

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION/
TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
LAND USE OFFICE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2010
(Not yet approved by the Commission)**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Crary Brownell called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. at the Town Grange.

2. ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell-Chairman (regular member), James Curtin (regular member), Bernard Gillis (alternate member), John Matthew (regular member), Kevin Matthews (regular member), Louis Salicrup (Alternate), Harvey Thomas (regular member)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Elizabeth Lunt (Alternate), Anthony Saraco (regular member)

OTHERS PRESENT: James Ventres, and approximately 5 people were present.

Mr. Brownell appointed Mr. Salicrup to vote for Mr. Saraco this evening.

3. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND SET HEARING DATES

A) East Haddam Village District map amendment involving the Farr property – 2 Porges Road

No one representing the applicant was present at this meeting. Mr. Ventres informed the Commission that he has now received a full application and narrative, along with the proposed text amendment. Mr. Ventres noted that if the Commission plans to schedule a public hearing for this application, he will need 35 days for notification of Midstate Regional Planning Agency for review. He also noted that the Plan of Conservation and Development review is scheduled for the second February meeting; therefore, he suggested the first March meeting.

Responsive to inquiry by Mr. Brownell, Mr. Ventres presented a map with the zones. He stated he would send out a .pdf file before the public hearing.

Motion by Mr. Thomas to schedule a public hearing on March 9, 2010, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange for Haddam Village District map amendment involving the Farr property – 2 Porges Road. Seconded by Mr. Curtin, and carried by unanimous vote.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the January 12, 2010 regular meeting were accepted with the following amendments:

- Page 2, Item 6A, 1st paragraph, 3rd sentence: Change “EDC” to “zoning enforcement officer”

- Page 2, Item 6A, 2nd paragraph, 5th sentence: Add “each” after “feet”
- Page 5, Paragraph 3, 2nd sentence: Add “part of the original parcel” to end of sentence

5. BILLS

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Suburban Stationers	3505788-0	\$133.98

Motion by Mr. Curtin to pay the bill as presented. Seconded by Mr. Salicrup, and carried by unanimous vote.

6. DISCUSSION

A) Discussion with Economic Development Commission on signage in the commercial districts.

Mr. Gillis gave an update from the last Tuesday’s subcommittee meeting. Notes from the meeting were distributed. Mr. Gillis stated that one topic of discussion had been for zoning regulations to apply to everyone in the IG zone. He reviewed the topics from the handout.

Mr. Bob Casner suggested the possible use of a free standing sign, and then list business names and/or services offered underneath the sign. Mr. Ventres stated this was similar to the directory sign, used at the Grist Mill site, where each company used a 1’ x 4’ area, totaling 4 square feet each.

Mr. Casner discussed the use of sandwich board signs, either 2’x2’ or 2’x3’. He noted that these would need to be classified as temporary signs, taken in at the end of the day. Thomas noted that a few years ago, there had been some discussion about taking in sandwich board signs at night, and it was not well received.

Mr. Casner suggested that all of the businesses should be entitled to one “open” flag on the buildings, but that these should be taken in at night. Mr. Thomas questioned the use and effect of open flags on each building, such as at Grist Mill Market and the adjacent stores. Mr. Gillis stated the open flags would be on each building, not in front of the stores. Mr. Ventres believed it could be a very effective tool, if they were used properly and taken in when the businesses were not actually open.

Mr. Thomas questioned the window signage, as listed on the handout. He asked if this would be 25% of the total area of the windows. Mr. Casner stated it would be 25% of the windows of the front façade.

Mr. Casner stated that the EDC was developing some proposals, and they planned to come back with some recommendations in two weeks. Mr. Brownell informed the EDC that the Plan of Conservation and Development review was scheduled for the second February meeting. Mr. Ventres informed the Commission that the HDC and Conservation Commission planned to attend and had reports. Mrs. Ziobron stated that the EDC would be attending as well.

