

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 8, 2010

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Farmer, AICP, Director of Planning & Community Development

1. **Call to Order:** Michael Cardin, Chair 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 **Road Acceptance** – Consider recommending acceptance of new roads to the Town Council.

- Chester Way
- Josiah Lane

Ms. Farmer said the roads are complete. They need a Draft Certificate of Title on one and may need to hold an additional bond on the other. She said the PZC can recommend acceptance. The Town Council cannot vote for acceptance until these items are taken care of. Mr. Hughes asked if Josiah Lane was a private road before. Ms. Farmer said it is part of a cluster subdivision that was always intended to be a town road.

Sue Errickson/Marilee Beebe motion to recommend acceptance of Chester Way and Josiah Lane as new town roads. Motion was unanimously approved.

5.2 **PZC Budget** – Discuss use of Professional Services funds. Ms. Farmer said Heidi Samokar and Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics have submitted a draft of the new scope of services for the Tolland Village area. They currently have just over \$21,000 in the Incentive Housing Zone account and have encumbered another \$2,500 for professional services from last year.

Ms. Farmer said in this year's budget they have \$2,000 designated for professional services. There was some discussion about what these funds are used for. Ms. Farmer clarified that if there is a request for a third party review as part of a public hearing, the applicant is generally required to pay for such things. She said they have not used their professional services funds quite as much as they used to and would expect they would probably be safe in using it now for Planimetrics. If so, this would bring them up to \$25,500. John Hughes questioned if it would not be wise to hold some of the money back in case

there was a need for it later in the fiscal year. Ms. Errickson asked Ms. Farmer if she anticipated needing any funds for professional services other than for Planimetrics. Ms. Farmer said it has been mentioned by the Town Manager that they may need to acquire more specific traffic information associated with the Tolland Village Area. She suggested they might want to cap the budget for Planimetrics at \$23,000 for now and review where they stand as they get closer to the end of the project.

Ms. Beebe noted that they will be discussing the quarry again in the spring. Ms. Farmer said this will be in June, which might end up incurring costs in the next fiscal year. Ms. Farmer also reviewed where the various costs of the scope from Planimetrics were being incurred. Mr. Cardin said the Commission does not have to make a decision tonight, but that his basic concern is that they do not get to a critical juncture and not be able to complete the work. He asked if there are any avenues for planning grants for writing regulations. Ms. Farmer noted that several Farmington River Valley towns have gotten \$50,000 grants to develop town centers that incorporate low impact development.

Ms. Farmer suggested that Mr. Cardin join her in talking with Ms. Samokar and Mr. Chalder about how they can keep costs down such as shifting some aspects of the work to be in-house. There was also consensus to revisit this at the beginning of the next calendar year.

5.3 Continued discussion on Sign Regulations. For background information, Ms. Farmer provided a handout about signage laws and where towns must draw the line between signs they can regulate and signs they cannot regulate. Mr. Cardin reviewed some of the concerns about current sign regulations with regard to color of signs, size, logos, types of lighting, architectural standards, and splitting the square footage of allowable signage when there are two frontages.

The Commission also discussed whether neon lighting was prohibited. Mr. Barrow said he understood the only neon lighting that was allowed was the standard "OPEN" sign that many businesses have. Other illuminated signs, it was understood, are allowed by special permit.

Mr. Cardin asked Ms. Farmer if she has had to deny a sign permit to anyone because it is not allowed under the regulations. Ms. Farmer said she has not, although the reality is that some people will come in and request a sign permit while others will simply put up a sign. She said Star Hill Family Athletic Center has brought up the topic of having an off-premise sign directing people to their location, but it has not been discussed further. Ms. Errickson said she feels the Business Park should have better signage. It was noted that there was a directory sign in the Business Park previously but a truck backed into it and knocked it down. It has not yet been reinstalled as the Economic Development Commission feels it was not the best sign to begin with. Ms. Beebe suggested taking the idea of the effective directional sign that is at Colonial Square and having something similar installed in the town Right of Way at the Business Park.

