NCZ. Ms. Farmer said she took the goal for the NCZ almost verbatim from the Plan of Conservation and Development. Ms. Beebe said they would need to determine how they would evaluate the goal of “promotes and maintains the economic vitality of the zone.” Ms. Farmer said from the Planners listserv, she inquired how they might cap or control the amount of multi-family housing allowed in the zone. She said if they keep the 10-acre minimum for allowable multi-family housing in the zone, then Richard Lee’s property would be the only property in this zone that would qualify. However, she said they may or may not want to consider allowing multi-family on smaller parcels. Ms. Errickson asked if the 10-acre minimum would preclude allowing cluster subdivisions in this area. Ms. Farmer said it would depend on the density that the Commission would allow on the property.

Ms. Beebe suggested rewording the fourth bullet in Section 8-1—Purpose—to read *Allow mixed uses, new single-family housing at existing densities or multi-family development.*

Under Section 8-3, Ms. Errickson suggested that Motor vehicle and motor vehicle trailer sales and rental special permit uses be limited to those existing at the time of adoption of the revised regulations. Mr. Barrow said he would want language adopted that made it clear that existing businesses could expand. He said they should keep the use as a Special Permit use so that the applicant would have to come before the Commission.

Under Section 8-2, Permitted Site Plan Uses, Item M, Printing, was removed as printing is now typically a basic retail goods and services type of business.

Under Section 8-3, the Commission also agreed to remove Item P, gasoline service stations. They also agreed to remove Item S (theaters) and instead add it to Item H in the Permitted Site Plan Uses.

The Commission reviewed Section 8-4, Requirements for all Uses in NCZ, noting that there is a need to expand the language in Item L and M to encourage shared parking and corresponding uses. Ms. Beebe suggested they look at front lot lines and lot coverage to see if it is similar to what they do in other zones. Mr. Barrow suggested that if an applicant added sidewalks for walkability, then they could allow smaller setbacks as a tradeoff. Ms. Beebe suggested that instead of requiring 50' setbacks, they could consider looking at 35' setbacks with a variance down to 25'. They also agreed to take a second look at the maximum square footage allowed for a retail business in the NCZ (currently 32,000 square feet) which appears too large for this area.

Ms. Farmer noted that Richard Lee's concept plan that he showed the WPCA called for ten units per developable acre. She reviewed some information from a density catalog that shows how various densities could look. Ms. Beebe said they will need to look at layouts of densities and how it might fit with a sense of place. She said the way buildings are sited on a property can make a big difference in how it looks. Ms. Farmer agreed saying it is not all about the number of units per acre as some layouts can look village-like while others can appear more urban. Ms. Beebe added that structures need to be organized around green space rather than around parking lots. Ms. Erickson said she would expect Mr. Lee's project would be evaluated similar to the TVA with staggered rooflines and other requirements. Ms. Beebe suggested they look at the concepts that were invoked when they were considering the Belvedere Ridge project to jog their memories.

5.2 Discuss Tech Zone and Visualization – Ms. Farmer said she talked to Heidi Samokar and Glenn Chalder at Planimetrics. She said the PZC has about \$2,100 left in their budget for consultant services this fiscal year and with that Planimetrics could provide conceptual site plan sketches for parcels in the Technology Zone to show development potential. Ms. Farmer said she also talked with George Mantak, chair of the Economic Development Commission, as they will want to be an integral part of the process. She said the EDC is meeting next Wednesday and will discuss this, and so the PZC could discuss this further at their December 12 meeting.

Ms. Farmer said they may need some consulting engineering services for the Gottier project as they expect to have an application submitted before the end of the year, and we don't yet have a new town engineer. Josh Freeman, Town Council liaison, said the Town Council discussed the possibility of sharing an engineer with other towns. Mr. Freeman said they need to express the importance of having a town engineer and that if they want to attract businesses to the Tech corridor, a full-time engineer will be needed. Ms. Beebe said they need an engineer who is vested in the job, is forward thinking, and who is familiar with Low Impact Development regulations.

