

TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

MINUTES

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NOVEMBER 29, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gary Bazzano, Bart Pacekonis, Stephanie Dexter, Kevin Foley, Kevin Greer

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Teri Parrott

STAFF PRESENT: Michele Lipe, Director of Planning; Jeff Doolittle, Town Engineer; Lauren Zarambo, Recording Secretary

SPECIAL MEETING / MADDEN ROOM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Bazzano called the Special Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Chairman Bazzano appointed Alternate Commissioner Parrott to be seated for Commissioner Kuehnel.

1. CGS 8-24 Referral of proposed improvements of 11 acres of park land on Nevers Road

Director of Parks and Recreation Ray Favreau on behalf of the Town of South Windsor and the Town Manager presented a proposal for 11 acres of farmland within Nevers Road Park to be leveled and seeded by local contractors to become open green space. Some of the area is proposed to be made into gravel parking for 50 to 60 cars.

Director of Planning Michele Lipe read the State Statute for CGS 8-24 Referrals and indicated the Commission is being asked in a planning capacity for an advisory report that will go to the Town Council for their decision. A site plan would then come back to this Commission if the project is to go forward.

Town Engineer Jeff Doolittle concurred that a site plan would be necessary for the grading and drainage of the site which has had a history of poor drainage.

Chairman Bazzano stated public comment would typically be given at the Town Council meeting since they are the decision making body but would allow for public input.

Mr. Andy Paterna of Strawberry Lane and SWALPAC asked why the proposal was not sent to SWALPAC for their review and recommendation before the project went to the Commission since this project takes farmland away. Chairman Bazzano advised Mr. Paterna to bring it to the Town Council for discussion.

Mr. Jim Morrison, resident of Ayers Road, stated last week the Town Council indicated he had approved the project but he has not.

Ms. Mary Sullivan, resident of Wydemere Court, asked for the contractors to be identified who are doing the work and who will benefit from the project. Chairman Bazzano referred the question to the Town Council.

Mr. Sam Brady, resident of Wydemere Court, stated he has been deeply involved in recreation and open space acquisition. There is little farmland left and it is the cheapest non-cost use to the Town of open space with a return of immense benefit to the town. He indicated no matter what is said as concerned citizens the Town Council is going to do what it wants. The Chairman suggested comments be made at the Town Council meeting.

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Mr. Joe Kennedy, abutting resident of Nevers Road, stated the only improvement that could be made to the property would be to let it revert back to nature otherwise it should remain agricultural.

Ms. Betty Warren, resident of Abbe Road and Vice Chairman of SWALPAC, stated their concern is to keep the property in agriculture and is here tonight to be heard after attended the entire Town Council meeting last Monday night and receiving no answers from the Council. The lease on the property which does not end until 2018 is being broken at the cost of \$6,000 to the Town. It is not fair to the farmer who has been offered alternatives which do not appear to be viable.

Mr. Andy Paterna addressed the Commission as a planning body and stated the Plan of Conservation and Development, the Park and Recreation Master Plan, and the South Windsor Agricultural Commission Master Plan should be guiding the long range planning and decision making. The fact that someone has offered to do work for the Town at no charge is not a good reason to go forward.

Ms. Sandy Jeski, native resident of South Windsor and now of Davewell Road and member of SWALPAC, would like to see the property stay farmland to be farmed. Forty acres of farmland between Nevers and Graham Roads and additional farmland on Clark Street is being lost to private development but this is town land that can be preserved as farmland for the long term plan for our agricultural community.

Ms. Laura Futtner, resident of Main Street, spoke about the fragility of topsoil which once compromised is lost permanently and asked the Commission to think about future use of the land.

Ms. Susanne Erikson speaking for the children described the area as a portion of the park with wild life offering room for exploration for those who do not play soccer which adds an enhancement to the park.

Chairman Bazzano asked for clarification of the other two sections of farmland on the aerial view. Vice Chairman Pacekonis asked about the eleven acres to be leveled. Mr. Favreau stated the proposal is to level the land but it has not yet been engineered and there is no plan for the other two eastern sections of farmed land.

Commissioner Parrot asked how the proposed area would tie into the rest of the park and its proposed use. Mr. Favreau described the park trail system that could be easily connected to or accessed by car from Nevers Road. The use would be for open grass green space without goals or back stops for sports. The site potentially could house the farmers market with up to 60 cars accommodated in a proposed gravel parking area.

Vice Chair Pacekonis asked about the work to be done by volunteers and who would mow the area. Mr. Favreau stated his understanding is that local contractors may do the work. The Vice Chair recalled statements from the Superintendent of Parks frowning on adding to their work load with more fields to maintain. Pacekonis stated the \$6,000 lost in the farming contract and adding the cost of mowing two more fields as counterproductive to the Town. He noted page 7 of the POCD showing the parcel as agriculture and that the many public hearings held over the years have shown a major concern of this town is that we maintain agriculture. The Vice Chairman stated if there is not a plan he is not in favor of wiping out agriculture. Mr. Favreau did not agree that his department is against the development and mowing of new areas which can get on the mowing schedule and taken on as a maintenance item with the department's improved equipment which is more efficient.

