

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION/
TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
LAND USE OFFICE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 10, 2016
(Not yet approved by the Commission)**

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

2. ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Cary Brownell—Chairman James Curtin (regular member), Bernard Gillis (regular member), Ed Gubbins (regular member), Martha Hansen (alternate member), Kevin Matthews (regular member), Richard Pettinelli (alternate member), Louis Salicrup (regular member), Harvey Thomas (regular member)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Ventres, and 8 members of the public

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the April 26, 2016 meeting were accepted as presented.

4. BILLS

East Haddam News (legal publications)	\$37.50
Suburban Stationers	54.38

Motion by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Gubbins to pay the bills as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. REVIEW OF THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A) Chapter 8

Mr. Casner stated the Economic Development Commission has presented this proposed draft, and he believed it was ready for action by the commission.

Motion by Mr. Gubbins, seconded by Mr. Salicrup, and carried by unanimous vote to accept the draft Chapter 8 proposed revisions to the Plan of Conservation and Development.

B) IG Zone

Mr. Ventres distributed latest plan for review by the commission. Mr. Casner explained that they tried to reduce down to 4 zones from 6. He added that Mr. Ventres came up with proposed areas shown on the plan. Mr. Casner stated what they want to do is pretty much what is shown on this map. Zone #2 (the area outlined in orange on the plan) will encompass the four corners area. Zones 9 and 11 pretty much stay same, and Zone 6 would become part of the orange zone, to condense the zones.

Mr. Casner asked the commission to consider condensing the zones. He stated the Economic Development Commission (EDC) suggested language to include hardware store, auto parts store, and were basically a way to allow retail as an allowable use in the zone. The other suggestion from EDC was at the four corners, where the vacant lots are, to allow a country store, baker, antiques, crafts, galleries. They are looking to make this a tourist area, to offer services.

Mr. Gillis asked if the country store would be in the orange zone. Mr. Casner responded affirmatively, in Zone 2. Mr. Casner added that they were trying to clarify the uses.

Mr. Thomas questioned a warehouse or commercial self-storage buildings on Town Street. Why would that be a good idea? Mr. Casner stated right now it is an allowable use, so they are hoping to give the owner a better option than self-storage buildings. Mr. Thomas asked then why not take self storage buildings off the table. Mr. Casner responded that they have section 8, which might be a better fit, since the town garage is up there, as are mostly construction buildings.

Mr. Pettinelli asked if they want to clutter up the zoning regulations or do it with where self storage could go. Discussion ensued regarding possibly leaving the zones a bit more vague. He noted that a business owner 200-feet down the road from this area could not have the same country store. Mr. Ventres stated the appendix has a great number of items. Mr. Thomas added that in the back of the regulations is a series of illustrations of what is preferable. Mr. Casner hopes to be able to give people more of what they are looking for in the zone. Mr. Pettinelli suggested even a needed use such as self-storage units could be simply set back from the road.

Mr. Gillis asked the origin of the 4500 square feet restriction. Mr. Casner stated this has been in place for approximately 10 years. He commented that is restrictive for Sanibel's.

Mr. Curtin asked why the backs of the lots for 43, 44, and 45 are not included in Zone 9. Mr. Ventres stated the backs of those lots do not have a great deal of usable space. Mr. Curtin believed it might make a difference for lot coverage.

Mr. Brownell suggested re-reviewing it after everyone has a chance to really review it in depth.

Mr. Casner suggested this be added to the next agenda.

C) Inclusion of hotels as a permitted use

Mr. Casner stated this would include everything in the village. Mr. Ventres noted the exception of Creamery Road.

Mr. Ventres stated that no towns really address the term “transient”. He stated that Air B&B is the new trend, but does not appear to be a problem here. Mr. Thomas commented that kitchenettes would open this concept to longer term stays.

Mr. Curtin stated it has been coming for a long time. There are not enough opportunities for people to stay when they come to town. Mr. Casner stated the town used to have accommodations. He noted that Don Bergeron just tore down a 52 unit motel as part of his renovations.

Mr. Gillis asked how the commission would regulate this so that no one built time shares or condominiums. Mr. Curtin stated you can’t regulate the ownership. Mr. Gillis suggested the issue was in-house cooking.