Mr. Thomas noted that too many signs could be counterproductive to businesses. Mr. Casner stated it was difficult because each business has different needs. He stated they needed to find a balance. He believed that the directory signs seemed to be a way they could help a lot of people.

Mr. Matthew inquired about illumination. Mrs. Ziobron stated they have not gotten to this, but the proposal Mr. Casner and Mr. Sabetta are working on will include some language for illumination.

B) Discussion of existing subdivision regulations - interior lots

Mr. Matthews stated this subcommittee met. Mr. Ventres distributed Mr. Thomas' notes from the meeting, entitled Interior Lot Discussion. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the discussion notes.

Section 1, Item #4: Mr. Ventres presented a plan that showed various lots in the Moodus area, as well as the area surrounding Ballek's Garden Center. Mr. Thomas commented that there was not much exposure in either place, and suggested that it could possibly be removed. Mr. Brownell asked if it should be left in the regulation. Mr. Matthew suggested it be removed. Discussion ensued.

Section 1, Item #5: Mr. Ventres presented plans to the Commission. Mr. Curtin believed if more than 4 lots were allowed on common driveways, there might actually be fewer lots. Mr. Ventres stated that many people have had issues with common driveways. He reviewed a couple of layouts in town that have had issues. Mr. Curtin noted that some areas do have issues, which is why they need criteria for common driveways. Mr. Thomas stated they were proposing to pave common driveways up to where they split. He noted that there may be problems with some of the existing driveways, but there should not be as many issues with new common driveways.

The Commission discussed Section 2, Item #3 at great length. They discussed the possibility of up to 4 back lots. Mr. Curtin stated he would prefer this to more roads. Mr. Thomas noted that if they allow more than 4 back lots, they would need new driveway easements, etc. Mr. Gillis noted that one component to more than 4 back lots would be an issue of open space. Mr. Matthew asked if this would just allow developers to put in common driveways, instead of roads, and what the negative aspect would be. Mr. Curtin believed it would really be a positive, because the Town would not have to have the infrastructure to maintain.

Mr. Curtin stated if a developer did not have to build a road, they could end up with fewer lots, since the developer would not have to pay for the cost of the road. Mr. Matthew suggested that for some parcels that had to have a road, the cost might prohibit the project, and the site might not be developed at all. Mr. Curtin believed there might be some parcels that might get a few more lots, but he believed the positives would outweigh the negatives.

Mr. Ventres drew a scenario where an applicant might come in and ask for more lots off a common driveway, without any open space. He stated this could possibly be done through Special Exception review. He suggested the Commission might want to look at Attorney Fritz Gahagan's information. Mr. Curtin stated then that if more than 2 back lots were requested, it would be a special exception review. Mr. Thomas suggested they could have up to 4 back lots through special exception, but no more.

Mr. Ventres and Mr. Curtin brought up the issue of emergency vehicle access. Mr. Ventres noted that Chittenden Road is a private road, and they have designated areas on the sides for vehicles to pull off, if necessary. They also have a hammer-head turnaround at the end of the road. Mr. Thomas noted this was covered in the handout.

Mr. Brownell asked where the Commission was in terms of the number of interior lots. Mr. Curtin stated if they were serious about getting rid of roads, they could allow more interior lots, but it would have to be discretionary. The Commission discussed Section 2, Item #5.

Section 2, Item 6a: The Commission reviewed this section. Mr. Gillis asked if they would allow two cars to pass. Mr. Ventres noted that the driveway would widen as more houses are added. Mr. Curtin noted that the common driveway would be paved to the split, or to the last split.

Section 2, Item 7: The Commission discussed multi-family homes in various districts. Mr. Curtin asked if they wanted to force multi-family home applications to have four times the acreage. Mr. Gillis believed the focus needed to be in the R-1/2 zone. Mr. Ventres reviewed two-family homes versus a single-family home with an accessory unit. He explained that an accessory unit required the primary property owner to live in either the primary unit or the accessory unit. He suggested they could make accessory units a regulation. The Commission discussed the possibility of having the multi-family units in the back lots.