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Commissioner Foley asked how the property was originally purchased and what was its intended use. Director Lipe indicated bond money was used to purchase it to allow for the combined use of recreation, open space, and farmland. Commissioner Foley stated he is interested in preserving farmland and the town is losing land left and right but this fits the criteria for walking trails, athletics, and with twelve acres of farmland still available for agriculture. He noted the Town Engineer's comments on the field's drainage issues and stated if it is green space the erosion issues go null.

Mr. Favreau addressed Vice Chairman Pacekonis' comment about a plan stating there is an approved plan in the current Parks and Recreation Commission Master Plan of Development calling for two baseball fields, a soft ball field, and a parking lot. That plan put in place ten years ago has never come to fruition nor is it what is being asked for here but was an adopted plan by the Town Council and by the town in general. Mr. Favreau indicated that plan could be revised because their master plan is presently in process of being revised by the Park and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Foley stated if the master plan was put in place and approved ten years ago and there is local support from booster clubs, and the little league, softball, and baseball could it be brought to the Town Council. Mr. Favreau stated it is a concept plan but not a guarantee. Director Lipe stated it would require land use approval.

Director Lipe stated ultimately it is a Town Council decision whether any projects come forward. South Windsor has evolved as a community over the last twenty years and when change is warranted, plans change over time with land use. The Commission could direct the Town Council that this is an appropriate use of the land now however not as an endorsement for coming back for ball fields later on unless it was something that was understood by the public.

Chairman Bazzano stated the plan went before the Park and Recreation Commission. Mr. Favreau stated the Commission did review the plan and forwarded a letter to the Town Manager in support of the pursuit of this proposal. The Chairman stated there has been discussion about having some other farmland available to the farmer to replace the farmland which would be removed. Mr. Favreau stated there may be opportunities to relocate the farmer to another field.

Commissioner Parrott suggested if there is a lease to farm the field on Town owned land and another open green space area is not presently needed, cannot the field be farmed until a plan with more approval comes forward. She noted agricultural corn fields say South Windsor.

Secretary Commissioner Dexter asked how farmers access the two eastern farmland sections. Mr. Favreau indicated access has been through the 11 acres and could continue to have access through that area or from the other side of the fields. The Secretary Commission looked for a compromise to satisfy all interests. Director Favreau stated they are open to suggestions for their concept plan which is a work in progress.

Commissioner Foley asked about the proposed gravel parking lot. Commissioner Greer asked if access to the eastern farming fields could come through the dog park. Director Favreau indicated there is access through it. Commissioner Greer voiced support for the open green space proposal.

Commissioner Greer made a motion to send a favorable report to Town Council.

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Secretary Commissioner Dexter seconded the motion.

Secretary Commissioner Dexter requested a provision be added that at least the two lots to the east must be preserved for agricultural purposes and access granted to the town through the bark park or another way.

Chairman Pacekonis asked what the ten year Park and Recreation Master Plan is for the large undeveloped sections of the park to the north. Mr. Favreau stated the plan preserves a major portion of the property which is well utilized by the trail system and will remain for that use.

Commissioner Greer requested the existing plan for ball fields in the park to remain in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Chairman Bazzano asked if the Commission would entertain anything in the best interest of finding alternative land for the agricultural farmer to lease.

Secretary Commissioner Dexter requested the Town will make every effort to find like farm land for the current tenant of the field.

Motion passed 4 in favor and 2 against. Roll call vote taken. Commissioners Greer, Foley, Dexter, and Bazzano voting in favor and Commissioners Parrott and Pacekonis voting against.

2. Preliminary discussion with Phil Tartsinis regarding property located at the corner of Sullivan Avenue and Rye Street

Mr. Phil Tartsinis presented a proposal for the Industrial zoned property to be rezoned General Commercial and developed for office and retail use in a similar style as his previous development, Sullivan Place Centers, with a change of having the businesses face the street with parking in the rear. He distributed aerial maps of the parcel to the commissioners and showed a foundational layout. The development would conform to General Commercial setbacks. The main access would be from Rye Street with a right in right out on Sullivan Avenue. The rear area of the parcel would be left undeveloped.

Director of Planning Michele Lipe gave staff comments stating Mr. Bob Urso previously had an informal discussion with the Commission for the property using Restricted Commercial zoning. General Commercial zoning offers greater flexibility with set back requirements of 50' rather than 60'.

Mr. Tartsinis described his idea for the development and its appearance using light poles to give an impression of a street setting within the complex and wanting the buildings to have more visibility. Chairman Bazzano suggested if the buildings are closer to the road they should be dressed up as the entrance to Sullivan Avenue.

Vice Chairman Pacekonis noted the drive-through indicated on the layout will have to be handled carefully. Town Engineer Doolittle suggested rotating the building 90 degrees so the long end goes back giving more room for stacking of vehicles and away from the road.

After discussion and questions the Commission reached consensus for Mr. Tartsinis to move ahead with the zone change and bring forward a new application.

