

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON  
JANUARY 19, 2016

The Planning & Zoning Commission of the Town of Southington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at the Municipal Center Assembly Room, 196 North Main Street, Southington, CT. Chairman Michael DeSanto called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The following Commissioners were in attendance:

Paul Chaplinsky	James Sinclair
Jennifer Clock	James Morelli
Susan Locks	James Macchio
Michael DeSanto, Chair	

Alternates: Ted Cabata

Ex-Officio: Keith Hayden, Director of Public Works  
Robert A. Phillips, Director of Planning &  
Community Development  
Mark J. Sciota, Deputy Town Mgr/Town Attorney

Absent: Kevin Clements & Joe Coviello, Alternates

A quorum was determined.

Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited by everyone in attendance.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATE**

The Chair will have a name for the next meeting.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular meeting of January 5, 2016

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to approve. Mr. Macchio seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**6. BUSINESS MEETING**

**A. Beacon Electric, Inc., site plan application to construct 7,500 sf industrial building, property located at 306 Clark Street,**

**owned by D & B at Clark, LLC, in an I-1 zone, SPR #1709, tabled from January 5**

Sev Bovino, Planner with Kratzert, Jones & Associated presented the application. The proposal is for a 7,500 sf industrial building. We received staff comments and responded in writing. All comments have been taken care of.

The one issue last time was the sidewalk waiver that Mr. Chaplinsky asked for an opportunity to go look at the site. It's about 130 ft of frontage. There's no sidewalks in the neighborhood. There is an obstruction - heading south there is a ditch and a structure there that the sidewalk cannot be taken across. Also, there are a couple of CL&P poles with major transformers which would be very expensive to relocate.

Under Section 9-03.9C of the regulations, 2, 3 & 5, we have the opportunity to ask for a waiver. We hope the commission considers that waiver.

Also, we've provided the building elevation for your review. It's 24 feet high, brick with insulated panels to the front of the building and all around the building.

Showed the street elevation. Brick treatment and insulated panels the rest of the way with windows and dormers, etc cetera.

The side has the same paneling and the dormers and windows. We have an overhead door with a service door. There could be more than one overhead door but that is the look of the building.

There'll be 10 to 12 employees overall.

Mr. Phillips advised this is ready for action. The waiver on the sidewalk has to be your decision.

There are two sections of the regulations that are kind of conflicting as far as sidewalk requirement, but given that, it's better to get the waiver and do it that way.

We have one stipulation of approval if you so desire and that would be final approval from the engineering department on the storm water calculations.

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to waive the sidewalks as there is nothing in the area at all and it would be a hardship on the applicant. Ms. Locks seconded.

Mr. Phillips added that when looking at the aerial imagery, he couldn't find an existing sidewalk about a quarter mile in any direction.

Motion passed 6 to 1 with Mr. Chaplinsky opposed.

Mr. Sinclair noted everything is in order so he will make a motion to approve as suggested by Mr. Phillips. Mr. Chaplinsky seconded as did Mr. Macchio. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

**B. Request for 5 year extension of site plan approval, 1198 West Street, SPR #1444, tabled from January 5**

Mr. Phillips advised this is ready for action.

Mr. Chaplinsky stated he had requested the table to take a look at the site. Upon review, it seems there is some outside storage and some question as to whether there is previous approval or any specific language around outside storage for this specific site plan. I'll be asking for a table on this so staff can go out and take a look and determine if there are any improvements that need to be made per the site plan before considering site plan.

Mr. Sinclair asked if the applicant knew there were questions about this by the commission. Mr. Phillips said he had to look at the Minutes to refresh his memory. It was made clear Mr. Chaplinsky wanted to look at the site.

Attorney Sciota clarified the request: It is to make sure before the extension is granted that the requirements put on for the original site plan, specifically some landscaping and some other aspects had been accomplished before giving the 5 year extension. I think it is an appropriate check and there is still time.

Discussion.

Mr. Phillips clarified: If we inspect it and can report there is no inconsistencies with the approval and everything seems to be working the way it is supposed to be, we wouldn't be asking them to come in. But if there is an issue, we may want to have them come in.

Mr. Chaplinsky noted specifically around screening and outside storage.

Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to table. Ms. Clock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**C 8-24 referral for the purchase of Lot 2, Upson Place for Open Space (Map 19, Parcel 2) MR #504)**

Attorney Sciota explained this is a request from the town council. Ms. Clock is your representative to the open space committee and she can add if she wishes. But for several weeks, months and sometimes years, the open space committee has been reviewing several properties. This is on Upson Place.