Mr. Pettinelli asked if this was really designed specifically for the town office site. It was noted that the Champion House was another possibility. Discussion ensued. Mr. Thomas asked if the commission was interested in sending notice and scheduling a public hearing. The consensus was to wait.

**Motion by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Matthews to take a brief recess at 7:56 p.m.
Motion carried by unanimous vote. The meeting reconvened at 8:00 p.m.**

7. PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Matthews read the call for the following public hearing:

A) New – Inclusion of Helistops to the East Haddam Zoning Regulations
First date: May 10, 2016 **Last date: June 13, 2016**

Mr. Bob Knackel addressed the commission. Mr. Ventres distributed proposal submitted a few months ago. He noted that Mr. Knackel has now submitted an official application to the commission.

Mr. Knackel thanked the commission for the opportunity to speak with them tonight. He stated he is not just some New Yorker wanting to come here to drive a helicopter. He explained that his grandfather bought the white house next to Staehly’s, and he spent every summer here from the time he was a child. His family is mostly gone now, with the exception of his older brother. He and his wife now have a daughter and bought a house on Honey Hill Road. Although they live in New York City, they use their property as a summer and weekend home. They would like to have the helistop pad so it is more convenient to get here. It may mean that they can spend more time here.

Mr. Gubbins asked why they could not use the airport near the bridge. Mr. Knackel stated he could land there, but then could not get to his home.

Mr. Curtin asked if the neighbors had any input. Mr. Knackel stated he has spoken to both of his neighbors, and neither has voiced any objection. He asked for a helistop rather than a helipad. They won’t be staying overnight, etc. It would basically be a taxi service. The noise level is approximately the same as a chainsaw, and the duration is about three minutes.

Mr. Gillis asked if he would be flying, to which Mr. Knackel stated he would not. Mr. Ventres stated these are typically used in cities, where helicopters are able to land and take off on a postage stamp sized pad.

Mr. Gubbins expressed concern that although Mr. Knackel's intentions are honorable and low use, the regulation would be written for, and would apply to everyone. They have identified 200 parcels on which such helistop pads could possibly be placed.

Mr. Pettinelli appreciated the point that it is less noisy than a chainsaw, and the duration is short. Mr. Salicrup stated helicopters fly very low over the power lines on a regular basis. Mr. Ventres added that LifeStar lands in Moodus Center.

Mr. Ventres read into the record letters from Richard Serra, Town Planner of Salem; Southeastern Council of Governments by Thomas Seidel dated March 10, 2016; Lower CT River Valley by JH Torrence Downes; and from the CT River Gateway Commission by JH Torrence Downes dated March 29, 2016.

Mr. Ventres distributed the plans for the area. He showed the Gateway area in the yellow line. The State land is shown in green. The pink dotted areas could have a visual impact from the river.

Mr. Ventres distributed the pertinent section from the FAA documents on what is required for a helicopter approach. If it is within 500 feet of a property line, it does have to go to abutting property owners and abutting towns.

Mr. Gillis believed it would be weather dependent. Mr. Ventres agreed, and it was noted that much of the approach would depend on the wind.

Mr. Ventres distributed Old Lyme's regulations. Mr. Curtin noted that Old Lyme does not seem to be intimidated by helistops. Mr. Gubbins asked about Chester.

Mr. Gillis questioned the setback from the property line to the proposed area. Mr. Knackel estimated it at approximately 150-175 feet.

Mr. Brownell opened the hearing to the public. No public comments were offered.

Mr. Curtin stated we have the most complete regulations around. Mr. Gubbins wants to see what Chester's regulations are. Mr. Thomas questioned other densely populated parts of town where the commission should be concerned. Mr. Ventres replied that because of the acreage requirement, Moodus, Lake Hayward, and most of Bashan Lake would be excluded. Mr. Gubbins asked about float planes. Mr. Ventres stated this was not a designated landing area. A brief discussion ensued, and Mr. Pettinelli stated the float plane has to avoid others who are on the lake.

