

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
LAND USE OFFICE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 9, 2013
 (Not yet approved by the Commission)

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

2. ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: James Curtin (regular member), Bernard Gillis (regular member), Ed Gubbins (alternate member), John Matthew (regular member), Kevin Matthews (regular member), Louis Salicrup (regular member), Harvey Thomas (regular member)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Crary Brownell – Chairman, Jessica Stone (alternate member)

OTHERS PRESENT: James Ventres, and approximately 16 townspeople were present.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the March 26, 2013 meeting were accepted with the following amendment:

Page 6, under **Other:**, third paragraph, should read, "Mr. Curtin suggested working on the commercial stables regulation with people who own stables."

4. BILLS

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|--|---------|
| Suburban Stationers | \$79.56 |
| Suburban Office Furniture (office partitions) | 412.36 |
| NL Jacobson (bond update) | 204.47 |
| Hartford Courant | 310.79 |
| Branse, Willis, and Knapp (Lipka, Procedural issues, minimum square, car dealership issues) | 660.00 |
| Branse (bonding issues) | 49.50 |

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

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND SET HEARING DATES

A) Application 13-04, John Ivers, 27 WM F Palmer Road, Special Exception Review to use building for professional offices. Assessor's Map 65, Lot 157.

First date: April 9, 2013

Last date: June 12, 2013

The commission briefly discussed lighting, signage, and paving of the parking lot.

Motion by Mr. Salicrup, seconded by Mr. Gubbins to schedule a public hearing for April 23, 2013, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

8. ZEO REPORT

Mr. Ventres stated the commission previously approved an application for construction for a bait shop and skiff rentals, etc. The minutes of that approval meeting indicated that the owner could have a hot dog cart. Mr. Ventres received a request today for a food truck. He explained that the owner told him he plans to sell hot dogs, burgers, beef kabobs, etc. Discussion ensued regarding zoning and health approval.

Mr. Curtin stated that Chatham Health would have to weigh in on this issue before the property owner purchases a food truck. Mr. Curtin believed this would have to have an application to amend his approval.

Mr. Ventres attended a meeting on the lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments. Mr. Ventres believed it would be another six months before they were really up and running. They plan to start working on the GIS maps. They are looking for a volunteer from the Planning and Zoning Commission to be on this committee. Mr. Ventres will send an email to the commissioners. Mr. Salicrup stated that Mr. Brownell had asked him to be the liaison, but that he would not have to go to every meeting. Mr. Ventres will speak with the contact at the agency.

The commission discussed the functions of this planning agency. It was noted that this agency reviews grants and regulation changes that impact East Haddam and the other council towns..

Mr. Curtin asked the status of the Moodus green. Mr. Ventres stated there has been a plan, but there is no funding for this project yet. If they get the funding, they plan to have Mr. Nemergut draw a final plan. There was no indication of when the approval of funding will be decided.

Mr. Ventres has a meeting with Gateway on April 25, 2013 to discuss building heights. He believed the photographs Mr. Casner submitted would be helpful.

7. DISCUSSION

A) Minimum Buildable Square

Mr. Ventres has given the commission the draft for this regulation. Mr. Curtin asked about the draft which refers to an acre. Mr. Curtin suggested adding a minimum of one acre to this draft.

Mr. Gillis asked how this would impact the conservation subdivisions. Mr. Curtin did not believe this would apply to an open space subdivision. Mr. Ventres stated that this commission would have the opportunity during a preliminary subdivision review to address this.

TAPE CHANGE (1B)

Mr. Ventres stated applicants are still required to submit to the four-step process. Mr. Curtin stated if there is not a really good piece of land, it would be really difficult to have an open space subdivision with these minimum buildable square requirements.

The commission reviewed various subdivisions.

Noting that the time was now 8:00 p.m., the public hearing began.

6. PUBLIC HEARING:

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

A) Continued: Application 13-01, Rodney Davis, Green Village Heights, Grove Street, Special Exception Review for a 33-unit retirement community. Assessor's Map 55, Lot 126.
First date: February 12, 2013 **Last date: April 29, 2013**

Mr. Ventres informed the commission that Mr. Davis has requested a continuance until the next hearing.

