

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON

JANUARY 21, 2020

MINUTES

The Planning & Zoning Commission of the Town of Southington held a public hearing & regular meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at the Municipal Center Assembly Room, 196 North Main Street, Southington, CT. Robert Hammersley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00, p.m.

The following Commissioners were present:

Robert Salka, Susan Locks, James Macchio, Jeff Gworek & Peter Santago

Alternates: Theresa Albanese, Caleb Cowles & Joseph Coviello

Staff: Robert Phillips, Director of Planning & Community Development
James Grappone, Ass't Town Engineer

Absent: Christina Volpe, Commissioner
Stuart Savelkoul, Alternate

The Chair seated Joe Coviello for Christina Volpe for this evening's meeting.

A quorum was determined.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited by everyone in attendance being led by Elaine Anderson.

A Moment of Silence was observed by everyone in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular meeting of January 7, 2020

Ms. Locks made a motion to approve which was seconded by Ms. Albanese. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

(Minutes are prepared summary style. You may refer to the video on line to hear the full 30-minute discussion.)

A. Hunter Build, LLC, proposed zone text amendment for a proposed new Section 3.10 entitled "Village Residential Zone District (VRZD)" to provide for new Zone District that allows for an inclusionary village residential community use, with an affordable or workforce housing component, as

provided by Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statute, “Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure” and revision to Section 7A-00 (ZA #603) applicant has requested a continuation of the hearing to February 4th.

And

B. Hunter Build, LLC, proposed zoning boundary change from R-23 to Village Residential Zone District (VRZD) to provide for more diverse housing opportunities in the Town of Southington consistent with and in compliance with Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes. “Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure” property located at 136 Liberty Street, owned by Giammatteo, Inc., parcel size approximately 1.9 acres (ZC #563) applicant has requested a continuation of the hearing to February 4th.

And

C. Hunter Build, LLC, site plan application to permit a thirty (30) unit multifamily residential community development, with an affordable or workforce housing opportunity component. Consistent with and in compliance with Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes. “Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure” property located at 136 Liberty Street, owned by Giammatteo, Inc., parcel size approximately 1.9 acres (ZC #563) applicant has requested a continuation of the hearing to February 4th.

Mr. Gworek recused himself and left the dais. Alternate Commissioner Cowles was seated in his stead for these items.

Stephen Giudice, 876 South Main Street, on behalf of the applicant, requested a continuation on all three items above to February 4th.

The Chair advised the applicant for the Hunter Build, LLC items has asked that they be continued to February 4th. However, if there are people here to speak regarding this item, we will take their testimony or they can wait until the February 4th meeting. He reminded everyone that anything you said at the last meeting was part of the record and need not be repeated.

(Those speaking in favor of the application.)

None.

(Those speaking against the application.)

The following six people spoke against the application citing as the reasons: the new zone, VRSD zone is for a specific piece of property and is setting a precedent, high density housing with apartment like structures that don't belong in residents' backyards, other properties in town where this development is more appropriate, questioning of the safety study completed by the applicant. Thirty units and 65 parking spaces with only one suitable entrance and exit poses many risks and safety issues. The lack of privacy within the new development as fencing won't address the issue because of balconies on the second floor are above the fence line. Increased traffic. The traffic study information presented was outdated and not valid based on residents' testimonial as to what they see on a daily basis in terms of traffic. Noise level will increase. The property was previously used for oil delivery with many oil tanks on the property. Have there been tests completed for that. Note the petition submitted last week on file. Location of 1.9-acre space where they want to put over 80 people living in the small space is

unsuitable. There could be 40 children living in this area. The housing is too dense. Houses could be purchased in town for the amount of money they would be paying for rent. Need for an environmental study was questioned. Questioned the need for affordable housing in town. The impact of dense housing like this is really a mental health issue. Automobile accidents on the area streets were discussed noting this would increase traffic in the area causing more risk to the residents in the area and school children in the area. Where is the snow going to be plowed to? Low income, assisted living residents. The fire trucks can't access the parcel without trouble from the main entrance off of Liberty Street without closing off Liberty Street which is a major concern for safety. The emergency driveway is more narrow so how can they get access there which is a big major concern. The larger size vehicles in the parking lot make it difficult for the ladder truck to maneuver around the parked cars. Is the land going to be treated if it is contaminated and if so, the residents have a right to know that? Something small than 30 units would be more comparable.