The consensus of the Commission was to have accessory and multi-family language as separate entities. In addition, multi-family units should always be reviewed by Special Exception.

Motion by Mr. Gillis to take a brief recess at 8:58 p.m., seconded by Mr. Curtin, and carried by unanimous vote. Mr. Brownell reconvened the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Section 2, Item #8: Mr. Ventres indicated that the goal of the Plan of Conservation and Development was to preserve as much open space as possible. Mr. Curtin believed it was important to do this without degrading the zone in which you live. He stated that back lots work because one can see the driveway cut from the road, but not much else. The Commission discussed lot sizes in various zones. It was agreed that the Commission would come back to this discussion after reviewing Items 9 and 10.

Section 2, Item #9. Mr. Ventres presented the map, and reviewed the buffers. Mr. Curtin suggested they might want to use the buffering instead of the setbacks discussed earlier. He believed they should eliminate the side yard setback. He stated he had no problem with buffering in any direction. Mr. Thomas questioned if the Commission wanted to enlarge the setbacks. He noted the suggestion was to remove #9. Mr. Curtin reiterated that they should pay more attention to the buffering. Mr. Brownell asked what could be done if a buffer was cut. Mr. Ventres stated there are covenants to make the person who cut them to replant. The Commission agreed to remove #9.

Section 2, Item #8 (continued): It was noted that the back lot would have to be 150% of the maximum aggregate. Mr. Curtin stated he would prefer the back lot size to be doubled, in order to keep it simpler. Mr. Gillis asked why they would allow interior lots in open space subdivisions. Mr. Ventres explained that this would be reviewed by special exception, and the Commission would get to decide.

Mr. Curtin again stated he would prefer the back lot size be doubled. Mr. Ventres noted that the front size could vary. Mr. Brownell asked if the Commission wanted to double the minimum or the maximum to accommodate the flex. Mr. Thomas responded affirmatively.

Item #11: Mr. Curtin believed this provision works well. It protects the people with and who wanted to access the land outside. No changes were made.

Item 12: was changed to “interior lot” after “between”, “a minimum of 300 feet along the road right of way” was removed and replaced with “enough to satisfy health, safety, and welfare.

Item 14 was removed.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

None

6. ZEO REPORT

Mr. Brownell informed the Commission that the CT Siting Council would hold a meeting regarding the AT&T proposed towers on Thursday, March 4, 2010, at the Town Grange Hall at 3:00 p.m. and continued at 7:00 p.m. There will be a field event at 2:00, during which they plan to float a balloon. Mr. Brownell asked if they planned to have a pre-hearing, to which Mr. Ventres stated they did not. Mr. Brownell asked if AT&T responded to the Eightmile River Watershed Committee. Mr. Gillis noted that the Eightmile River Watershed Committee wrote a letter, and AT&T chose an alternate location. Mr. Ventres thought it would be a good idea to write a letter for the file.

Mr. Ventres reviewed several cease & desist orders that were ready to be served, for properties on Bashan Lake Road, Lakeside Drive, Sipples Hill, and Petticoat Lane.

Mr. Ventres distributed a recent newspaper article on outdoor stoves. Mr. Brownell stated they may have to review and possibly revise the regulations, as many towns are banning them. He stated it could be done by ordinance, and enforced by the State police. Or, it could be done by P&Z, and enforced by the ZEO.

Mr. Ventres informed the Commission that he would email the proposed budget before the next meeting.

Mr. Brownell inquired about the Harris case. Mr. Ventres stated they were waiting for a trial date.

Mr. Ventres announced that East Haddam was awarded for the salt shed building design.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Salicrup to adjourn at 9:58 p.m., seconded by Mr. Gillis, and carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pattavina