Mr. Ventres noted that at the last meeting, the commission requested that he obtain a phasing process, which was received. The other thing the commission requested was a list of items from Mr. Davis. Mr. Davis was not present this evening. Mr. Ventres spoke with Mr. Davis, and he is finishing a job and is not here this evening.

Mr. Ventres also informed the commission that Mr. Davis asked him about removing the age restriction from these units. Mr. Ventres informed him that there is no regulation for this at this time. Changing a regulation is a lengthy process. He asked Mr. Davis for towns where this is being done, and regulations. Mr. Matthew did not see how relaxing the age restriction would help the community.

Mr. Salicrup referred to Mr. Curtis's letter regarding the Health Department review. Mr. Ventres stated that would be done with each phase.

Mr. Curtin opened the hearing to the public.

Ms. Debra Williams believed removing the age restriction would be detrimental to the community. Mr. Ventres stated they were only reviewing the application for 55+ development. There is no official request to amend the application at this time.

Mr. Thomas moved to continue this application to the next regularly scheduled meeting on April 23, 2013, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange. Motion was seconded by Mr. Gillis, and carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Matthew asked if the commission would want to take a vote on the issue of changing a regulation. Several commissioners did not believe this would be advisable.

B) Continued: Application 01-13, Maria Misenti, 52 Mott Lane, Subdivision Review for a proposed 3-lot subdivision. Assessor's Map 76, Lot 106.

First date: March 12, 2013

Last date: April 15, 2013

Mr. Ventres read into the record a letter from Mr. Nemergut requesting a continuance.

Mr. Gillis inquired about the stop sign, which had been discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Ventres reported that they are considering moving the driveway due to the sight line issue.

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

Motion by Mr. Salicrup, seconded by Mr. Matthew to continue the public hearing to April 23, 2013, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange.

7. DISCUSSION

The commission discussed affordable housing. Mr. Ventres attended several meetings a few years ago. He was informed that small communities such as East Haddam without sewer lines, public transportation, etc. would not receive funding for assistance in affordable housing.

Mr. Matthew stated this was not within the State's plan, and it should not be in East Haddam's plan of conservation and development. Mr. Ventres indicated that we have one application for Banner. Based on the acreage, they can cluster the units, and then the rest of the land would remain open. Mr. Matthew stated he had no issue with cluster housing. He believed if there was a 100-acre parcel, and all of the houses could go into 10 acres, that was great. However, when you cluster the housing and make the cost very low, it goes against the principle. He added that converting seasonal housing created a huge negative financial impact. He stated we consistently make, in his opinion, not great decisions because we do not have the rules in place that discourage what we don't want. He added that there are many good regulations, but they could be better.

Mr. Gillis stated when there is a seasonal home conversion, it is an actual upgrade. Mr. Matthew stated maybe there are examples on a lake that would be. Mr. Ventres stated in lake associations, the buildings are typically knocked down, and the property owner then builds a single family home with a real foundation, septic, and well. Mr. Ventres has seen this happen over the years.

Mr. Matthew stated that seasonal to year-round conversion has a huge negative impact. Mr. Curtin disagreed, and noted that there have been upgrades to these houses, they are being taken care of, etc. Mr. Ventres stated that his child, as well as others, recently graduated from college, could not afford to purchase a house in town. Mr. Thomas believed there should be a mix where people can come in and purchase a house. Mr. Matthew stated we have the cheapest housing in the state.

Mr. Gillis discussed handicapped housing. Mr. Ventres stated that was in the regulation, and was allowed with the 55+ housing. Mr. Curtin asked about group homes. Mr. Ventres stated he had no authority over this, and they are treated like single family homes.

Mr. Salicrup asked if anyone has seen the latest This Old House with a self-contained septic system because they are building a house on all ledge in Essex, MA. Mr. Ventres stated this could be allowed, as long as there is a code-compliant area on the lot.

The commission briefly discussed Mantis systems. Mr. Curtin stated there are several of these systems around. They are mainly located in the lake areas. Most of the new houses do not have these. Mr. Ventres stated these are great systems for repairs with limited space.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Gubbins, seconded by Mr. Thomas to adjourn at 8:53 p.m., and carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pattavina