

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

REGULAR Meeting #1766 – September 24, 2019

MEETING MINUTES

*******Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting*******

The Regular Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT. at 6:32 P. M. by Chairman Ouellette.

PRESENT: **Regular Members:** Joe Ouellette (Chairman), Michael Kowalski, Dick Sullivan, and Jim Thurz.

Alternate Members: Anne Gobin, Frank Gowdy, and Marti Zhigailo.

ABSENT: **Regular Members:** Tim Moore

Alternate Members: All Alternate Members were present.

Also present was Town Planner Ruben Flores-Marzan.

GUESTS: Terri Hahn, of LADA, P.C., Land Planners; Dick Pippin, Kathy Pippin, and Tom Talamini.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum was established as four Regular Members and three Alternate Members were present at the Call to Order. Chairman Ouellette noted all Regular Members would sit in, and vote, on all Items of Business this evening. Following in accordance with the service rotation schedule Chairman Ouellette requested Alternate Member Gobin to join the Board regarding discussion and action on all Items of Business this evening as well.

LEGAL NOTICE: None.

ADDED AGENDA ITEMS: None.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Chairman Ouellette queried the audience for comments regarding items/issues not posted on the Agenda. No one requested to speak.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/August 13, and September 10, 2019:

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MOTION: To APPROVE the Minutes of Regular Meeting #1675 dated September 10, 2019 as written, AND the Minutes of Regular Meeting #1674 dated August 13, 2019 as written.

Sullivan moved/Kowalski seconded/

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Sullivan indicated he would be voting in favor of the Minutes of August 13, 2019 but not the Minutes for September 10, 2019; Chairman Ouellette indicated he would be abstaining from August 13, 2019; Commissioner Thurz indicated he would be abstaining from August 13, 2019 as well.

Chairman Ouellette noted the motion as presented failed.

MOTION: To APPROVE the Minutes of Regular Meeting #1674 dated August 13, 2019 as written.

Sullivan moved/Kowalski seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Kowalski/Sullivan/Zhigailo
Opposed: No one
Abstained: Ouellette/Thurz**

MOTION: To APPROVE the Minutes of Regular Meeting #1675 dated September 10, 2019 as written.

Sullivan moved/Kowalski seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Ouellette/Kowalski/Thurz/Zhigailo
Opposed: No one
Abstained: Sullivan**

RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS:

Chairman Ouellette noted receipt of the following new Applications:

PERFORMANCE BONDS – ACTIONS; PERMIT EXTENSIONS; ROAD ACCEPTANCE

No requests presented under this Item of Business this evening.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

NEW PUBLIC: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

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**OLD BUSINESS/A. Update from T. Hahn of LADA re: Warehouse Point
Stormwater Study:**

Terri Hahn, of LADA, P.C., Land Planners, joined the Commission.

Mrs. Hahn reported that as part of the ongoing study of the stormwater conditions within the Warehouse Point area she has completed an Existing Conditions Report. The next step was to hold a neighborhood workshop to confirm those findings. As an option to the traditional workshop Mrs. Hahn held two pop-up workshops at Geissler's Supermarket, one during the evening of August 21st and the second during a Saturday sidewalk sale in September. The workshops were held for three to four hours respectively. Mrs. Hahn reported they had set up a table outside the market, and asked people as they entered or left the market if they lived in Warehouse Point. Those people who responded yes and were willing to participate were given a survey which reflected questions associated with the study area. Respondents were also given a packet of flood information from DEEP and FEMA.

Mrs. Hahn reported the purpose of the workshop was to see if her calculations matched the people's responses. During the time of the two workshops they found approximately 500 people entered the market during the August evening and approximately 1000 people on the Saturday morning. Approximately 180 people identified themselves as living in Warehouse Point; 21 people agreed to complete the survey. Mrs. Hahn indicated that the results reflected approximately 10% of the neighborhood residents responded to the survey. The respondents either owned property or were renting properties in Warehouse Point. One of the respondents lived on Spring Street, one lived within the 100 year flood zone, two lived in the 500 year flood zone, and the remainder lived outside the flood area. None of the respondents lived on South Water Street. Mrs. Hahn reported if you live in the 100 year flood zone and have a mortgage you must have flood insurance; the person who lived in the 100 year flood zone carried flood insurance. Those who lived in the 500 year flood zone were aware of the flood issues but were not required to purchase flood insurance.