Questions: There is a demand for such housing opportunities in the Town of Southington. Who is demanding this type of housing be built in Southington? Are the people who will be residents in this apartment building, are they residents of Southington now who don't have housing? Can't afford housing? Where did they get their information?

If you vote to oppose this and not allow this zone change to take place, I think there would be a court case. Is that correct? You would have to account to the state if it is not approved?

There are only two things you can use in your defense: safety and health?

Are all of the concerns we have and objections we have to mean nothing for this?

Does this VRZD zone exist anywhere else in Southington? Mr. Phillips said it is proposed as a new zone. The applicant is requesting this new zone. We don't have to entertain public comment because it is requested to be continued. We are doing it as a courtesy to you folks. State the issue you have and the applicant is here taking notes and we can't enter dialogue without representation from both sides being present.

If it doesn't exist in Southington, does it exist anywhere in the state and how many of these are there?

If it doesn't exist in Southington, what's the closest thing to this type of zone that exists in Southington. This is absolutely ridiculous.

Whether investors or people living there, we have the right. We rent apartments or bought properties; they don't expect these units in their backyard.

Why after two weeks doesn't the applicant have answers to the questions we asked? Just a little concerning to me.

1. Frank Izzo, 416 Rockwood Drive (Owns property on 25-27 Bristol Street with brother)
2. Carmella Kimmell, 1067 Woodruff Street
3. Joe Della Porta, 99 Eden Avenue
4. Roxanne Mirando, 1820 West Center Street

5. Elaine Anderson, 102 Carey Street (Owns property on West Center Street)
6. Mario Izzo, 44 Pebble Drive. (Owns property at 25-27 Bristol Street with brother)

The Chair continued the public hearing items leaving them open. Commissioners are reminded that this is an active public hearing and you should not engage in any conversations outside of this public hearing with regards to this application. That's for the public as well. We are not allowed to engage in those conversations outside of this forum.

BUSINESS MEETING

A. Hunter Build, LLC, proposed zone text amendment for a proposed new Section 3.10 entitled "Village Residential Zone District (VRZD)" to provide for new Zone District that allows for an inclusionary village residential community use, with an affordable or workforce housing component, as provided by Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statute, "Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure" and revision to Section 7A-00 (ZA #603)

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A motion to table Items A, B & C was made by Mr. Santago. Mr. Macchio seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Mr. Gworek resumed his seat and Mr. Cowles was thanked for his service.

D. AutoZone Northeast, LLC, site plan application for a proposed 7,382 sf AutoZone building and associated parking lot, property located at 1776 and 1784 Meriden Waterbury Turnpike, owned by 249 South East Road, LLC, in a B zone, (parcel size approximately +/- 1.6 acres) SPR #1793.

Michael Lambert, Harry Cole & Son, 876 South Main Street, Plantsville. I am here on behalf of the applicant. The project is on two parcels, 1776 and 1784 Meriden Waterbury Turnpike and it is just under 1.6 acres.

The topography mostly slopes north to south/east to west. There is a small pocket of wetlands on the southeast corner of the property. The parcel originally contained residential houses. Parcel on 1784 was torn down between 2015 and 2016 and 1776 was torn down between 2016 and 2017. Each property had public water and sewer services that have been disconnected when the houses were torn down.

The proposed plan is to put up a 7,382-sf retail building to be used and operated by AutoZone similar to the Queen Street location. Same kind of set up. Home Depot and AutoZone are right next to each other.

Thirty-four parking spaces in the parking lot as per AutoZone's requirements. Zoning regulations only require 25 spots and we have the overage which is able to compensation for the additional parking along the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike. The spaces are permeable pavers which is accepted by the town and per that regulation.

