

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
TOWN OF SOUTHTON

SEPTEMBER 18, 2018

The Planning & Zoning Commission of the Town of Southington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at the John Weichsel Municipal Center Assembly Room, 196 North Main Street, Southington, CT. Michael DeSanto, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

The following Commissioners were in attendance:

Paul Chaplinsky	Jennifer Clock
James Morelli	Susan Locks
Dagmara Scalise	Robert Hammersley
Michael DeSanto, Chair	

Alternates: Joe Coviello, Peter Santago & Ted Cabata

Ex-Officio: Robert Phillips, Director of Planning & Community Development
James Grappone, Assistant Town Engineer

(Note: Resignation received from Alternate Ross Hart due to his employment.)

A quorum was determined.

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

MICHAEL DELSANTO, Chair, presiding:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular meeting of September 4, 2018

Ms. Locks made a motion to approve as presented. Ms. Clock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote with Mr. Hammersley abstaining.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. AHCO, LLC, special permit application for two building on one parcel, 72 Industrial Drive, in an I-1 zone (SPU #610)

Stephen Giudice, with the office of Harry Cole & Son, 876 South Main Street in Plantsville. I'm here tonight on behalf of the AHCO, LLC and with Mr. Phillip Robotham who is the applicant and the owner of Affordable Conveyor Systems in Bristol.

This property is 72 Industrial Drive. It's also known as Map 441, Parcel 06. It's a 2.1-acre piece of property. An interior lot located off Industrial Drive, which is a subdivision this commission approved approximately ten years and we are slowly developing each parcel. This is the latest property to come before you.

The topography, this property slopes from west to east. There is an existing building here, a vacant parcel and residential properties to the north and to the west of our property (indicated on the screen.)

The reason we are here tonight is due to Section 1-09, principle buildings. This section of the regulation requires a special permit procedure for any parcels that have more than one principle building. Because we are proposing two buildings that will have all utilities, water, sewer, electricity. Regulations require us to submit this special permit application.

This is not here for necessarily the use, but more the multiple principle buildings on the property.

Looking at this property, we have a larger section to north and a smaller section to the south --- kind of a bow tie shape. It lends well to what we are proposing.

The larger building is a 9600-sf building. That's the primary building. This is going to be the operation of Affordable Conveyor Systems. They'll be moving here from Bristol. It is basically a servicing company and he does some light fabrication and some light assembly but the site will be kept. No outdoor storage proposed. The building is designed to allow him to bring his trucks into the building through the back and then back out in the morning.

The second building is divided into what we consider an industrial condominium use. Hoping to have some small trades come in and lease out portions of the building.

Parking for each building was explained.

Sewer and water run up to each building.

Stormwater management is through some grass swales behind the buildings and some catch basins and drainage runs out into Industrial Drive which then goes into a detention basin designed as part of the entire subdivision.

We felt the best use of this site was two separate buildings instead of trying to do a larger building on one part of the property or do a continuous thin building. We thought this worked best for the applicant due to the property's unusual configuration.

Under the special permit process, there are certain things you have to consider:

- Is it consistent with the purpose? And, it is our opinion this is consistent with the orderly development and the regulations. We believe the proposed buildings are in harmony with the surrounding properties and we think the structures are suitable for the proposed use. These are relatively clean, light uses. We think this will fit right in with what is happening up there.

This site is going to be lower than the properties behind. We had to drop the property to make the site work. There will be a slope in this area (indicating) approximately 8 to 10 ft. We are also proposing a landscaped berm along the west and northerly properties.

Your regulations require a 35 ft landscaped buffer along the residential zone. We have incorporated that into our plans.

There are a lot of thing in the special permit section I could go through and try to address, but I think that with this use it's a little different than some of the more intense applications. It's our opinion the lot is sufficient size to house the two buildings, the roads are substantially adequate to provide access for emergency vehicles to the property. Because of the residential use, we think that the changing of the grade and then the landscaping will protect the abutting properties from our use.

We are here for any questions.

