

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
VIRTUAL ONLINE MEETING via ZOOM
ASHFORD, CT / October 10, 2023**

Present: Jeffrey Silver-Smith (Chair), Janet Bellamy, Gerald Dufresne, Alex Hastillo, Douglas Jenne (arrived late), Jeffrey Schillinger, Mark Schnubel, Richard Williams, Nord Yakovleff

Guests: P & T Guerin, Marji Roy, Martin Connors, Amy Rainaud, Dianne M., Steve Rodolakis, Nora Galvin, John Midworth, Irwin Krieger, Lynita Shimizu, Laurie, Sue Leavitt

Call to Order: The Oct. 10, 2023 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Chairman Jeffrey Silver-Smith at 7:02 p.m.

Seating of Alternates: Mr. Jenne was seated for Ms. Sampson later in the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Approval of minutes of the Sept. 11, 2023 meeting:

MS. BELLAMY MOVED AND MR. DUFRESNE SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE PZC MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2023. MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FROM MR. SCHILLINGER.

Public Comments:

Ms. Roy requested that announcements of PZC public hearings be posted not only twice in the *Willimantic Chronicle* but also once in the *Ashford Citizen* in order for Ashford residents to be informed about the hearings. Connecticut statutes require formal notification. However, it was noted that the current method of notification required by the state is not up to date considering current methods of electronic communication. Mr. Silver-Smith replied that it would probably be better to have the announcement made via our town website as the deadline for submissions for the *Ashford Citizen* do not leave enough time to be very accurate. Information on the website can be revised easily to reflect more current information. The Chair stated he would investigate this better electronic solution to be more transparent about PZC meetings.

Mr. Krieger asked about how complaints regarding short term rentals are handled? The Chair responded that the PZC is not an enforcement agency. However, if complaints are made to the Land Use Office, the Zoning Officer specifically, then when a short-term renter comes up for a renewal of their permit – it would be considered prior to renewal of the permit request.

Mr. Yakovleff noted that Mr. Griffith has sold his home and moved.

Bills: none

Correspondence – Commissioner Training Opportunities:

Mr. Silver-Smith put documents on the screen outlining training options for PZC commissioners. Training is required for all PZC members and is needed by January of 2024. If members do not have this training the PZC might be open to appeals. Training requirements are different for full members and for alternates. The Conn. statute requires reporting on the training of the town's PZC members. The UCONN website offers a 4.5 hour online training course and there will be an in-person course on Oct. 28, 2023 in the Hampton CT area.

Please consult with Mr. Hastillo or to ask any questions. The training should be done before the January 1, 2024 deadline for reporting compliance.

Training opportunities are listed on the town web site in the PZC section, dated Aug. 16 2023.

[A list of classes into November can be seen on the internet by typing in: land use commissioner training opportunities Sept. 14, 2023]

Ms. Roy provided information about the review of the POCD and the IID zone's discussion within that report. PZC meeting materials can be seen on the town web site and can help with the review of what has occurred and future documents relating to the PZC's work on the IID and the POCD.

The Chair reminded attendees, especially commissioners that all items suggested for the agenda should be sent to the Zoning Officer. Material submitted by the public should not be sent to individual commission members. If a submission from the public is received by a commissioner, it should immediately be sent to the Zoning Officer. Suggested topics should be sent to the Zoning Officer no later than the Wednesday before the Monday meeting.

Public Hearing: None scheduled

Unfinished Business: 154 Westford Hill – Compliance Status

The Chairman put the status report on the screen, letter to Mr. Love dated 9/26/23. He read through the report that included observations and a way that further materials could be removed without getting a new special permit and the circumstances that would require a new permit. The last paragraph included language that served as a warning to Mr. Love to comply with the PZC's directive. [I did not find this report on the web site].

As noted by Mr. Yakovleff, the major complainant Mr. Griffith has now moved. Mr. Jenne was told that the attorney was consulted and approved the compliance status report.

