

TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

MINUTES

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FEBRUARY 9, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Frank Bonzani, Stephanie Dexter, Bill Flagg, Bart Pacekonis, Stephen Wagner

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Paul Bernstein, Michael LeBlanc, Elizabeth McGuire

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Secretary Commissioner Bonzani read the legal notice as published on the Town Website.

Chairman Pacekonis stated the meeting is being live-streamed through a Webex conference call on the Town website as well as on local channels and described the procedures under which the meeting will operate.

Chairman Pacekonis appointed Alternate Commissioner LeBlanc to be seated for Commissioner Foley, and Alternate Commissioner Bernstein to be seated for Commissioner Greer.

PUBLIC HEARING / Webex Conference ONLINE MEETING 7:00 PM

- 1. Appl. 21-01P, Town of South Windsor Fairgrounds at Rye Street Park** – request for a modification to allow limited use of the Troy Road access (currently emergency only), on property located at 75 Brookfield Street (westerly side of Brookfield Street and northerly side of Troy Road), RR zone

Superintendent of Parks and Grounds John Caldwell presented the request to use the emergency exit access onto Troy Road as an entrance on limited occasions when permission is granted by Town staff. A site plan was shown. The access was proposed to be improved as a gravel road.

Director of Planning Lipe gave staff comments:

1. Request for a modification to the existing site plan of development, approved in 2015, to allow for a change in the use of the Troy Road emergency entrance/exit to accommodate access to the multi-use open area for potential uses, on property located on the westerly side of Brookfield Street and northerly side of Troy Road, RR zone
2. With the current plan, there are two curb cuts proposed to service this site – the primary entrance will remain off of Brookfield Street with an emergency entrance/exit off of Troy Road. The Troy Road entrance is gated. During the Wapping Fair, the Brookfield entrance is used for the public, staff and parking and the traffic pattern allows for separate locations for ingress and egress along Brookfield Street with the Troy Road entrance being used to bring in the large fair equipment and for emergency access.
3. This proposal is to allow limited use of the Troy Road access, subject to approval of the Town Manager or his designee such as Director of Parks and Recreation or Superintendent of Parks, for uses such as: Wapping Fair, Paws in the Park, Doodle Bug, South Windsor Flyers Club, access for farmer leasing property, tiger beetle maintenance and other activities that may use that field.
4. The goal is for these groups to gain access from Troy Road without have to cross the main fairgrounds. The existing gate will remain locked and the minor improvements will be made to the roadway to add the anticipated additional traffic and large trucks for events.

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5. This site does abut residential houses and is subject to a fifty foot buffer along those property lines. The existing Troy Road access (shown in attached pictures) is approximately 360 feet from the abutting residential house to the west and 640 feet to the east.

Town Engineer Doolittle had no additional staff comments.

Chairman Pacekonis asked for public comment. Director Lipe stated no emails were received. Mr. Guild confirmed no one was on the public line to speak.

Chairman Pacekonis stated the public hearing will be held open to give the public time to comment and asked for comments from commissioners.

Commissioner Wagner commented that access was difficult when he had visited the site on bicycle and suggested future improvements could include a bicycle multi-use path.

Commissioner Flagg asked Superintendent Caldwell about the area used by the Tobacco Valley Fliers Club. Mr. Caldwell stated Fliers Club is happy about their move to the area that is also a good habitat for the tiger beetles where more activity is better for them. Commissioner Flagg spoke highly of the Fliers Club.

Commissioner Dexter appreciated Commissioner Flagg's comment and voiced her support. Commissioner Bonzani agreed.

Commissioner Bernstein noted he did not receive a packet in the mail for the meeting and asked about the site plan shown. Director Lipe stated materials will be resent and the public hearing will be held open for review and discussion.

Commissioner LeBlanc stated he did not receive a packet either but is in support of the application.

Commissioner McGuire noted she did not receive the packet but the plan sounds good and would like to see the materials.

Chairman Pacekonis asked about the sandy area for the beetles. Caldwell described the endangered tiger beetles that were moved from one location in town to the Fairgrounds and where the Fliers Club will be flying their planes.

Mr. Guild stated no one from the public was waiting to speak.