Ms. Clock asked for detail on the buffer. Mr. Giudice said they have staggered evergreen pine trees up and down the buffer and supplemented that with smaller shrubs. Explained it will take a couple of years to establish but it should be a good protection.

(Those speaking in favor of the application)

None.

(Those speaking against the application)

(1) Matt D'Angelo, 330 Townline Road. I border the property. He spoke about the landscaping. There are 25 ft pine trees. They're going to destroy those and my property is right behind that property. He showed where his property is on the screen.

Discussion.

I don't want this encroaching on my property and I don't want to hear trucks going in and out all night. I don't know what or how they're building it. Hours of operation?

That'll do it.

(2) Dan Badgley, 314 Townline Road. He spoke about the landscaping. He showed where his property is on the screen. I want what is there to stay there and add some additional. His concern is he is closer to where they're building the building.

Discussion.

(Rebuttal)

Mr. Giudice said we do have to do some clearing on this property to make it work from a grade perspective. We can increase the landscaping along the northerly boundary and maybe put in some larger white pines or more white pines to replace what we are taking down. We do need to do grading there. Explained.

The Chair reiterated that procedurally we are here tonight about the two buildings on this lot. The discussion of the trees and buffers is more site plan issues. We shouldn't make decisions on this application with regard to trees. That discussion will be had under site plan.

Mr. Giudice said his client wants to be a good neighbor. The building to the north could be built without the public hearing. Hearing what the neighbors have to say, we can try to address those issues and help with their concerns for sure.

Hours of operation: Usually 7:00 am to 5:00 or 6:00 pm. Monday thru Friday. Comes in Saturday mornings. There could be an emergency where he has to come in and grab the van. No large vehicles or tractor trailers coming on the site late hours or anything like that. Deliveries are during a weekday. No retail component.

Ms. Scalise asked about the rationale for two buildings versus the one. Mr. Giudice said two different uses are proposed for the buildings. Portable Conveyor Systems would operate out of the entire northerly building. The southerly building would be leased to trade contractors. Explained.

The configuration of the lot, in order to make turns in/out of the facility, if we have one large building it is difficult with the turning movement for vehicles. We wanted to have his operation separate from the other building.

So, it is turning radius, shape of the parcel and the to different components of the two buildings.

Discussion of the trees discussed previously. The building is about 38 ft off the property line. We are proposing drainage around the building. We can make some improvements in that area, if necessary.

The site plan is not ready for approval tonight.

Discussion about whether or not to close the public hearing at this time.

Mr. Giudice wanted on the record that we will increase the landscaping requirements on the boundary line.

The Chair closed the public hearing at this time.

B. Eric Rathburn, special permit application for parent/grandparent apartment, 88 Hillside Avenue, in an R-12 zone, (SPU #611)

Eric Rathburn, 88 Hillside Avenue, applicant presented. He stated he currently has an attached 24 by 24 garage that I'd like to convert into an in-law apartment for my mother. She's widowed and living in Newington currently.

It has the standard living room, small kitchen, bathroom, washroom, so forth. The plan of it was to convert that area since it was being used as a garage, anyway. It was just a storage area for the kids' stuff. We should use it for something useful.

Access into the unit was discussed. It is externally accessible. We will expand our kitchen and there is no common area. You walk into the kitchen and pivot to my mother's apartment. She has her own door she can shut if the kids get too loud.

(Those speaking in favor of the application)

None.

(Those speaking against the application)

None.

The Chair closed the public hearing at this time.

C. Michele Krom, special permit application for garage in excess of 3 spaces, 44 Rochela Drive, in an R-40 zone, (SPU #612)

Michele Krom, 44 Rochela Drive, Southington, presented. We are looking to build a two-car garage/pool house. We recently put an inground pool in our yard and before we were able to do a patio we'd like to put a garage, kind of bathroom, for easy access for the kids in/out. A little like lean-to and put table and chairs and then do the patio to the garage. It's part of a multi-phase project to kind of help improve our property, create our own backyard oasis.