Mrs. Hahn indicated she hoped to reach residents living on South Water Street by other methods. She felt that many of those property owners may not currently have mortgages on their homes.

Mrs. Hahn reported they became aware of a drainage issue on Gardner Street, Grandview Terrace, and North Main Street which was not identified on the map; that information has been passed on to DPW. Everyone they spoke to was aware of the river but it wasn't in their backyard and was not as urgent to them.

Mrs. Hahn felt that everything they discovered during the survey was consistent with their calculations and observations to date.

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Mrs. Hahn indicated that one of the ancillary discovery they noticed was that not many families with kids visited the store. She noticed the age of the average buyer was older so the overall age in Warehouse Point may be higher than average. Mrs. Hahn suggested the Commission may want to consider that information when considering ways to sustain the existing businesses in Warehouse Point.

Commissioner Thurz questioned if any of the respondents mentioned the Blue Ditch? Mrs. Hahn indicated that everyone they spoke to was aware of it; the person who lived on Spring Street felt his property was drier than the information indicated, although she noted there hasn't been that much rain since April this year.

Chairman Ouellette questioned what would Mrs. Hahn have done differently if she had done a traditional workshop rather than the pop-up workshop? Mrs. Hahn suggested she may have done it in June, and perhaps held it at the Little League field, where she may have encountered a different generation of respondents.

Commissioner Sullivan questioned if the people who did participate in the survey could Mrs. Hahn provide an estimate of the number of people who didn't care about the stormwater issues? Mrs. Hahn indicated that everyone she spoke to was interested in the issue, and questioned what could be done about it; many questioned how that would affect them putting on an addition or paving their driveway. Several people questioned how the stormwater issue would affect the growth of Warehouse Point? To address those questions Mrs. Hahn suggested the Commission will consider writing regulations, and will develop site plans and streetscapes for the Warehouse Point area specifically.

Mrs. Hahn suggested the elevation of South Water Street is 30 feet, while the flood elevation is 35 feet. She suggested if a property owner planned to make substantial improvements to their property those improvements would need to be made at the elevation of 36 feet. Would that require that the buildings were raised up? She suggested many of the existing buildings are older structures; what would raising them up look like? She suggested the living area would be raised up to the second story level, with parking underneath the structure and stairs being the access to the second level. No dwelling space would be allowed on the bottom level. Mrs. Hahn suggested the Commission envision the beach communities being built along the Connecticut shores as an example of this construction.

Commissioner Gobin questioned how many of the existing properties located on South Water Street are multi-family dwellings? She noted the photos of existing homes reflect multiple meters at the dwellings. Mrs. Hahn suggested the challenge will be to make the renovations financially worthwhile. She suggested perhaps the dwellings would be moved further back from the street line and increase the overall size of the house while going upward with the reconstruction. The Commission would need to consider increasing density to make the properties financially worthwhile.

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Commissioner Kowalski questioned if existing homeowners would have to participate in the redevelopment? Mrs. Hahn cited current flood regulations require reconstruction at current standards if property damage was incurred at a specified percentage. Discussion continued regarding what agency would decide that limit of damage; the Commission felt many people would demolish the existing property and start over. Mrs. Hahn suggested the Town currently has aggressive flood regulations; the Commission will need to consider the direction of the redevelopment. Commissioner Thurz recalled that South Water Street flood during the 1980s; there was 4 feet of water in the first floor of many of the existing homes. He suggested all of those homes would have to be raised up. Mrs. Hahn noted the current regulations weren't in place in the 1980s.

Chairman Ouellette suggested a consideration for the Commission is do we stay with the current flood regulations, or rewrite regulations based on a DEEP model? He questioned what would happen if the Commission raised the standards, a flood occurred, and people opposed making the changes? Mrs. Hahn suggested the Town has a blight ordinance, and FEMA has a buy-out program but the Town would have to get involved in the program for the properties to qualify. It's not an eminent domain situation; it's a financial assistance program to help homeowners relieve themselves of their properties.

Commissioner Gobin questioned how you would provide the owner of rental properties with the incentive to follow the new construction standards; do they lose the first floor rental to the parking? Mrs. Hahn suggested that would be addressed by increasing the density factor. Commissioner Gobin questioned if Mrs. Hahn's study reflected multiple owners along South Water Street, or did it appear that one person owned multiple properties? Mrs. Hahn indicated she could review the property information.