Along with having that parking along the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike, there is going to be a planted buffer. There is about 9 feet between the street line and the parking right now. We had a landscape plan done by Two Design that has it heavily vegetated in that area.

A town comment received was are we requesting a sidewalk waiver for the site. We had shown on the new revised plans submitted we are requesting a waiver due to the site constraints where the property line to the edge of pavement is about 4 feet in some areas. There is existing street signage and a fire hydrant. If we try to install a sidewalk, it would put the sidewalk on to our property. There is also an existing sanitary main that runs just inside that shoulder between the property line and the edge of pavement. Public Works has no objection to putting a sidewalk over the main, it's just not beneficial to anyone to have a sidewalk over a main in case it ever has to get replaced.

The building will be connected to public water and sanitary.

The storm drainage on site was described.

No outdoor storage is being proposed on site.

No internal floor drains.

No servicing of vehicles is to be proposed besides the standard battery changes, wiper blades replaced. No changes of fluids being proposed on the site.

The renderings were shown and described as being the standard masonry and block walls. White, orange, red, gray colors you have typically on their sites.

We have received town comments. I've talked to staff. There are stipulations they suggest to the project and we have no objection to them.

I'll take questions.

Ms. Albanese asked if during the demo of the homes, everything was properly disposed of. Mr. Lambert was not sure of the history of the site.

Discussion.

Mr. Santiago asked about the vegetation on site. Have you cleared that with staff in regards to the types of what vegetation you are proposing? That section of town is getting more busy and we want it to look nice. Mr. Lambert explained comments had been received from the town previously and he had talked to our landscape architects at Two Design. We made sure we had enough plantings to coincide with the zoning regulations and the number of street trees required. We made sure all plants were native and not invasive to the area. There is a significant amount of vegetation to be along the parking area along the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike. For the headlight screen that is desirable.

Discussion.

Mr. Salka brought up the requirement of a 4-foot berm on the Meriden Waterbury Road. In your comments you were talking about grade level. Can you just review that with us and how you are going to handle that? Mr. Lambert pointed out there is 9 feet between the parking and the driveway. We have the 4-foot-wide buffer area and there is going to be a little bit of a high berm. Explained the natural 12 to 18-inch berm existing and there'll be plantings on top of that to add to the buffer effect which meets the town's requirements.

Mr. Phillips interjected and explained the way staff interprets this is it specifically says (paraphrasing) no vehicle parking shall be provided in the front yard unless separated from a public ROW by a fully bermed landscape border of not less than four feet. I read that as height. If you read it differently, that's fine. But that is how I would read that. Otherwise, what is fully bermed? It's undefined if you don't say it is 4 feet high. We may need to look at this in the subcommittee for continuous improvements. Unless you feel differently, that's how we look at that.

Discussion of the types of plantings proposed on the rendering noting the height.

The buffer with the berm was discussed by Mr. Giudice and Mr. Lambert with the Commissioners. Mr. Giudice suggested the regulation needed some fine-tuning. The Chair pointed out the Commissioners were looking at from the idea of not having glare from the headlights shining on to the roadway.

The site's parking is actually a foot lower than the road. With another berm and landscaping, the lights would be shielded.

Discussion.

Blocking headlight glare was the major objective.

Discussion.

Ms. Locks said she was concerned with not having a sidewalk. You have the rails to trails down the street, you have people that are starting to walk that area. If you go into Home Depot, people are walking, crossing the street and there is not even crosswalks there.

The Chair reminded everyone a sidewalk waiver requires a supermajority vote of the commission.

Mr. Giudice said there are a lot of utilities on site that make it difficult to put the sidewalk and also trying to meet the landscape and buffer requirements. There is the sewer easement, the utilities, the pole for the sign and landscaping and berm and things like that. That was the reason for the request. If you think it is absolutely necessary, we will engineer it accordingly.

The YMCA lot was noted as an example of what this site would be modeled after.

Cross easements for future connection with the Blimpie's property was discussed.