One of the key reasons for doing a garage is we have Toll Brothers construction and we did a two-car garage bay and we didn't elect to do an expanded or a larger garage. My Pilot I cannot fit into the garage and I'd like to be able to park my car in the winter and not have to clean off the snow.

There are some concerns because we started a business two years ago and we've grown quickly. We've been looking for ---we own Apple Valley Irrigation here in town. We've been looking for property lease space since the beginning of the year since we launched in the spring. We've been struggling to find space to get out quickly. We've grown faster than we expected.

We were able to sign a Purchase Contract on a unit on Spring Street. We're excited we will be moving very soon. We're working with our lender for financing and a closing date. That'll help eliminate any concerns.

For the garage, we're trying to improve the property and also have it be functional and create that oasis we're looking for. We have designed it to be aesthetically pleasing and to look as though it were built as part of the original house. I have color photos which the commission already has.

We're looking to use the same curved window we have in the front of the house to match to be sure it looks nice. It will not only increase our property value and functionality but help to increase the property values of those nearby us as well.

The second story is just for storage, more for aesthetics.

Mr. Phillips clarified you can't have a second story. You can only have 1.5 story, basically. That's defined by the building department looking closely at this to be sure what we're looking at is not going

to be a situation we have to deal with. The elevations here are representative of what would be allowed for 1.5 stories and there is no concern with what was presented.

Matthew Krom added comments, as well.

(Those speaking in favor of the application)

None.

(Those speaking against the application)

(1) John O'Connor, 44 Blotcher Farms Place. An abutter. I submitted written comments to the town we wanted to be part of the meeting.

Two objections: The main objection is the building --- we are shoehorning in a building that is the size of a small starter home onto a half-acre lot. About 1300 sf, story and a half.

Use of the building because of the business is a concern.

And, the biggest concern is it does not match the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Explained the rooflines of the houses in the neighborhood and this roofline is simple. Its shoe horned into this lot. I think it is going to look terrible.

Discussion of the lot sizes. It is a cluster subdivision.

Question about it meeting the side line requirements.

(2) Tony Morrison, 49 Blotcher Farm Place. Next door to Mr. O'Connor. The building is totally out of scale for the neighborhood. We bought houses with the assumption that the aesthetics would be kept and this would destroy that. He's cramming an extra building into a space it was never designed for.

The houses were all built with side garages. We will have here a garage that faces the road. It'll change the look of that particular road quite dramatically.

This is a small development of 30 houses. We're surrounded by other developments built at different times that also have an aesthetic. If you drive around there are no structures like this within a 4 sq. Mi. radius.

It will harm the property values.

(3) Robert Janetty, 160 Rochella. I am not so much against the building as I am what the purpose of the building is going to be for. It may be used commercial. If it is a garage and a pool house I'm for it. But commercial equipment going in/out and cars on the street, then I am against it.

(4) Richard Addelson, 115 Rochella Drive. We're concerned about the size of the building on the lot. It is quite large and will look out of place in the neighborhood.

The Chair asked Mr. Phillips about the side line setbacks. He confirmed all accessory structures shall be located a minimum of 10 ft from any property line when located in the rear yard. The applicant meets that requirement.

The Chair brought up the size and scope of the building for discussion. The speakers believed this will damage the aesthetics of the neighborhood and the property values are a concern. The garage door facing front was an issue, as well.

Mr. Phillips added there were several other letters in opposition submitted to the commission on file.

All homes on this road have a side entry. Mr. Chaplinsky noted it was said earlier the town asked for this. Is there a requirement for side entry garages? Mr. Phillips responded we don't have a regulation that requires any directional facing garage. But maybe it is due to a private deed restriction in the neighborhood. That is outside our purview. It wasn't a town requirement. Deed restrictions are outside of our purview.

(Rebuttal)

Mr. Krom addressed the comment about different rooflines. We actually added a useless dormer to make it match the rooflines. We used the exact same window in one of the gables on the front of the house on the front of the garage. It mirrors and matches the siding roof shingles color. Everything is the same down to the garage doors.