3. Preliminary discussion with Rob Mannarino regarding day care expansion on Ellington Road

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Mr. Robert Mannarino, President of the Learning Center, presented a proposal to upgrade and add an addition onto their day care facility at 1250 Ellington Road stating they have a different type of enrollment since opening twenty years ago which is now more geared toward toddler and infant care.

Mr. Mannarino showed a preliminary drawing of elevations which went before the Zoning Board of Appeals but they found no hardship and a variance for the plan was denied. 'Plan B' was shown to the Commission for the same size building and parking. The plan affects two property owners to the east and west both of whom are in favor of changes and had written letters in support. This plan will increase their enrollment from 37 to 80 children although they are never at full capacity. They are evolving as a company and upgrading their facility in Manchester, two in Windsor, and in this one in South Windsor.

Director of Planning Lipe asked how the parking ratio is determined for their use. Mr. Mannarino described the different facilities but the peak hours when clients are coming in and out has varied as schedules have changed in general with the way people now work from home electronically. He stated he is comfortable with the parking spaces shown for the facility.

Vice Chairman Pacekonis stated he had no issue with an approval. Commissioner Greer asked what was located behind their property which was described as wetlands and undevelopable. Chairman Bazzano asked about the parking. Mr. Mannarino stated they will be adding nine parking spaces for 17 spaces total. Director Lipe confirmed the number equates and complies with the parking equation typically used.

4. Preliminary discussion with Rob Mannarino regarding proposed housing development along Ellington Road on 11.75 acres adjacent to Pleasant Valley School.

Mr. Mannarino stated he will come back to the Commission at a future date to discuss the proposal.

5. Appointment of Demolition Delay Committee representative

Alternate Commissioner LeBlanc is in consideration of being the representative and will be reached out to for confirmation.

6. Discussion regarding various draft zoning text amendments

Director Lipe described a definition to be added to Table 3.1.2A for Pervious Surface Coverage and amendments to Section 2.6 Location and Screening of Ancillary Structures; 4.1.4 Accessory Structures to change 200 square feet to 500 square feet; and to add Section 8.5.E Minor Modifications to Site Plans.

The Commission concluded the draft amendments will be sent to CRCOG for review.

Public hearings will be held at the December 13th meeting for draft amendments to remove the Designed Residence Development Zone and Senior Residence Developments from the regulations as well as a Metro Realty Group text amendment for an apartment project at Berry Patch.

7. Discussion regarding request to WPCA to extend sewers from East Windsor into South Windsor into an area designated as sewer avoidance in the Plan of Conservation and Development

Director Lipe stated the applicants of the Star Center approached the WPCA to work with the Town of East Windsor to sewer their properties in the northern section of Route 5. WPCA indicated it is not in their jurisdiction to extend sewers into an area identified as a preservation area in the POCD and looks for the land use policy to be established by the Commission before they could consider sewers to be extended. Providing sewers into the area could also promote more development countering the intention for the Northern Route 5 Overlay zone to remain a low intensity development area. Sewer avoidance areas were required to be

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designated by the State when the sewer maps were upgraded. If the Commission feels it is appropriate to bring sewers into the area it will be necessary to amend the POCD and approach the State Office of Policy Management.

After discussion with the Town Engineer, the Commission concluded to keep sewers out of the Northern Route 5 area so as not to encourage high intensity development and adhere to current zoning of the area.

8. Update on Comprehensive Transit Analysis Study conducted by CRCOG, DOT and CT Transit Director Lipe distributed a press release and maps from CRCOG for the existing and recommended bus routes in town based on ridership. Potential changes could take the route off Main Street and add a route onto Sullivan Avenue.

9. Review of 2017 Regular Meeting Schedule

The schedule will be amended change an April meeting to accommodate the Passover holiday.

BONDS: Callings/Reductions/Settings

- 1.** Appl. 15-03P, Regional Distribution Facility, 135 Sullivan Avenue Bond in the amount of \$20,000 to be reduced by \$20,000 to leave a balance of -0-.

A correction from last meetingCommissioner pacekonis made a motion to reduce the above mentioned bond. Commissioner Dexter seconded the motion. The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

MINUTES: Draft minutes of 11/15/16 were not distributed and will be voted on at the next meeting. Chairman Bazzano indicated Councilor Matthew Riley's comment in Item 2 of the minutes of 10/18/16 should refer to the Town Council meeting from the previous night and Councilor Riley will be satisfied with the way the wording stands.

OLD BUSINESS:

Appl. 16-55P, Manchester Property Group LLC dba Mike & Tony Auto Repair, Inc. at 1161 John Fitch Boulevard is in redesign and will come back before the Commission in January using their 65 day extension.

Vice Chairman Pacekonis had reported the crosswalk lights on Ellington Road at the Mill on the River are not working. Director Lipe researched the lights which showed their maintenance is the responsibility of the Town. The police are researching possible ideas for replacement and to address the crosswalk.

OTHER BUSINESS:

CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 8:22 p.m. was made by Vice Chairman Pacekonis

Seconded by Commissioner Foley

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren L. Zarambo

Recording Secretary