Commissioner Wagner noted the sounds that planes make and asked about implications for the neighbors. Mr. Caldwell stated 98% of all the planes flying are electric. Commissioner Flagg noted he has watched the planes fly and even with the gas planes, the noise is dissipated with the amount of space.

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to continue the public hearing to February 23. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bernstein. The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

- 2. PZC Sponsored Zoning Text Amendment** – request for a Zoning Text Amendment to modify Section 7.15 Outdoor Dining Permits to increase the number of tables/seats allowed through staff approval to 24 Tables/96 Seats (**Continued from 1/26/21**)

Director of Planning Lipe gave staff comments regarding consideration of additional parking to accommodate more outdoor dining and read revised wording for the amendment. (Exhibit A)

Town Engineer Doolittle had no comments.

Chairman Pacekonis asked for public comment. Mr. Guild reported no email comments or calls.

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Chairman Pacekonis asked for comment from commissioners.

Commissioners voiced support for the amendment and text changes.

Chairman Pacekonis concurred that the changes and regulations are completely adequate for what South Windsor needs, and would like to explore adding more areas for outdoor dining especially in the town center.

The Chairman closed the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

3. PZC Sponsored Zoning Text Amendment – request for a Zoning Text Amendment to modify Section 7.12 Home Animal Agriculture to allow chickens on properties with less than one acre and to establish criteria for beekeeping (**Continued from 1/26/21**)

Director of Planning Lipe gave staff comments regarding the comment received from the public about allowing chickens by notification rather than permitting. Director Lipe noted criteria written by the Zoning Enforcement Officer for permitting chickens. (Exhibit B)

Chairman Pacekonis asked for public comment. Mr. Guild reported no comments or calls.

Chairman Pacekonis asked for comment from commissioners.

Commissioner Bonzani no additional comments.

Commissioner Dexter had no additional comments and agreed with the recommendations from Staff.

Commissioner Flagg noted the regulation as a good balance of what residents can do with their properties and is in favor of the amendment.

Commissioners Wagner and Bernstein had no comments.

Commissioner LeBlanc stated it is a good thing for those with less than acre to have the opportunity to have chickens.

Mr. Guild connected a call from Ms. Jessica Waterhouse of 215 Main Street who is interested in starting an animal sanctuary as a non-profit asking how the regulation would apply to other animals besides chickens. She had reviewed the regulations but did not find anything other than information regarding chickens. Director Lipe referenced Section 7.12.2 of the Zoning Regulation

Commissioner McGuire noted the changes as fair and reasonable.

Chairman Pacekonis agreed with text changes and that it is important for anyone who wants to participate to provide the information asked for permitting.

There was one else from the public wanting to be heard.

Chairman Pacekonis closed the public hearing at 7:50 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING / Webex Conference ONLINE MEETING

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Pacekonis called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Guild confirmed no one was on the public line and Director Lipe had no emails.

NEW BUSINESS: Discussion/Decision/Action regarding the following:

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1. Discussion of recommended zoning regulation text amendments for Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (Continued from 1/12/21)

Commissioner Wagner presented recommended zoning text amendments drafts from the Energy Committee with committee member Hank Cullinane and subcommittee member Stephen Lewis. The discussion that began at the 11/24/20 and 1/12/21 meetings continued with Commissioner Wagner describing how charging will be needed in the future and how the draft amendments will provide for vehicle supply equipment to be a permitted use.

It is projected there will be 125,000 electric vehicles in the state by 2025, and 500,000 electric vehicles by 2030. The State DEEP has proposed zoning regulations be modified to require 10% of parking spaces for any new construction or major renovation and multi-family sites to have EV Ready conduits, wiring and panel capability; with 3% of the spaces to actually be installed for new construction. People will be charging their electric vehicles at home or at work, and there will also be a need to support charging at other locations where people spend time if they live or work in older developments without charging capability.

Commissioner Wagner went over the specifics of the draft regulations that provide for EV charging to be a permitted accessory use everywhere and allow for large facilities to be set up as destination charging areas. Percentages of building ready spaces were shown for the 2028/2030 timeframe with the number of actual chargers starting out low and gradually increasing over time.