As far as the facing of the garage doors, it is side entry to make the homes look bigger. I don't see how that affects things. Some are left facing and some are right facing. What direction they're facing in my opinion doesn't have a whole lot of merit. I don't see how it would negatively affect property values and I'd like to see data on that if possible.

We could build a smaller garage. We picked the bigger one on purpose in order to not affect the aesthetics of the neighborhood as much. If we do a 24 by 24, we don't need a special permit. We are within the 10 ft front and back. There is another garage door on the side which is blocked from everybody. Explained.

We can build this as a garage and then I get a permit for a shed on the other side of the property. I don't want to do that. That would ugly the neighborhood. This was done with the intent to match the neighborhood.

Ms. Krom made clear to the neighbors, I have the same concerns with the vehicles parked there for our business. I want it out of our home. I am pushing to get this out of there. I appreciate you have been so patient with us. We have a contract signed and we are on our way to moving.

The Chair noted the trust issue as with what's going on. Cars along the street, lunch boxes, trucks pulled up to the garage. You addressed that and I don't think we need to belabor that issue.

You can't continue operating the business out of the home. You just can't.

Mr. Krom signed an affidavit this is what it is for. I can fit the Pilot in the garage, but only I can. Explained.

Mr. Santago asked if the applicants had any other conversations with their neighbors other than this evening's conversation regarding their plans to do this. Mr. Krom explained there were a number actually. (Enumerated)

Mr. Santago pointed out this is best solved in the neighborhood and we don't want to, as a board, get involved.

Discussion.

The Chair said anyone from the public can come to the Planner's office and look at the record and pictures on file. It also can be sent via email.

Mr. Chaplinsky reiterated you can't continue to run the business, regardless. As to speaking with the neighbors, are there any abutting neighbors to this property that came out tonight. Immediately to either side or to the back or across the street? The response was: no.

There is an outstanding zoning violation issue. How do you feel about taking some time and talking to your neighbors about this while you firm up your contract? Ms. Krom said we are overdue to reach out to everyone. We talked to some but not all.

Discussion.

Options were discussed with the 14 by 24 size.

The Chair advised we will keep the public hearing open and at our next meeting we will reconvene and everyone can come and speak again, if they wish. We will not act on this tonight in the business section of the meeting.

BUSINESS MEETING

A. AHCO, LLC, special permit application for two buildings on one parcel, 72 Industrial Drive, in an I-1 zone (SPU #610)

Ready for action. Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to approve. Mr. Morelli seconded. Mr. Morelli added he felt it was in harmony with the buildings in the neighborhood. There are other structures like that in the industrial park and it is pretty low in intensity which is meeting the character of the industrial area and the neighbors. During the site plan review we can talk a little bit more about the landscaping.

The two buildings make more sense than trying to cram one building into an odd-shaped lot.

Mr. Hammersley was happy to see another business come to our town from an outlying town. Happy to support this.

Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

B. AHCO, LLC, site plan application to construct 2 buildings and associated parking, loading and circulation areas, 72 Industrial Drive, in an I-1 zone (SPR#1765)

The applicant requested a table. We have to make revisions based on staff's review and hopefully we'll get that done before the next meeting.

Motion to table by Mr. Chaplinsky was seconded by Mr. Hammersley. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

C. Eric Rathburn, special permit application for parent/grandparent apartment, 88 Hillside Avenue, in an R-12 zone (SPU#612)

Ready for action with the standards stipulations on the plan. Mr. Hammersley made a motion to approve with the stipulation by the Town Planner. Ms. Scalise seconded. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

D. Michele Krom, special permit application for garage in excess of 3 spaces, 44 Rochela Drive, in an R-40 zone, (SPU #612)

Motion to table by Mr. Chaplinsky was seconded by Mr. Hammersley. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

E. Reduction of E&S bond from \$7,410 to a new amount of \$2,500, West Mountain View Estates (S#1318)

Ready for action. Mr. Hammersley made a motion to approve which Ms. Clock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

F. Reduction of subdivision bond from \$319,350 to a new amount of \$47,580, West Mountain View Estates (S#1318)

The applicant requested a table so they can do additional work and get a lower reduction at the next meeting. Mr. Chaplinsky made a motion to table. Mr. Hammersley seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

G. Informal Discussion: Potential zone text amendment, potential zone change and potential 8-30g for an elderly multi-family development off Laning Street.