Motion by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Matthews to continue the public hearing for the Inclusion of Helistops to the East Haddam Zoning Regulations, until the next regularly scheduled meeting on May 24, 2016, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

KM read the call for the following public hearing:

B) New - #16-05, Mark Thiede, Two Wrasslin' Cats, 348 Town Street, Special Exceptin Review for an addition to the existing building to be used as retail for ice cream sales. Assessor's Map 27, Lot 90.

First date: May 20, 2016

Last date: June 13, 2016

Mr. Thiede addressed the commission and stated he is nearing his third anniversary. His proposal is for an addition so that he can begin offering ice cream. The property sits close to the property line, therefore, he is in the process of getting a lifetime easement from the State of Connecticut of approximately 5 square feet. He will be going before the ZBA at the end of the month for a variance.

Mr. Thiede hired Mr. George Fellner to design the space. Mr. Fellner addressed the commission and reviewed the proposed changes. He proposed a 10-ft deep x 21-ft wide addition to the front of the parking lot side area. This will be 210 square feet. There will be two windows, one for ordering, and one for pick up. The materials would be the same siding as the rest of the building. They are proposing one lantern light fixture on the side of the building.

There will also be adding signage to the side of the building, which is included in their packet. The proposed sign would be 1'5" x 10'. Mr. Thiede stated he has people taking photographs of his signs and taking pictures of themselves in front of the signs. Mr. Fellner stated they are approximately 10 square feet below the limit for signage size.

Mr. Ventres read into the record a letter from Chatham Health District dated May 10, 2016, by Elizabeth Davidson, RS, which would condition the continued monthly monitoring of the water usage.

Mr. Salicrup questioned the hours. Mr. Ventres stated they would like to amend the hours 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, 7 days per week.

Mr. Pettinelli asked about the ground area in front of the windows. Mr. Thiede would like to put in stamped concrete or stamped asphalt to this area.

Mr. Gubbins asked about the handicapped area. Mr. Thiede stated there have been some areas of grass/weeds. He would like this to have some seating.

Mr. Brownell opened the hearing to the public.

Mr. Casner stated this has certainly been a success story in East Haddam. Seeing an expansion of a business is something to be proud of, and he hoped the commission will approve this application.

Mr. Pettinelli asked about the ice cream. Mr. Thiede stated he would be serving Salem Valley Farms ice cream.

Responsive to inquiry by the commission, Mr. Thiede stated that he would like to try this year with the existing parking, but if necessary, he might need to go before the IWWC.

Motion by Mr. Gubbins, seconded by Mr. Matthews to close the public hearing of Mark Thiede, Two Wrasslin' Cats, 348 Town Street, Special Exception Review for an addition to the existing building to be used as retail for ice cream sales. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Motion by Mr. Thomas to approve #16-05, Mark Thiede, Two Wrasslin' Cats, 348 Town Street, Special Exception Review for an addition to the existing building to be used as retail for ice cream sales, with the following conditions:

- **To include an amendment to the November 16, 2012 original approval for hours to change to 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m., 7 days per week**
 - **That ZBA approval be secured**
 - **All recommendations of Chatham Health District must be followed,**
- Seconded by Mr. Matthews, and carried by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Matthews read the call for the following public hearing:

C) New: #16-06, East Haddam Elementary School, 45 Joe Williams Road, Special Exception Review for reconstruction of parking lot and building of a storm water basin. Assessor's Map 78, Lot 99.

First date: May 10, 2016

Last date: June 13, 2016

Mr. Tom Linden, Linden Landscape Architects addressed the commission. He stated they began with the building committee back in December to improve the safety and traffic flow. They closed the loop so the bus traffic stays on the school site. All of the parking on the west side of the school would be basically the same size and shape as it is now. The area in front of the school would turn in onto a new separate driveway from the parking lot. The parking lot would be rebuilt closer to the school. The busses would continue down and around a new loop in the field. All other traffic, parents, teachers, etc. stay in other parking lot. There would be a designated parent drop off lane, so they have completely separated those two uses. The busses will line up, with the first few utilizing the main entrance. All others will use the side entrance. There will be a designation for bus traffic only beyond this point. They will screen the dumpsters, which will still be located near the kitchen.