Chairman Pacekonis referenced a table for new construction requirements and noted concerns about requirements for the construction of additions onto existing buildings. The Chairman suggested amending the EV code requirement for renovations to half of the required spaces for new construction to encourage renovation of buildings. Commissioner Wagner commented that if a parking lot is torn out to gravel it is relatively inexpensive to install the equipment where as if the pavement is undisturbed it may not be a requirement. Adding 10,000 sf, or expanding parking, or as a change of use, are the only cases in renovation where this is a requirement in the draft. Director Lipe and Commissioner Wagner will modify the wording for discussion at public hearing.

Commissioner Bernstein asked if the requirement would be a default situation and as applications came in, exceptions could be requested if not beneficial to a project. Director Lipe noted criteria could be drafted to that effect but suggested incentives could be written to encourage installations rather than discourage use. Commissioner Bernstein agreed.

Commissioner LeBlanc noted increasing the amount of electric service at a building at the time of renovation can be cost prohibitive and possibly a burden to smaller businesses, and while installing equipment at time of construction for future use is a good thing, having a power source installed and unused does incur monthly fees. Commissioner LeBlanc also noted proprietary charging can be a legal issue and may be need to be addressed. Commissioner Wagner noted provisions in the draft that chargers must be of universal use. Director Lipe stated if there is concern for a small business meeting the 1 to 9 requirement, the requirement could be modified to those businesses providing more than 10 or 15 spaces. Commissioners continued the discussion and the draft was modified to eliminate required EV Ready spaces for sites with 15 or less required parking spaces.

Commissioner Wagner discussed how advertising can be allowed on charging equipment as an incentive to finance the equipment and suggested an addition to Appendix H of the draft for moving advertisement and video to be allowed only if not visible from the road, in order not to be a distraction to drivers. Chairman Pacekonis suggested the same requirements for travel hub zones.

Commissioner Dexter commended the amount of work that has been put in by Commissioner Wagner.

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Commissioner Bernstein spoke from a marketing viewpoint stating Commissioner Wagner has been an evangelist for the effort and stellar in his foresight on EV charging noting current and future statistics for electric cars and trucks.

Commissioner Wagner noted multifamily developments want to get on board to be more marketable.

Commissioner Dexter asked if an amended draft would be ready to go to public hearing. Director Lipe stated a draft would first be sent to CRCOG for a 35 day referral period.

Mr. Lewis applauded the efforts of the PZC and South Windsor.

Commissioner Wagner noted this requirement will impact school construction and will be a cost to be absorbed in their next plan.

Chairman Pacekonis suggested March 23rd for the amendment to go to public hearing. Commissioner Flagg asked that the agenda has room for public input so the Commission has time to address the details.

- 2. PZC Sponsored Zoning Text Amendment** – request for a Zoning Text Amendment to modify Section 7.15 Outdoor Dining Permits to increase the number of tables/seats allowed through staff approval to 24 Tables/96 Seats

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the text amendment with the changes presented in the public hearing in accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development with an Effective Date of 2/28/21.

Commissioner Dexter seconded the motion.

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

- 3. PZC Sponsored Zoning Text Amendment** – request for a Zoning Text Amendment to modify Section 7.12 Home Animal Agriculture to allow chickens on properties with less than one acre and to establish criteria for beekeeping

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve the text amendment with the changes presented in the public hearing in accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development with an Effective Date of 2/28/21

Commissioner Bernstein seconded the motion.

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

BONDS: Callings/Reductions/Settings

MINUTES: 1/12/21 approved by consensus and the minutes of 1/26/21 to be reviewed at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: *see page 3*

APPLICATIONS OFFICIALLY RECEIVED:

1. **Appl. 21-08P, T's Auto Service**– request for renewal of a two year temporary and conditional permit (Section 2.13.a) to allow display of four vehicles for sale at 718 Ellington Road, RC zone

OTHER BUSINESS:

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Commissioner Dexter asked where the sale of firearms is allowed. Director Lipe stated it is allowed where retail sales are allowed and in the industrial zone only as an incidental sale to a permitted use.

Chairman Pacekonis asked when in person meetings will be held again and that he is open to conducting meetings in person.

CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:46 p.m. was made by Commissioner Bonzani

Motion seconded by Commissioner Dexter.

The motion carried and the vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren L. Zarambo,

Recording Secretary