(Minutes are prepared summary style and you may refer to the video on line to hear the full 65-minute presentation.)

Attorney Bryan MEccariello, 200 Executive Boulevard introduced the application. Frank Fragola, 127 Maplewood Road, one of the applicants, is here this evening with me.

He gave an overview of the three items to talk about tonight and then I'll ask Jim Sakoncheck from Kratzert, Jones & Associates to elaborate on the first matter.

The property is located at 295 Laning Street. It's in an R-80 zone. Its 11.21 acres. My clients have owned the property since 2007. They're now presenting a couple of plans informally to discuss to determine in which direction to go.

I've sent Rob three drawings to discuss within the three matters tonight. I've also asked him to include for you the POCD, certain sections of which I will talk about. I've also included some other documents regarding this property from the GIS mapping to show there is public water and sewer available for this property.

The first matter to talk about tonight is what was on the previous PZC agenda, two meetings ago, a proposed text amendment that was filed by Kratzert & Jones on behalf of the applicant. That was to expand the existing zone right now. Zoning Regulation 3-08 has a Housing Opportunity District. Mr. Sakoncheck will explain why it is or how it is he'd like to expand that zone but include an Elderly Housing Opportunity District portion. The deficiency of the first zone in place is it only considers property tracts of land at 30 acres or more. This is an 11.21 acres piece.

Mr. Sakoncheck explained the zoning, present and proposed to the commission along with housing trends in the elderly population. (Over 65 years old, empty-nesters)

Regulations under an 8-30g and HOD were discussed.

Restrictions in the new zone to what is already allowed in the underlying zone was suggested.

Population versus housing units in Southington analysis was discussed.

The POCD relevant sections addressing the need for elderly housing were discussed. (Page 12)

This property sits with the north to the 13th green at Hawks Landing. To the east it butts up to three properties on Doral Lane. To the actual north it is I-84. To the south it is the First Baptist Church. This is not right in an R-80 zone. Its on the cusp. Across the street is R-20/25 and R-12 is on the other side of the highway. Businesses where Queen and Laning Streets meet. Right in that section. It's important to understand that from a zoning point of view.

Reference to Page 135 of the POCD.

Section 12, Page 81 of the POCD was referred to.

Page 88 and 91 were referenced and discussed.

Section 11, the Guide to Residential Development, Page 73-74 were quoted and discussed.

Downsizing was discussed.

Different kinds of proposed developments were discussed including discussions with Hawks Landing and the Baptist Church.

Further discussion of the acreage and some details of the development proposed. An affordable housing component was discussed.

Detached and attached unit schematics were shown and discussed.

The purpose of tonight was to say we are identifying this piece of property and the possible uses the applicant is interested in that would mostly fit the requirements and the needs for the elderly housing section of the POCD. The units would be outright owned with deed restrictions on the affordable units. It would be 55 and over.

Lastly, in the POCD you did go out of your way to look at certain types of development that actually don't cost the town money. This is one that doesn't. It actually brings the town money.

Discussion.

Just an informal discussion. I will answer any questions you may have. My client is here to do that, as well. Sev Bovino from Kratzert, Jones is here, as well.

The Chair asked Mr. Phillips to talk about these informal discussions. There is no application before us. Talk about legalities and any comments made are not binding, all that good stuff. Mr. Phillips responded you're on the record because it is a public meeting. No application, no public hearing, nothing Just an information gathering exercise that anything said on either side is not binding. It's purely to gather information from both sides.