As you recall, across the street, the town purchased property probably this summer. The same family. This is another purchase for \$420,000. The vast majority is in Southington but there is 3 acres in Cheshire. The town did an appraisal on the property and the property owner agreed to the town's appraisal --- which doesn't happen very often. That's \$420,000. The town has that in its open space account. We're asking for a favorable 8-24 on that and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

The total acreage is 17 and 3 are in Cheshire. We have requested under the state statute of Cheshire that we be taken off the tax rolls. I don't see a problem with Cheshire waiving that.

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to send back a favorable 8-24 to the Council. Ms. Clock seconded. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

**D. 8-24 referral for the purchase of 1081 East Street for Open Space MR #505**

Attorney Sciota explained through the open space committee, the town applied for a grant for this parcel. It is 19 acres. The family is retaining approximately 2 acres. Seventeen to the town. The purchase price is \$650,000. Awarding of the grant of \$312,000, the net price to the town is \$338,000. We are hoping for a favorable recommendation.

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to send back a favorable 8-24 to the council. Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

**E. 8-24 referral for abandonment of parcel on Belrose Avenue  
(Map 088, Parcel 150) MR #506**

Attorney Sciota noted this parcel is .19 acres of land. It came to us through the property owners on both sides as they were complaining about trees not being kept up and they were asking the town to do some work on the property.

In exchange, we said it would be better if we abandon the property and you can share half/half. They agreed to do and they've submitted written documentation.

We submitted their request to all town departments, including the BOE, and nobody has any objection to the town abandoning this property.

How it works is one half goes to the property owner to the side and the other half goes to the property owner on the other side.

Discussion on how the town got the property in the first place.

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to send back a favorable 8-24 to the council. Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

**F. Release of \$11,000 E & S bond, Sign Prop, 60 Westfield Drive, SPR A#1659**

Ready for action. Mr. Sinclair made a motion to approve which Mr. Macchio seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**G. Release of \$12,000 PI bond, Sign Pro, 60 Westfield Drive, SPR #1659**

Ready for action. Mr. Macchio so moved the motion which Mr. Sinclair seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**H. Release of \$ 35,000 Bond in Lieu of Site Plan Compliance, Sign Pro, 60 Westfield Drive SPR #1659**

Ready for action. Mr. Macchio so moved the motion. Mr. Sinclair seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**I. Release of \$24,000 Maintenance Bond, Farmstead Road Extension, Sorbello Estates S#1269**

Ready for action. Mr. Sinclair so moved the motion which Mr. Macchio seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**J. Release of \$3,000 trailer bond, Walmart, 235 Queen Street  
SPR #1210.4**

Ready for action. Mr. Macchio so moved the motion which Mr. Sinclair seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**K. Call \$3,800 Public Improvement bond - 1157 Meriden  
Waterbury Road SPR #1108**

Mr. Phillips explained this has to do with an approval of about 20 years ago. Late 1990's. It was for a sidewalk installation which they never did. The property owner doesn't want to put the sidewalk in so essentially he authorized us to call the bond. It's about 130 lf. The plans show it 4 ft wide but it is a state highway so it will be 5 feet wide. By estimation working with engineering at \$7.50/sf, we're looking at about \$4,875 for that length. The bond is 3,800, so the town will have to cover the difference of about 1,000.

Attorney Sciota stated there is money in our sidewalk fund to cover that.

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to call the bond. Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

**7. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**(Refer to video for the approximate 30 minute presentation.)**

Glenn Chalder, from Planametrics is here to talk about the POCD which he has been working on for over a year now, introduced Mr. Phillips. He has been working with the subcommittee that Jen Clock has chaired. He'll go through the draft plan.

Ms. Clock thanked Glenn and Rob for all of their hard work. They spent a lot of time on this and thank you very much.

Glenn Chalder reviewed the process the POCD has taken since the public meeting in the fall of 2014. We have worked to prepare a draft plan which we think reflects the issues Southington is facing today and is likely to face over the next ten years.

Based on our work, we've organized the plan into five main components. Besides the introduction and conclusion, the three main elements are:

(1) Conservation Strategies

Things we want to try to protect and preserve in the community. The plan talks about natural resource, open space and some things you've talked about tonight.

(2) Development strategies

Recommendations and strategies for the commission and the community in terms of how to guide growth or change in the community in the future. It deals with downtown, the villages, residential development, economic development, major corridors (West Street, Queen Street) and provide strategies for future growth there.

(3) Infrastructure strategies.

This is the services and facilities that Southington might want in the future in terms of enhancing the quality of life and it includes things like transportation, community facilities, utilities, et cetera.

This is presented before you for your review and consideration as a POCD for Southington.

He went over the provisions of state law stating this document has a ten year life. It must be adopted by August 1, 2016. Once we have adopted the plan, we get ten more years for the plan in terms of its effectiveness in the future.

My goal and the recommendation of the steering committee is present the plan to you, to work through this plan with you, to mold it and shape it in ways that might be appropriate for the community and move towards a public hearing on adoption. I urge you to get that done by August 1<sup>st</sup> so we don't fall off the state deadline.