They will also rebuild all of the existing sidewalks. There will be a turnaround beyond the gym for event nights. There will be a fire lane going all around the school. There will also be a flush sidewalk out of every egress door. Mr. Linden explained that the school site is comprised of 19 acres, plus 6 acres of town-owned land to the north, which actually gives them 25 acres for their calculations. The existing lot coverage is 5.6%. The total impervious surface is 15.9%, and would increase to 17.4%. The regulation maximum is 20%. This proposal includes an increase of 16,000 square feet of pavement, which is basically the bus loop.

They did borings for storm drainage. Mr. Matt Chait, CBH, stated they would add two separate underground detention systems. One is inside the bus loop. He stated they had borings done on site. With the existing septic system, they plan to infiltrate the water back into the ground as much as possible.

The rip rap pad at the bottom detention area has eroded over time. Mr. Chait stated they could achieve a net decrease off the site. They plan to add a plunge pool in order to create a non-erosive velocity. They

will also provide hydrodynamic separators. The systems will have some sort of water quality measures, where none are in place today.

Mr. Gillis asked about deliveries. Mr. Linden stated those would go into the bus loop. Mr. Pettinelli asked how the dumpsters are emptied. Jason Guernon, chairman of the East Haddam Elementary School Building Committee, stated a truck comes for the pickup. Mr. Pettinelli asked them to look at this for their final design, to make sure the dumpsters can be easily and properly emptied.

Mr. Brownell asked if the bus loop will be one way, to which Mr. Linden stated it was.

Mr. Thomas asked what separates the driveway from the parking lot. Mr. Linden stated it would be a landscaped island.

Mr. Curtin asked the construction timeline. Mr. Linden stated if they get approval tonight, they will go out to bid tomorrow. Mr. Guernon stated the boilers will be a project for this summer, the roof, and removal/replacement of asbestos tiles in the 100 wing. Mr. Curtin asked about contingencies for timing. It was agreed by all that the timelines are extremely tight, and this will be written into the specifications for this project.

Responsive to inquiry by Mr. Pettinelli, Mr. Ventres stated there is an O&M manual that he will forward to the Public Works Department. Discussion ensued regarding drainage.

Mr. Brownell opened the hearing to the public. No public comments were offered.

Mr. Ventres stated that the NLJ review letter had minor comments, and they were being addressed in the final design.

Motion by Mr. Salicrup, seconded by Mr. Gubbins to close the public hearing of #16-06, East Haddam Elementary School, 45 Joe Williams Road, Special Exception Review for reconstruction of parking lot and building of a storm water basin. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Ventres stated the town should follow the recommended maintenance. Mr. Pettinelli suggested a condition that they demonstrate the dumpster disposal to Mr. Ventres' satisfaction.

Motion by Mr. Curtin to approve #16-06, East Haddam Elementary School, 45 Joe Williams Road, Special Exception Review for reconstruction of parking lot and building of a storm water basin, with the following conditions:

- **Demonstrate that the dumpsters can be correctly emptied**
- **The Stormwater system shall be maintained by the Public Works Department, as specified in the drainage report.**

Motion seconded by Mr. Thomas, and carried by unanimous vote.

8. ZEO REPORT

Mr. Ventres updated the commission on Banner. Mr. Ventres stated Ms. Riling and about 15 Banner Residents came to the last WPCA meeting. They looked into problems she brought up. On Thursday, Mr. Ventres contacted all parties to be there. On Friday, the issues were being repaired. On Sunday,

emails sent by the residents were calling for a cease & desist, and calls were made to the State. On Wednesday, Mr. Ventres sent emails telling everyone that work is being done. A full site inspection was made on May 4, 2016. The CT DEEP responded by stating that the system was found to be in working order and a list of items to fix or maintain was created. This has been a very time consuming issue.

Mr. Brownell stated that Banner cannot present their application until they pay their bill to the town, which is approximately \$14,000.00.

Mr. Ventres stated he went to a meeting last week on blight. There were no selectmen there. Mr. Ventres spoke with the attendees, and it was suggested that Mr. Ventres address the structures specifically with the blight ordinance and nothing else. He cut and pasted the regulation and sent it to the selectmen this morning.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Gubbins to adjourn at 9:47 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Matthews, and carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pattavina