Ms. Clock referenced the part of the POCD that specifically supports what the applicant is wanting to do. It is Page 34, Section: Redevelopment Strategies. This outlines how we can address those needs and there is a need. It's Action/Steps which identifies what we should do as a town. Reference to #6. My comment is going from 30 acres to 11 acres is pretty dramatic and something we would want to consider is how many other parcels in town would this affect if we were to make such a drastic change.

Discussion.

Attorney Meccariello noted each piece of property has to be looked at individually. Case by case, special permit, public hearing.

Discussion.

The EHOD being a floating zone was explained by Mr. Phillips.

Mr. Phillips wanted to be sure we are not focusing on any particular site. We are talking about demographic changes which are right. Things are changing and the housing may not fit the preference for the elderly. Maybe there is not enough supply moving forward. From a planning standpoint the important thing is to provide housing opportunity and options as opposed to anything in particular. As long as there is a wide range of housing options and opportunities to get into any level of price-point is something that from a planning perspective should be encouraged in every way.

Having said that, in this case, we're talking about a regulation proposal that kind of fits under the HOD and it was mentioned I was working with Mr. Sakoncheck. Well, he was actually supplying me with regulation proposals and I was critiquing them trying to figure out where exactly they were going to go with this and what their intentions were. It wasn't like, okay, let's put this together. I want to be sure that's clear.

The POCD encourages additional affordable elderly housing and options. What is in our current regulations was enumerated.

Discussion.

The original HOD regulation is basically an incentive housing zone. Something intended and designed to be similar to an affordable housing type encouraging zone. Based on affordable housing and not necessarily elderly. Fitting this into there, in my professional opinion, is a little clunky. I thought there were other areas we could look at.

I think the bigger question for you is with respect to the POCD, do you see a need to pinpoint a specific type of floating zone for this given that you do allow this type of use in other areas. Maybe that is something that needs to be analyzed --- where would these types of developments possibly land?

In the proposal, it is for a much higher density than what is currently allowed there.

I think at this juncture you need to be looking at what you have in the current regulations and whether it's meeting the need and whether this would be something that would be further incentivizing this type of development.

Mr. Morelli said on the POCD, this is a hot topic as is the preservation of land and contiguous properties for town acquisition. This parcel happens to abut the golf course which we have the building rights to. We have the orchard on the other end of the street, does the town want to support senior housing or do they want to support open space initiatives? This is not strictly a POCD concern. I do agree that we have an aging population in town and they need a place to go. I am in agreement with the discussion of putting a floating zone like this somewhere. Maybe this parcel is not great for development but it might be good for open space. Those were two things were the two hot topics as I noted as a member of the POCD committee.

Discussion.

Attorney Meccariello pointed out this parcel lends to the activity of the community. It is an active community. Self-contained. And, it adds life to the golf course.

Discussion.

Mr. Santago pointed out Laning Street is a dangerous street. It's a wooded area. Very near Lopper Street which is the poster child we use to stop building in town. Now, not too far from there we're going to do the same thing elderly or regular housing. I can imagine the consternation when we strip cut another forest. I can't help but have an issue with this spot in regards to also the need for open space and the need to preserve forestation. As far as 55 and up, I agree with Jen that further study should be done to see what other parcels and what impact this would be to the town and how many other places this could impact.

Discussion.

Ms. Scalise offered another perspective although the conservation parts were interesting and important. I'm not sure that buy into the vision that we need to position Southington as a mecca for retirees from every community. A need for senior housing was identified but I think to have a vision of Southington as a vibrant, long-term is not for the group that is not going to be empty-nester, six months here, six months elsewhere. I want to live in a mixed community with people of all ages and I would assume a lot of people feel the same way. I don't want to live in a town that is predominantly dotted

with a Spring Lake Village or another type of community. That sends a message that is the demographic we're attracting. That combined with removing forested land? That, to me, is very troubling.

Discussion.

As a floating zone, this would have to be revisited every time there was a new applicant offered Ms. Scalise. I certainly not comfortable with the idea it could be sprung on the community pretty much anywhere, at any time, for any reason. Talking about variable lot sizes not 30, but less. Frankly, there is a lot to unpack here that I think is not on solid ground. My perspective.