In response to a query by Mr. Coviello, traffic patterns were discussed with regard to the curb cut.

Further discussion on access easements as being a requirement.

Mr. Phillips indicated this item is ready for action. He noted the sidewalk waiver is the first vote.

The Chair asked if there were sidewalks on the west or east side of the property. Mr. Lambert described the existing sidewalks in the area. Nothing in front of Blimpie's. There are sidewalks in front of Dollar General. There are two properties to the east of us before you get to Dollar General.

The Chair asked Mr. Lambert to show on the screen where the access agreements are proposed.
Discussion.

Mr. Salka made a motion to deny the sidewalk waiver. Ms. Locks seconded. Motion to deny passed 6 to 1 with Mr. Gworek opposed. The sidewalk waiver is denied and they must install the sidewalk, stated Mr. Phillips.

Ms. Locks made a motion to approve the application. Mr. Macchio seconded.

Mr. Grappone thanked the applicant for the offer of a sewer easement and suggested a stipulation that the review and approval of the document be by the Town Attorney.

Ms. Locks added the stipulation to her motion and Mr. Macchio seconded. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

E. Lineberry Realty, LC, site plan modification application for a proposed 2,835 sf addition, property located at 1223 Meriden Waterbury Road, in a B zone (parcel size approximately +/- .67 acres) SPR#1794.

Sev Bovino, Planner with Kratzert, Jones & Associates represented the applicant. This property is located at 1223 Meriden Waterbury Turnpike. It is an existing site, an existing developed site. To the east we have a retail plaza and to the west we have the stained-glass studio, retail, site. There are two buildings plus a small building.

The proposal is to remove the small building and add a larger building. The business was not working for the space they had so they decided to expand it and they need to remove the small building to make a bigger building.

Served by public water and sewer.

There is an existing parking. It is a used car lot and repair facility. The new building will be used for storage of cars and a repair area. There are going to be two overhead doors (indicating).

The rest of the site is the same. We have improved the landscaping per staff recommendation. We added some street trees and additional shrubbery in different areas. We like to group the

shrubby instead of straight across. They look better and form a nicer looking group of shrubs. And, for maintenance purposes, you want to be able to cut the grass in a nice, neat way and that's why we do groupings.

He showed on the screen what the existing building looks like. He showed a west looking view. He noted the building to be removed together with the spray booth inside this building. That is not going to be there any longer on this site.

The proposed building is going to be a metal building. It will have two doors. He referred to another site the applicant has with a building that this was modeled after.

He explained the drainage system on site.

We meet the regulation in terms of landscaping based on the number of parking spaces.

A cross easement (indicating) is proposed at this location as it makes sense. Some day there could be a connection there. The regulation says a 20 by 60 easement that goes back probably 30 years and the idea of the easement was to actually create less curb cuts. It was not intended for connectivity between buildings. It was intended for less curb cuts.

Discussion.

Now it is turned into a connectivity issue which I agree with, so we are now putting the easements at the most logical location instead of putting it 20 by 60. We put it where it belongs and can work for the business.

I'll answer any questions.

The Chair noted the planning department comment on the buffer between this property and the condos. Can you go over your response? Mr. Bovino stated the property next door is zoned business and they were allowed to put condos back then in business zones. It is not a residential zone. It is a business zone. The regulation says the buffer is required next to a residential zone. And, when we did this design, we showed the buffer on their property. There is already going to be a buffer there.

The Chair clarified there is a buffer on this property in addition to a buffer on their property? Mr. Bovino showed where the buffer is proposed, the buildings, and in the spring where it would be planted.

Mr. Phillips asked: Why not an access connection on the west? Mr. Bovino explained the building here (indicating) is located right where the driveway would be. It interferes with the circulation. And, also, we have parking here (indicating). We can show it.

Mr. Phillips asked: What about farther down the property line? Mr. Bovino noted the parking all the way down. We can show it in the back of the property line when they are going to do something. But they would have to come through --- being back there is quite a distance to come to the front of the property. And, the two businesses are kind of not compatible in a way. Mr. Phillips said that could potentially change. Mr. Bovino said it could show it.