5.3 Discuss PZC goals. The previous list from the last Commission was re-written with completed goals removed. The Commission also reviewed the Town Council's list. Ms. Beebe said they will need a strategy for using social media. Mr. Barrow said they should devise a policy for social media that addresses such things as blogging and Facebook and the appropriateness of such uses. Ms. Beebe agreed noting that they need to be cognizant that exparte communications, postings, or comments that are considered prejudicial could subject the Commission to legal proceedings.

Mr. Eccles said there are two issues to consider. First, they need to consider how the PZC can make the best use of social media, and second, how to establish a code of conduct. Mr. Freeman said the Town Council could take this as an action item and work with various boards on the issue. Dave Barrow suggested the PZC could divide up some of the responsibilities and Ms. Beebe said it might be good to establish subcommittees that look at various issues, social media being just one of them. Ms. Beebe suggested that Mr. Eccles might want to take the lead working with Mr. Freeman on social media issues. Mr. Eccles said they should first list divesting their workload as one of their goals.

Ms. Farmer noted that if they have a quorum to discuss any item, it constitutes a meeting—unless it is a caucus. The Commission also agreed that if they have any other goals that come to mind that should be on the list to send them to Ms. Farmer. Ms. Errickson said she would want to add a ridgeline discussion to their list. Ms. Farmer suggested they add the website to their goals list—including a discussion on how it can be improved and what content it should include. Ms. Beebe said she would also want to see a discussion on ways to better coordinate presentations of plans for public buildings to town departments, boards and commissions. Ms. Farmer said she is on a working group with CRCOG to develop Sustainable Land Use Development code.

6. **Approval of Minutes** – Approve minutes of November 14, 2011 Regular Meeting. It was noted that the minutes at the top of the page only refer to November, 2011 and that the date (November 14) needs to be specified. Sue Errickson/Dave Barrow motion to approve the minutes as amended. Motion was unanimously approved.
7. **Activities & Updates**: None.
8. **Town Staff Comments**: Ms. Farmer said that CRCOG received a \$4.2 million HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative grant and part of the grant is the development of sustainable land use code which she will be involved in. She said they will be working with Clarion Associates and three other consultants at a tentatively scheduled January 18 workshop. She said they will look at how they can implement sustainable land use code by requiring them in their regulations. Also, Ms. Farmer said she and Jennifer Usher had worked on an STP urban grant for funding to implement a portion of the corridor study for traffic calming at the approaches to the Tolland Green, and it appears they will get the grant. She said the CRCOG Transportation Cost Subcommittee voted to approve the funds and the full Transportation Committee will vote on December 12.

Ms. Farmer said the trees have been replanted in the median and along the street at Fieldstone Commons and she is in the process of returning to the developer their \$15,000. Ms. Farmer also discussed the Norwegian Woods sign. It improves safety and complies with our lighting regulations.

Ms. Farmer said Steve Lowrey used GIS to prepare maps for the storm repair and also for Neighbor Helping Neighbor day, which was very helpful. She added that the LID manual is on the town website under the Tolland Village Area. She said it can be downloaded from the website. She can also provide a paper copy if anyone needs one.

9. **Announcements – Upcoming Meetings:** No announcements.

10. **Reading of Correspondence:** None.

11. **Communications and Petitions from Commission Members** – CRCOG Report, Sue Errickson – Ms. Errickson said that CRCOG is looking at social media and they have also wrestled with a policy for their employees. Ms. Farmer said she will look into getting a copy of their policy.

Ms. Errickson said CRCOG is looking at developing a Sustainable Knowledge Corridor and they have \$1.53 billion for new transportation investments in this region, which encompasses the I-91 corridor to Springfield. The major concentrations will be on secondary institutions and there is a survey on the CRCOG website being done by Metroquest that she suggested members take. Ms. Beebe said she feels the Knowledge Corridor should extend to Boston if they want to be competitive. Ms. Farmer said she will email the link to everyone to take the survey.

12. **Public Participation:** None.

13. **Adjournment:** Dave Barrow/Bill Eccles motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 9:42p.m. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile  
Clerk