Discussion.

Attorney Meccariello noted people should read the POCD. It's a great footprint and roadmap to where this town should go. I'm just highlighting sections that would benefit this particular property.

Discussion.

This is just a proposal from Kratzert, Jones. Staff and the commission need a lot of time. Maybe look at other communities that have these same zones/communities that are doing quite well.

Discussion.

The POCD approval process was discussed. There was public input, but not a large turnout.

The Chair said as some commission members touched on, there was a trend back in the 2000's maximizing density which came to an abrupt end in the early 2000's. We had a couple of applications and then we didn't have them for a long time. Now, if there is any talk of increasing density anywhere, folks are blinded by it. Read the POCD. They don't want to hear or see or read anything --- they don't want more.

Discussion.

I appreciate your coming out tonight and discussing this continued the Chair. I appreciate this information discussion. It's something we need to digest and eventually if the application comes forward, we'll tackle it just like we tackle any application. The seats won't be empty that night.

Discussion.

Attorney Meccariello commented they had overwhelming support for the zone change. Not only from the community, but from the church, business next door.

Discussion.

The Chair advised the applicant to continue to work with staff on whatever you decide to do. We will take it on the same way we take on every application.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE

Mr. Cabata reported at the last meeting the presentation was about updating and fixing the intersection between Route 44 and Route 196 out in Tolland. Basically, that goes from the end of 384 up to UCONN. The town's people don't want more density but they finally realized they have a traffic problem. You can't get in and out of the town on game nights. Or happenings at UCONN.

The state is going to make it safer for drivers and others to get in/out of Storrs faster. Whatever kind of mass transit that comes up with it, that as well.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

A. Open Space Preservation Subdivision Discussion

The Chair asked for direction from the commission on this. Ms. Clock said it was her opinion that she wanted to make sure that we are thinking about this clearly. We're considering future parcels, the inventory out there and big question marks. From my involvement with open space, POCD, and everything in between, it's my take away that perceived open space is more important than actual open space. People just want to drive by and see a big parcel of land and they don't want to walk on it and they don't want to count butterflies. They just want to drive by and get a warm and fuzzy feeling.

The Chair added they did not want to see more houses. Ms. Clock agreed.

Mr. Morelli totally agreed.

Ms. Clock felt like what is here presents that. I'm not saying we mandate it, but if a developer is going for a preservation subdivision, this is what should be the option. That's my opinion.

Mr. Morelli felt it was a first big step in the right direction. It is not a taking any more of the land and it gives them an avenue to really develop in a more proper way. I do think that is a good solution. Rather than what we have right now.

Mr. Chaplinsky asked what specifically was attractive about this proposed regulation as opposed to the current preservation subdivision regulation? Mr. Morelli said it doesn't give them an out. They have to go with that now if we make a change to the zone (sic).

Discussion.

Mr. Phillips explained two mechanisms for open space. One is open space as is calculated in the conventional subdivision. We're not looking at that right now.

We're looking at the other option for open space which is existing cluster housing options. It's a special permit use. You seek a special permit and have a public hearing to get that approval. We're only looking at that right now. I think after all of this discussion and my experience, I think maybe you should consider. I think when you looked at the mapping, to me what really jumps off the page – R-80 as a lot of acreage not protected, but you have a lot of topography, wetlands, water lands that won't go to development any time soon. I think when you look into it there is really not a lot of development pressure there that'll create a visual problem. You have the trap rock ridgeline.

Then you have the R-20/25 zone and that is mostly little pieces here and there. Not really a big factor. And, with the lower zones, the clustering becomes less feasible.

In my opinion, the R-40 zone has some decent sized parcels still left and that's one-acre zoning. And, you'll typically see a lot of lots clear cut. That is not exactly the outcome that is intended. In that sense you have some unprotected land there. It has a tendency to be clear cut. Maybe this zone is what you should be looking at. I would venture to say, flip the script in the R-40 zone. Make the conventional subdivision a special permit. Make the cluster subdivision by right. So, you have to get a special permit to do a conventional subdivision for the R-40 zone.