Discussion.

Mr. Bovino commented if you want to stipulate I show an easement at this location, I think it makes sense. In the future, that property to the west would have to provide the easement.

Discussion.

Mr. Phillips advised this item is ready for action.

Ms. Locks made a motion to approve with the stipulation of the easement to the west in the back. Mr. Coviello seconded.

Mr. Phillips said he wanted to make sure the applicant is aware that there is a ZBA approval for the number of vehicles and we need to remind the applicant he has got to honor that. Mr. Bovino said he saw that comment and responded to it.

Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

F. Oak Hill Cemetery Association, site plan application for expansion of cemetery plots, phase one, property located at 105 Flanders Street, in a B zone, (parcel size approximately +/- 48.19 acres) SPR #1795.

Sev Bovino, Planner with Kratzert, Jones & Associates represented the applicant. This property is located at 105 Flanders Street at the corner with Queen Street. It is one of the oldest cemeteries in town consisting of 48.19 +/- acres. The terrain is hilly with wooded areas. Less than half of the property has been utilized at this time.

The property is zoned business all the way to the east, including this property which is zoned business.

Served by public water and sewer. Not wetlands found site and a report was provided with the application.

The proposal is to expand the existing operation approximately in the center of the property. Explained and showed the location on the screen.

The proposal is to expand the plot area in this location (indicating). It is about a couple of acres, plus or minus.

No additional driveways will be constructed at this time. No extension of the water line. We received water department approval for this project.

The reason we are before you is, we have an expansion going on on this facility. We have the right to do it and we are here to show you what we are doing.

We have the appropriate erosion controls.

We received and responded to staff comments.

We added some siltation fence. We provide fencing around the detention area (indicating). Orange construction fence will be installed along the existing graves to prevent anyone from accidentally coming across. The moved material will not be taken off site and there will not be any

imported or exported material. The material will be shifted from this area (indicating) to here (indicating) to make the grades more acceptable for plots.

The map attached to the submitted set shows Phase I (indicating). And, then we have Phases 2, 3 and 4 which are future phases to be constructed at a later time.

The computations were done for the detention area to accommodate the runoff from those areas to achieve ZIRO as required by the regulations.

I'll answer questions if you have any.

Mr. Santago said if we are going to move earth, be cognizant if there is anything historical there on a site that old. Explained.

Ms. Albanese explained what an Unanticipated Discovery Plan is. She asked if geological surveys were done on the site to see if blasting is required. Mr. Bovino said not blasting is required here. It is all sand and gravel. Explained.

Mr. Cowles brought up a Green Burial Ground and wondered if the sexton of the site was interested in that. And, if so, which section of the cemetery. Mr. Bovino said it is going to be the typical burial spots, flat to the ground with the vertical stone.

Discussion.

Mr. Phillips advised this application is ready for action.

Mr. Santago made a motion to approve. Mr. Salka seconded. Motion passed 7 to 0 on a roll call vote.

G. Informal discussion: future use of Briarwood College property, 2279 Mount Vernon Road

(The Minutes are prepared summary style and you may refer to the video on line to hear the full 25-minute commentary.)

Mr. Bovino, Planner with Kratzert, Jones & Associates, presented on behalf of the applicant who are the owners of Briarwood College a/k/a Lincoln College. This property is located at the corner of Welch Road and Mount Vernon Road. The property is bounded by residential zones to the east, south and to the west.

One of the owners, Mr. Terwilliger, provided staff with a copy of the report and the commission had received that report outlining what they are going through with this property. (Report on file in the Town Planner's Office.)

This property has been used for educational purposes for many years, but because of the change in education, Lincoln College closed and the property went for auction with no takers. The owners and the economic development coordinator have marketed this property to many schools and others with no success.

We met with staff and discussed this proposal over the phone with the owners a couple of times. The property has 33 acres (indicated). Quite a bit of frontage on Mount Vernon Road and Welch Road. Multiple buildings.