I'm here tonight to answer questions or walk you through the plan or just talk on how to proceed at this point.

Discussion of the time line. Discussion on the POCD with Glenn has been scheduled for the second meeting of the planning & zoning commission of each month to move forward.

Mr. Chalder presented the following operating guidelines:

- statutes require a 65 day notice period from the date you decide to schedule a public hearing. I urge you not to schedule a public hearing in July as that is vacation time. The latest date we might want to have the public hearing would be June which would mean pulling the trigger in April. Then it gets referred to the council for their input and the regional planning agency for their input.

Attorney Sciota suggested the Town Council hold their public hearing sometime in June, also.

Mr. Chalder reminded everyone the statutes don't require a public hearing by the Council and it is an option if they choose to take it. Attorney Sciota said when it was presented to them they talked about the public hearing aspect of it. My gut reaction is they'll have a public hearing. The public hearing is mandatory here and discretionary at the Council.

Discussion.

A question and answer period was entertained.

Mr. Chaplinsky brought up solar panels. There is mention about renewable energy in here in the sustainability section. Were there any discussions around different renewable energy sources or how zoning regulations should be adapted or how other communities have handled it to look forward and be progressive on that?

Mr. Chalder noted the plan advocates for forward thinking and being sustainable and resilient. See Page 45 of the plan.

Discussion.

The plan advocates for the commission to move in that direction and should you craft a regulation revision, we would find language in the plan and state the regulation is consistent with the POCD. This is a much more strategic plan.

Discussion.

Refer to the Implementation Section at the back of the plan (Page 120) with a number of recommendations.

Discussion.

This is an advisory document and not like a regulation. It's to guide you in a direction.

Discussion.

Discussion of the CB zone. It is important we pay attention to the CB zone noted Mr. Chaplinsky as well as the B zone down in the center of town. Look to see if our zoning is properly aligned to where we think things are going with the linear trail being converted from an active railroad to something with more pedestrian walkways. Are our zones down there appropriate for what we think is going to happen? We should do that sooner or later, I think, added Mr. Chaplinsky, and not wait until this POCD is voted on.

Discussion of CB zone vs B zone. There is more opportunities along the linear trail for those types of discussions and possible zones changes, continued Mr. Chaplinsky. Sooner than later is an important thing.

Ms. Clock referred to the implementation plan at the end. This difference between this plan and the last plan is the plan of implementation sets it apart. The suggestion is to have an implementation committee of people especially to use this as a guide. The committee will take the guidance and then bring the suggestions over to the continuing improvement committee to start hammering out our regulations, et cetera. It will be an organized process rather than here is the plan.

Discussion.

Mr. Chaplinsky brought up design review boards/committees. Discussion followed with Mr. Chalder giving his thoughts as a result of his planning experiences throughout the years.

Ways to do design review:

- (1) Have design guidelines in your regulations.
- (2) Design review committee which provides recommendations.
- (3) A Village District.

Mr. Chalder noted in the plan, the design review board/committee was considered. Very much debate about it. He is a plan of design review and maybe the first step is having some basic design guidelines in the regulations.

Discussion.

It Mr. Chalder pointed out it might be worth it to modify Action Step #2 which says investigate establishing a design review board and a town wide review process for all uses except one to four family

residential homes. Listening to this discussion tonight, maybe that is a compound thought and it should be broken into two pieces and sequence them.

Discussion.

The Chair brought up Page 10, the 55 and up projections.  
Discussion.

Is there eventually going to be a need for the 55+ communities to have the age restriction lifted because they are not useful anymore? Will that hurt our services; bring more students to the schools? We have to be in check with this kind of forward thinking.

Discussion.

We do need be mindful that this needs to be monitored in the future and think about the demographics and how this is going to unfold in the market place overall, pointed out Mr. Chalder.

Discussion.

Page 12 was discussed as to the percent of multi-family homes and the percent owner occupied. There is no target number to strive for to achieve the percentage of owner occupancy. A diverse range of housing styles and types that appeal to be people and owner occupancy is a tremendous advantage as to the way the tax code treats it.

Southington has a very diverse housing stock which is one of its strengths.

Affordable housing percentage, 5.7%, in Southington was discussed. Mr. Chalder pointed out you need to get your numbers up so you can have a four year moratorium. It can be done; the key is to try to find ways to incorporate diverse housing within the community. Downtown is dramatically changed in the last 10 years. This could be a way to reinvigorate the downtown with the diverse housing stock and meet the affordable housing goals and get a moratorium. I wouldn't advocate managing by the number. How to control it before it controls you is the challenge.

Discussion on how to proceed with the commission on this POCD in the next few meetings.