Discussion.

Perhaps it could be put in the open space has to be along an existing street with an undeveloped strip of land. So that subdivision, you don't see from the collector street. You're going by trees and you don't know they're in there on the other side of the tree line. Examples given in different towns (Farmington, Granby)

If those principles are met, I think that is going in the direction I think you could go with minimal changes but maximum impact and outcome. Just my opinion.

Discussion.

Mr. Morelli agreed thinking most developers would not have a problem once they understand it.

Mr. Chaplinsky contested the R-40 when looking at the zoning map. Explained there is not a lot there that is not protected already. With the impact of this, would it offer any kind of substantial change? He would like to see what we can actually impact. Can we look at the underdeveloped R-40 land? Rather than make a change to make a change. Mr. Phillips suggested really drilling down in the R-40 zone.

Discussion.

Ms. Scalise asked: In that case, what would prevent us from adopting it? If we are not going to make a meaningful impact? I thought the whole premise was what small opportunity we still have, we want to take advantage of saving space. So now we're back to doing more research to see what we can save. There is some feeling we need to do something. Why don't we just go ahead and do it?

A lively discussion followed between Mr. Chaplinsky and Ms. Scalise on her statement.

The Chair polled the commission: Do we need more information or should we submit this as is for referral out.

Discussion.

Ready for referral: Mr. Cabata, Mr. Morelli, Ms. Locks, Mr. Hammersley,

Wait for more information: Mr. Chaplinsky,

Ms. Clock noted Mr. Chaplinsky's request for information. Can we say we pretty much a consensus that people want to move forward and I think that's been clear for six months. If we take two weeks and no one come up with a specific revision to what is here, this gets referred out.

(Consensus then was that was fair.)

Mr. Chaplinsky noted nobody wants to do the R-40 drill down, but he is vehemently against doing this in R-80. Explained the purpose for the R-80 zone.

Mr. Chaplinsky continued we should consider how we define in here the number of lots that can be put in. A couple of different methods were brought up. The incentivization was discussed in the open space subdivision. If it is required, do we still want that?

Mr. Morelli said it was his understanding that if you can do 50 today, I at least have the ability to do 50 in the new regulation but maybe I might get 65, 70 or 80. It's up to how the land lays out and the design.

Discussion.

A lively discussion followed between Mr. Chaplinsky and Mr. Morelli regarding whether to have the regulation require or incentivize the open space subdivision. Mr. Phillips brought up and discussed a step down.

Mr. Phillips will incorporate these comments and provide a fresh copy to everyone.

Mr. Chaplinsky advised everyone to pay attention to Page 4 (red comments) which is a change that may give heartburn to some people. It is a material change in the way we write regs for the useable land.

B. Sign Subcommittee report

Mr. Hammersley reported on the first meeting held last week. Rob provided us with a number of bits of background information. We have another meeting coming up in a couple of weeks or so. Then we'll report back to this commission sometime in the next two months or so.

C. Cannabis Committee report

Mr. Phillips said there is an upcoming meeting in October. Mr. Santago pointed out the staff is providing and looking at language in the existing regulation, a potential change to the regulation, maps for options and soliciting legal advice for what should happen. Should we do anything at all or address regulations now Staff is providing that.

ITEMS TO SCHEDULE FOR PUBLIC HEARING

- Proposed zone boundary change from I-2 to CB, properties located at 62 West Main Street (rear) (075/180); 42 West Main Street (075/179); 76 West Main Street (075/181); 120 West Main Street (074/072); 35 West Main Street (075/028); 19 West Main Street (075/029); 13 West Main Street (075/030); 7 West Main Street (075/032); 29 West Main Street (075/031); 119 West Main Street (074/068); 111 West Main Street (0074/069); 55 West Main Street (075/026); 57 West Main Street (075/025); 83 West Main Street (075/024) ZC #560 – September 18

Okay to schedule.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

Just the public hearing item.

ADJOURNMENT

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

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 o'clock, p.m.)