Mr. Cardin suggested that he and Ms. Farmer talk with Economic Development Commission Chair George Mantak about what kind of signage would work. Mr. Scavone said that the more places they can encourage as destination places, the better as people can use their GPS to get to the destination, then refer to a directory sign to find the specific business they are looking for. Ms. Farmer suggested that Art's Signs might be able to provide some recommendations as well and she will follow up with them.

5.4 Discuss and approve 2011 PZC meeting schedule. The Commission checked the proposed dates against holidays and religious events for possible conflicts. Sue Errickson/Jack Scavone motion to accept the proposed 2011 PZC meeting schedule. Motion was unanimously approved.

6. **Approval of Minutes** – Approve minutes of October 25, 2010 Regular Meeting. Jack Scavone/Sue Errickson motion to approve the October 25, 2010 Regular Meeting minutes. Motion was unanimously approved.

7. **Activities & Updates**

7.1 Update on Geothermal Project at Town Hall – Ms. Farmer distributed a copy of the Powerpoint presentation the Energy Task Force will be giving to the Town Council tomorrow evening. She said the Town Manager has mentioned to staff concerns about air quality in the building right now and that the system is old with a potential for breaking down. She said Beverly Bellody secured a grant for testing for geothermal, and if the Town Council decides to replace the HVAC, they would have to go to referendum.

8. **Town Staff Comments** – Ms. Farmer said the Town Council will be having a discussion tomorrow night on a property maintenance code, and that there will likely be a discussion about who would be responsible for enforcing any such code.

Ms. Farmer said that Star Hill Family Athletic Center originally wanted to connect their two buildings but were informed they needed to maintain a 60’ separating distance to meet building code. They are proposing installing a chain link fence on either side between the two buildings to channel people from one building to the other, with gates on them if there was a need to bring in a vehicle. Mr. Cardin said he thought a chain link fence would be unattractive. Mr. Scavone asked if a covered walkway could be installed, but Ms. Farmer said the Building Official has said previously this could not be done. There was consensus to ask the owners of Star Hill to come in for a site plan review.

Ms. Farmer reviewed the various handouts in Commissioners packets including pre- and post-blast testing reports at the quarry, a July 7, 2010 memo “Schofield Announces Land for Simsbury,” a handout on “How to create Streamside Buffer Gardens,” and the “Backyard Water Resources Guide.” She also provided an updated Tolland Properties Purchased with Open Space Funds handout.

9. **Announcements – Upcoming Meetings**

9.1 **Tolland Village Area Presentation** – Meeting with Town Council, Board of Education, and Tolland Economic & Community Development Corporation – Monday, November 15, 2010 at 7:30p.m. at the Lodge at Crandall Park, 124 Cider Mill Road.

9.2 **Public Presentation of the Tolland Village Area with Planimetrics** – Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 7:30p.m. at the Lodge at Crandall Park, 124 Cider Mill Road.

9.3 **PZC Regular Meeting for Monday, November 22, 2010** – is cancelled.

10. **Reading of Correspondence** – None.

11. **Communications and Petitions from Commission Members** – Ms. Errickson asked if the State Police will be given a heads up when they discuss whether to allow hookah lounges as a special permit in the Gateway Design District. Ms. Farmer said Beverly Bellody and the Human Services Department are addressing this in conjunction with the State Police.

Ms. Errickson said they had a good turnout at the November 4 Tolland Village Area presentation. She said Steve Williams had expressed concern because he had Gardner and Peterson do some mapping of his property and they found wetlands would be running through the middle of the area where the hotel is proposed. He also expressed concern that he would be asked to bear the burden of putting in the infrastructure for the Tolland Village Area. Ms. Errickson said she was impressed by the comments made by people who attended the meeting and that they understood the concept of mixed use and the need for fewer curb cuts and an increased population to support the businesses. She said there were some concerns about density of population but one resident had suggested the proposed density should be increased. She said there were also concerns expressed about noise from the highway and the need for a mini-green area for community gathering.

12. **Public Participation** – None.

13. **Adjournment** – Marilee Beebe/Jack Scavone motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 8:48p.m. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile
Clerk