**MR. DUFRESNE MOVED AND MR. HASTILLO SECONDED A MOTION THAT THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION AUTHORIZE THE ZEO, IN CONSULT WITH THE COMMISSION'S COUNSEL TO INITIATE ANY FURTHER LEGAL ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN SHOULD ANY ACTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SUBJECT OF THIS LITIGATION, THE STIPULATED AGREEMENT AND/OR THE REMOVAL OF MATERIAL FROM THE PROPERTY BE VERIFIED BY THE TOWN TO CONFLICT WITH THE ITEMS SPECIFIED ABOVE OR THE ZONING REGULATIONS
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

New Business: Zoning Regulation Updates

a. Required amendments pertaining to PA 23-142, Family and Group Child Care Homes

The current zoning regulations were put on the screen showing the two sections containing the added terminology in red lettering. A short explanation was added at the side by Mr. D'Amato. One language amendment dealt with family child care home (under 8. Permitted uses, (6) Accessory structures ... adding g...) and the other with group child care home (under 8 Permitted uses, C. Special Permit Uses, 1. Group child day-care centers...) The adjusted regulations need to be completed and approved by Dec. 2023.

MR. WILLIAMS MOVED AND MS. BELLAMY SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ASHFORD ZONING REGULATIONS' TEXT AMENDMENT LANGUAGE (NOTED IN RED/ITALICS) UNDER 8 PERMITTED USES 6 ACCESSORY STRUCTURES ADDING g. FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME OR GROUP CHILD CARE HOME AS DEFINED BY CGS SECTION 19A-77 WHICH IS LICENSED AND COMPLIES WITH THE STANDARDS SET FORTH BY THE CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ALSO TEXT AMENDMENT LANGUAGE (NOTED IN RED/ITALICS) UNDER 8 PERMITTED USES, C. SPECIAL PERMIT USES 1. GROUP CHILD DAY-CARE CENTERS AS A PRIMERY WHICH PROVIDE CARE FOR 12 OR MORE PERSONS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. IID Moratorium

Mr. D'Amato and Mr. Silver-Smith have worked out a plan of action in 7 steps that was put up on the screen. It provided a month-by-month list of actions/activities, so that by April of 2024 we would have suggestions/recommendations for what the town would like to see on the IID site. During Oct. and Nov. of 2023 town boards and commissions will be asked to provide input and a survey might be prepared to ask for citizen input. By march of 2024 a public hearing would be held so that in April a document could be prepared.

Mr. Jenne noted enough time needed to be allowed so a survey might be taken during Dec. and January. Mr. Williams asked who would write the final report? Tyche, Mr. D'Amato's firm, would be fully involved including the writing. Mr. Williams also noted that the report should comply with the ideas in the POCD. Mr. Silver-Smith noted that the POCD was broad covering all aspects of the town. Ms. Bellamy noted that a new POCD was also to be created and that surveys were good. What citizens wanted several years ago when the POCD was written may have changed now. Mr. Rodolakis asked to be consulted by Tyche during the process. He was assured that he would be contacted.

Ms. Bellamy thanked the Chair and Zoning Officer for their work on the plan. The Chair noted that Mike D'Amato did most of the work. Any survey would be available for hand written reply via the *Ashford Citizen* and also for online reply. Ms. Bellamy reminded the group that the affordable housing survey was also handed out at the Transfer Station, Senior Center and Food Bank allowing more responses.

Ms. Jean Tanner of Amidon Dr. asked that the PZC put information in the *Ashford Citizen* to inform the town about what the PZC is now planning and the background. This will alert the residents prior to the announcement of any public hearings and allow them to be better informed.

Zoning Officer Report: no report

But the Chaiman wanted to thank Ms. Sampson and Mr. Calarese, who will not be running for office again, for their service to the town on the Planning and Zoning Commission. He also then shared a special "Certificate of Appreciation for Alex Hastillo" who is retiring after 39 years of serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission. All the other members joined the Chair in expressing their sincere thanks for such long and dedicated service for the town. Many wondered how the Commission would get along without him; he noted that it had been an adventure.

Adjourn:

**MR. DUFRESNE MOVED AND MS. BELLAMY SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT 8:11 P.M.**

*Respectfully submitted by,
Valerie B. Olliver, Recording Secretary
10/10/2023*