

August 27, 2012

Present: Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Reich, Mr. Solley, Mr. Werkhoven, Mr. Abella

Alternates Present:

Absent: Dr. Craparo, Mr. Wyant, Mr. Dutton

Staff Present: Shelley White, Janet Hill, Mike Ajello

Others Present:

Mr. Fitzherbert called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Seated: Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Werkhoven, Mr. Reich, Mr. Abella

Consideration of the Minutes

The Commission considered the July 23, 2012 regular Meeting Minutes of the Town of Washington Zoning Commission.

Motion:

to accept the Zoning Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2012 as submitted,
by Mr. Reich, seconded by Mr. Abella, passed by 4-0 vote

The Commission considered the July 30, 2012 Special Meeting Minutes of the Town of Washington Zoning Commission.

Motion:

to accept the Special Zoning Meeting Minutes of July 30, 2012 as submitted,
by Mr. Abella, seconded by Mr. Werkhoven, passed by 4-0 vote

New Application(s)

There were no new applications to discuss

Other Business

Possible Revisions of the Zoning Regulation and Zoning Map:

Ms. Hill distributed 3 maps of the separate business districts and a 4-page copy of the Town of East Windsor Zoning Regulations, Section 6.4 Wireless Telecommunication Sites.

Mr. Fitzherbert stated that he has been reading other town's telecommunications regulations on their websites and that they range from 6 pages to 22 pages. The Commissioners discussed the role of Zoning regarding the siting of cell towers. Mr. Fitzherbert stated that the Zoning Commission has a say about such things as buffering and lot coverage among other things but the Connecticut Siting Council regulates the siting. Ms. Hill stated that she believes the Town is able to voice their preferences to the CSC and that they consider the town's zoning regulations. .

The Commission discussed height of a cell towers. Mr. Fitzherbert stated that people read the telecommunication section in the Zoning Regulations and are mislead to think that the Zoning Commission has jurisdiction over siting but they do not and he feels that the regulations should be as factual as possible. Mr. Ajello stated that the cell towers would most likely be sited on a large lot because of the fall zone and lot coverage usually would not be an issue. Mr. Fitzherbert stated that he has read telecommunication regulations that include specs on broadcasting and wattage because if the town has a cell tower they want it to work and be effective.

The Commission discussed the current lease that is being negotiated with Homeland Towers. The Commission discussed the availability and accuracy of information regarding the health effects from the cell towers.

7:55 Mr. Solley arrives and is seated

Mr. Solley stated that a town might wish to keep some of the existing telecommunication regulations. The Commissioners discussed service coverage. Mr. Solley stated that the Town could negotiate any aspect of a lease with the tower erecting company. Ms. Hill stated that she has a call into Mr. McGuinness of the Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments to see if there are any towns that have recently revised their telecommunication regulations.

Ms. Hill stated that the maps she distributed indicate the district and the lots that the district line runs through. The Commissioners looked at the map of the Depot Business District. Mr. Fitzherbert read the last sentence in Section 3.2 Zoning District Boundaries: "Unless otherwise specified in the particular zone for a commercial lot, where the boundary between two districts divides a lot, the use of the entire lot shall be governed by the more restrictive district conditions." The Commissioners discussed possible revisions. Mr. Solley suggested that the Commission examine each business district separately and lot by lot and Ms. Hill agreed. The Commissioners discussed meeting with each business district separately.

Ms. Hill stated that the Planning Commission would like to meet with the Zoning Commission late September or early October to discuss the revision of the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Planning Commission plans to hold meetings in each village to hear the residents concerns and ideas in relation to the key items of the revised POCD.

Ms. Hill stated that a demographic study shows that in the last ten years the average age of the Town of Washington increased from 41 years old to 49 years old. She stated that the Planning Commission is aware of this and going to address this issue in the revised POCD. The Commission discussed the trend of the aging population in Town and how the regulations allow convalescent homes but the regulations need to be updated for modern needs.

Mr. Fitzherbert stated that there is one line in Section 1.3 Purpose of the Town of Washington Zoning Regulations that is about economics: "...and encouraging the construction of safe, convenient business buildings attractively and conveniently located with adequate provision for parking." Mr. Fitzherbert stated that that Town has some 'destination' restaurants but that is in the evening usually and he feels there are enough businesses in Town that draw people into Town.

Mr. Fitzherbert stated that the current POCD discussed items that were never implemented such as cluster housing. He stated that regulations were never written to implement cluster housing. Ms. Hill stated that there is a very abbreviated regulation addressing cluster housing but no one has

ever applied for it. Mr. Fitzherbert stated that he feels more specific regulations and he feels that with the more advanced septic systems that are available the soil type requirements would not hinder the ability to use a lot. Mr. Solley stated that soil based zoning was established in 1978 and one of the reasons for applying it was because it restricts density.

Mr. Ajello stated that he feels the Town should have an Economic Development Commission that works in tandem with the housing authority. Ms. Hill stated that she has recommended before. Mr. Solley stated that the Town could try to slow down the trend of the aging population, lack of affordable housing and disappearance of young families but he does not feel that it could be reversed without drastic steps. Mr. Abella stated that many towns see that there are people shopping at the bigger stores than the smaller business in the center of town.

The Commissioners agreed to take these maps home and drive around the districts to familiarize themselves with the individual areas. Ms. Hill advised the Commission to review the Planning Meeting Minutes of the past couple meetings. She stated that the four main topics the Planning Commission is focusing on are: 1. Enhancing Village Centers 2. Housing 3. Economic Development and 4. Sustainability. The Commission briefly discussed the school system. Ms. Hill stated that the Board of Education has jurisdiction over policy but the Planning Commission could address the facilities.

The Commission briefly discussed housing in the villages.

Privilege of the Floor

There were no members of the public present.

Zoning Enforcement

The Zoning Commission considered the Zoning Enforcement Report dated August 27, 2012 (on file in the Land Use Office).

Smith/35 East Shore Road:

Ms. Hill stated that she is waiting for a return phone call from Town Counsel regarding the Smith property.

Mr. Ajello stated that the issues included in the report are updates on existing issues.

Other Business Cont.

Mr. Fitzherbert stated that he would like to speak with Town Counsel to discuss the legal process and the options that are available to the Zoning Commission.

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn at 9:15 pm. by Mr. Solley, seconded by Mr. Abella, passed by 5-0 vote.

Mr. Fitzherbert adjourned the meeting.

SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:
Shelley White, Land Use Clerk