Chairman Ouellette questioned if Mrs. Hahn's study included a vision for what South Water Street should look like in the future; would it include open space along the river or linear trails? Mrs. Hahn suggested this is the only street in East Windsor with water views; it's also walkable to downtown Warehouse Point, and it's walkable to the train station in Windsor Locks. She suggested the Commission might consider a riverview zone. Town Planner Flores-Marzan suggested the area is almost getting to the point of negative growth with no kids living in the area. Does the Commission want to encourage new people moving in to increase the tax base?

Chairman Ouellette questioned what the vistas from the adjacent streets would be? Mrs. Hahn suggested Dean Avenue is at elevation 42 feet; people located on both streets would look into the first floor of the adjacent dwellings. Currently, the people living on Dean Avenue might have a glimpse of the second floors of the homes on South Water Street.

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Commissioner Gowdy questioned the number of home sales in the last 5 years? He felt many of those homeowners will be leaving the area and moving into retirement communities.

Mrs. Hahn then presented the Commission with redevelopment site plans for several of the larger parcels located within the Warehouse Point study area. The designs offered the Commission the varying types of redevelopment opportunities. They ranged from mixed use along street frontage with parking within the interior and perhaps housing to the rear, to small commercial/retail development with shared parking. Chairman Ouellette suggested this provides the Commission with the opportunity to create land use development for the future, and streamline the approval process by utilizing site plan approvals rather than special use approvals. Commissioner Sullivan suggested he would like to see a requirement for underground utilities.

Mrs. Hahn suggested the next step is to create draft regulations. She anticipates she will be returning to the Commission for further discussion once a month going forward.

OLD BUSINESS/B. Site visits:

No updates presented this evening.

OTHER BUSINESS/A. Informal discussion about development trends:

Town Planner Flores-Marzan noted Mrs. Hahn had spoken of generational trends when discussing the update on the Warehouse Point Stormwater Study. He indicated that land use professionals are seeing an up-tick for multi-family upscale developments/apartments, solar farms, small business/retail, and commercial/industrial developments. Investors from out of state, and also within Connecticut, say other surrounding towns are running out of land, and they are looking at East Windsor because of our proximity to the interstate and the airport. He noted interest in land surrounding the Route 5/North Road/Bridge Street intersection, and also further along Route 5. Developers are looking for larger tracts of land with public water and sewer and easy access to the interstate. Town Planner Flores-Marzan noted small business entrepreneurs are also looking to relocate or open up new businesses.

Town Planner Flores-Marzan suggested the Commission needs to reconsider the density limits specified in the current regulations, which is currently 4 units per acre. He suggested a current developer is working on a text amendment to increase unit density, and another recent developer is showing a similar interest regarding density for upscale apartments. Town Planner Flores-Marzan felt the current POCD is good but he felt there are opportunities to make changes to the regulations to attract these other people.

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Chairman Ouellette noted he's surprised that no one is showing interest in North Road after the Commission changed the zoning designation. Town Planner Flores-Marzan cited the lack of infrastructure along North Road. Commissioner Thurz felt the unwillingness of Connecticut Water Company to install a water line prior to development is a factor. Commissioner Gowdy recalled that the developer for Canyon Ridge had proposed installing the sewer line but residents opposed construction of the apartments; Canyon Ridge completed their development but installed the sewer line in the easterly direction which was a shorter distance. Town Planner Flores-Marzan suggested other towns are getting the Amazons because the infrastructure already exists; that lessens the risk and the developer is more willing to invest in a project.

Commissioner Gobin referenced the construction of freight warehouses along Sullivan Avenue in South Windsor; she suggested it's farmland that's become warehouses. Discussion continued regarding the Commission's intent for the development of North Road.

Discussion also followed regarding the limitations of Route 5 as it runs through East Windsor, and its impact on development.

BUSINESS MEETING/A. General Zoning Issues:

No discussion this evening.

BUSINESS MEETING/B. Signing of Mylars/Plans, Motions:

Mylars/Plans:

None presented for signature this evening.

Motions:

- **Windbrook Homes Subdivision** on Reservoir Avenue from Windbrook Homes, LLC, Map 089, Block 55, Lot 012.
- **North Road Materials, LLC Special Permit** Renewal of a Special Use Permit for a soil storage and management facility located at 297 North Road, in the A-1/A-2 Zones (Map 117, Block 36, Lots 43B and 43C).

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Kowalski moved/Sullivan seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

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Respectfully submitted,

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Planning and Zoning Commission