If something is not done soon, it will fall into disrepair which will be a shame. A year has gone by. They've tried to sell it and auction it. This property is at the point where it is very expensive to maintain. Up to now they've been maintained very well.

We are here to inform you we have an intended buyer; however, the buyer wants assurance from the owners that the uses other than a school can be implemented on the site. They have also a school in mind they'll be negotiating with. I'm told this will take over a year or two to get the terms agreed upon. The school they have in mind is not going to take the entire site.

In the meantime, they would like to know if this property can be marketed for other uses allowed under your special permit regulations under Section 3-01.2. The type of uses they have in mind are medical facility for the treatment of alcohol related illnesses, inpatient or out patient. Cancer units. Physical Therapy. Nursing home. Hospice. Wellness Centers, et cetera.

Also, we can have adult daycares, veterinarian hospitals.

The report indicates which buildings will be used for which type of use including space for school activities. (Refer to report on file in the Town Planner's office.)

We hope the commissioners have reviewed the options and maybe formulated an opinion on it.

Mr. Terwilliger and the buyer are here tonight to answer any further questions. We hope you can give us some kind of consensus of the uses we have proposed in the report so we can move forward and make something happen on this property.

Mr. Bovino then reviewed the buildings and recreational facilities on the property and what they could be used for as noted in the report.

He noted the property is well designed and security can be provided at the site if need be.

We are looking for some direction from the commission.

Mr. Grappone asked if the owner or buyer has looked into how the existing septics are working the area. That would be a major concern, I would think for the proposed uses. Mr. Bovino said a study was done on the septic system and we can provide that. He further commented that the uses proposed will be less than the 800 students that used to occupy the site.

Discussion.

There is public water to the site.

Mr. Cowles asked how many bedroom units were in the residential buildings on site. Mr. Dennis Terwilliger, President of Briarwood Real Estate Limited Partnership, owner of the property for over thirty years responded there are 93 bedrooms with a total capacity of 225.

He spoke about the failing educational system with high school graduates dropping. It is a problem. This property is in great shape and the way it was built, it makes it a natural use for a medical

type of use.

Discussion.

Under the special zoning, there are uses that we could meet and would function well on this property, he commented.

Mr. Phillips noted there is a campus with improvements on the property. There is no sewer access and that really makes it a tough situation on the building to be repurposed. This is residential zoning and if you were to tear down the buildings and put in single family homes, that may not be feasible either, because of the costs associated with that. You had a unique use to the area that no longer exists. You have the infrastructure there without a key component to the utilities of the site. It's a difficult situation. All we can do is work with what we have on the special permit or allowable uses which they mentioned.

The best result is to not see it go dormant. Everybody would want to have something there. It's a matter of what can be done given our regulations. That's the background story and it is not an easy nut to crack.

The Chair appreciated the historical background on the property and the current activity.

Mr. Bovino said the buyers are willing to pursue the special permits and they feel they can bring that to the site. Is there something there you would consider?

Mr. Santago asked if it would be brought with one big site plan or individual special permits?
Discussion.

Mr. Phillips said a Master Plan is the most logical here.

The Chair looked forward to hearing from the applicant in the future. I don't see there is a consensus of the commission. We'll weigh it as it comes in. We'd love to see something done and conversations with town staff will ultimately result in something. We rely on town staff to work with the applicant to do what's best for the town. When you have what that might be, it's our turn to weigh in on it.

Mr. Phillips recommended doing a Comprehensive Strategic Plan.
Discussion.

Mr. Terwilliger extended an invitation to the commission if anyone would like to have a tour of the property.

H. Release of \$13,540 E & S bond, Dollar General, 1724 Meriden Waterbury Road (SPR 1733)

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

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

- Update on PZC Subcommittees

Regulation Review

This is Chaired by Commissioner Santago. We heard a couple of items tonight that will be referred to this committee. Mr. Santago advised the first meeting is tomorrow. We will not look at those items tomorrow, as it is just going to be organizing. We'll report back.