The Chair said the best way to do it is for all of us to read it, know it, learn it, talk to constituents about it. Any questions bring to the forefront. Each month at one of our meetings, Glenn will be

here to answer questions. Cross the t's and dot the I's to get this out to public hearing, send it out and get it implemented.

The Chair brought up parking. We have to change the mindset in Southington that you're not always going to be able to park your car 4' from the business you want to go into. Sometimes you've got to park and walk a few blocks. Walking is passive, active recreation. It's exercise, good for you.

The Chair continued he didn't believe Southington has a huge parking problem. We have parking but it is just not as accessible as folks would like.

Any revisions you think we should make?

Mr. Chalder said one of the key recommendations overall is the parking demand and supply are pretty close to each other in terms of what you would expect based on the uses downtown. It is the location of the parking that causes people some discomfort. I think one of the key recommendations in the plan overall is on Page 52. It talks about the possibility of a charette (sp) type process for downtown. It's sort of an intensive design based exercise where people get a chance to envision their downtown in the future. Explained.

Downtown Southington is really a huge opportunity for the community. I think this plan would really help downtown continue on its trajectory and get bigger and stronger over time. Parking is one of them.

Discussion.

Ms. Clock loved the idea of the charette (sp). Explained the benefit of this exercise in preserving Southington's character and make sure we stay as the Southington we want to be. Everyone's opinion is important and it matters.

This plan is what Southington wants and if we can continue these types of open workshops or working groups, I think that would be an awesome form of government, continued Ms. Clock.

Have a discussion with your constituents about the plan and talk to them to change their view on parking. There is enough parking downtown. Explained there is a place to park but it is not as close as you want it.

Talk about open space with them. Refer to the video on the website. We have 550+ acres of open space.

These discussions are imported noted Ms. Clock as it only adds to the importance of this plan and how great we can make the town.

Talk about development, as well. Residential and industrial. How do we want to build Southington? That's what we're working on.

Mr. Chaplinsky spoke about parking, as well. Center Street and Liberty Street intersection reconfiguration was discussed as adding about 30 additional spots. Riccio Way parking with a small reconfiguration would add another 20 something spots. Was the idea of the reconfiguration included in the plan? Mr. Chalder referred to Page 51 of the plan.

Discussion.

Additional discussion ideas for the parking downtown. The Bank of America lot was specifically discussed as being "uncomfortable" and "inconvenient" by Mr. Chalder.

The next meeting is February 16<sup>th</sup> for discussion on the POCD. The Chair encouraged the commission to read this plan and reread it. If we could focus in on the first two sections suggested Mr. Chalder. Chapters 1 thru 3 and Chapters 4-7. If we can through those and into development strategies, that would be great. We are looking for possible refinements to the plan as our goal.

Discussion of the timeframes again.

A possible strategy suggested by Mr. Chalder:

- Tonight we've done an introduction.
- In February, the first half of the plan.
- In March, the second half of the plan.

At that point in time, possible changes would be made to the plan. When you are comfortable with the plan and modifications suggested, let's make the changes and schedule the public hearing for the end of May or beginning of June. That would be the planning & zoning commission's public hearing.

- 65 days from when I'm able to produce the draft Plan with the changes, we can schedule the hearing date. Let's say the first

meeting in June is the 7<sup>th</sup>. We decide we'll do it June 5=7<sup>th</sup> and we can roll it over to the second meeting if we have to, close the hearing and act the second night.

Pull the trigger in March. The 65 day clock starts to tick. We refer the plan to the Council and the regional planning agency.

The council then decides to have a public hearing or not. They have their meeting, do any recommendations, it comes back and you have the final public hearing in June.

Mr. Chalder said the 65 day window for the referral has strings attached to it. The council acts as the legislative body in Southington. They get to review the document in the 65 day window. If they send back a negative referral on any portion of the plan, the commission would take that into consideration as part of the public hearing but the statutes say a negative referral needs a two thirds vote on the commission to override.

Discussion.

**8. ITEMS TO SCHEDULE FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

A. Frank Fragola and Faith Baptist church, proposing to change the zone from R-80 to R-12, 243 Laning Street and parcel to the East (Map 170, Parcels 68 and 69) ZC#552. February 2

B. Steven Gialelis, special permit application to construct a 30 x 50 - 7 bay detached garage, 270 Frost Street, SPU #560, February 2

C. Subdivision Regulation amendment, Section 6- Open Space SA#25, February 2

All will be heard on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**9. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

Mr. Phillips had none for this meeting.

**10. RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS**

1. Lovley Development for site plan for a new club house at 300 Welch Road. It has to do with the 90-something lot subdivision approved.

2. Steve Gialetelis, SPU #560.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Sinclair made a motion to adjourn which Mr. Chaplinsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 o'clock, p.m.)