POCD

This is Chaired by Commissioner Gworek. Mr. Gworek will sit down with Rob. Ms. Albanese is interested in being on this committee. The Chair said this is not just limited to members of this commission. You can reach outside and it might be beneficial to reach outside of this commission to others who were involved in the POCD.

- Update on Town Council Subcommittees

Open Space

Mr. Salka advised there have been three meetings so far. Most of them are in executive session and we can't really talk about properties we are looking at. In the paper, there were two pieces reported going up to the town council: Florian and the Anderson piece on Marion Avenue (Marion & School Street). We have some state funding for that as part of open space. Nice properties for passive recreations.

The other items are in executive session but there are some properties that are very, very attractive. More to come.

The Chair said continuing to add to our open space holdings is a good thing.

Ordinance

Ms. Locks reported they had nothing since the vaping issue. The Chair said that Rob mentioned there might be a few things coming up. Mr. Phillips said one is going to be a recommendation to consider an ordinance for the ability to put a Do Not Block the Box pavement markings associated with an area of town that may benefit from removing the queueing that may be happening at the intersection. One area is the old Bertucci's on Spring Street. He is working with the property owner and Plan B that is moving in there on getting the widening of Spring Street to establish a right turn lane that would queue back towards the entrance of Plan B. To make that happen we're doing some things on site in the spring. The easement taking was filed today by the town manager to allow for that second phase of expanding Spring Street. A Do Not Block the Box there makes complete sense for us and was asked for by the applicant. We need to have an ordinance for it.

Another one will be another tool in our tool box of trying to keep control of sign installations especially by those that are rogue. We may have them consider an actual ordinance that would require an annual sign license procedure with a small fee which would put you on a list of sign installers in Southington and if you do something that is wrong or aren't on the list, you could be fined. Some of the bigger cities do this to help police this.

Discussion.

Economic Development Strike Committee

The Chair represents the commission on this committee. We met last week and talked about a couple of things. One was a marketing plan that Lou Perillo was going to try to get put into the budget. He is going to propose hiring a marketing director to market the town. It's an exciting opportunity for him to get somebody out there doing it out there on a regular basis that give him the ability to focus on his job.

The other thing was the property out in front here. The town council gave Mark Lovely a package to develop the property in the future. Probably in the future we will see a site plan on that. Exciting project because the property has been vacant for about fifteen years. Very contaminated piece of property. Excited about that.

The Curtiss Street update, we had a couple of public hearings and we asked as part of that process for Rob and his staff to go out and do what they can to enforce the current regulations for the tenant who currently is on that piece of property.

Mr. Phillips said the planning and health department staffs have been out there recently. We were able to witness mature specimens that the tenant pulled out of the ground to replace the buffer they removed. We sent out a Notice of Violation to the property owner and the tenant to request they come in with a designed professional plan for replanting with real nursery specimens by the end of March to be able to plant in April. We've had no response to this.

There was a recent complaint about odor. Health went out with the ZEO today and did not find any obnoxious odors coming from anywhere. The health department closed that.

We've looked at our blight definitions and we don't see anything on site that would rise to that considering it is an industrial property with storage use.

There is an open zoning permit for one of the hoop structures we're holding until they respond about the vegetative buffer fix.

The vegetative buffer is the real thing. That should be there. It should be resolved. Other than that, we really didn't see anything on that site that was out of the ordinary. It was generally in an organized state for an industrial property.

The Chair commented it is good we are being proactive about it. The neighbors were suffering for some questionable activities going on. I appreciate all the work you are doing and have done and I encourage you keep going and giving us updates as things develop.

The Chair advised on February 5th there is a Land Use Academy at 7:00 pm in this room. Make sure you let Rob and staff know if you plan on coming if you haven't already. I can't encourage you enough that that is a good thing especially if you are new on the commission.

The other thing, there is coming up a tour of some industrial sites in town organized by Lou Perillo which will be coming up in April. No date yet. I'll let you all know when we get the date. It will include the planning & zoning, town council and board of finance members.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

Mr. Phillips reported there were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Santago made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Salka. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 o'clock, p.m.)