

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
TOWN OF EAST HADDAM  
LAND USE OFFICE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
December 14, 2010  
(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 (regular member), James Curtin (regular member), Bernard Gillis (regular member), John Matthew (regular member), Louis Salicrup (Alternate), Anthony Saraco (regular member), Harvey Thomas (regular member)

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Elizabeth Lunt (alternate member), Kevin Matthews (regular member)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** James Ventres and approximately 4 townspeople were present.

Mr. Brownell appointed Mr. Salicrup to vote in place of Mr. Matthews this evening.

**3. MINUTES:**

The minutes of the 11/23/2010 meeting were accepted as written.

**4. BILLS**

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Suburban	3558645-0	\$33.00
NL Jacobson (Zito)	73286	28.23
NL Jacobson (Kennedy)	73287	169.35
NL Jacobson (Parker Rd)	73288	169.35
Branse, Willis, and Knapp (Orchard Rd, Besek, general)		1000.50
Hartford Courant	2475	280.75

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

## **5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND SET HEARING DATES**

**A) Application 10-16, Special Exception Review for the two-year renewal of existing gravel excavation permit, Mazer Gravel Pit, Hopyard Road. Assessor's Map 14, Lot 62.**

**First date: December 14, 2010**

**Last date: February 16, 2011**

No one representing the applicant was present at this meeting. Mr. Ventres explained that this was simply the renewal permit process for this applicant.

**Motion by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Thomas to schedule a public hearing on January 11, 2011, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange to hear Application 10-16, Special Exception Review for the two-year renewal of existing gravel excavation permit, Mazer Gravel Pit, Hopyard Road. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **B) 8-24 Grove Street, acceptance of Grove Street as a town road**

Mr. Ventres informed the Commission that he has received a letter from the Department of Public Works stating that all of the required work has been done. He advised that it is the discretion of the Commission whether to hold a public hearing, or just send it to a Town Meeting for acceptance. He commented that the easement language for the turnarounds has been done.

Mr. Matthew asked what the road was before this development. Mr. Ventres stated this was a development from 1929. Mr. Gillis asked if this road was a cul-de-sac, to which Mr. Ventres stated it was.

Mr. Gillis asked the status of Mr. Davis' project. Mr. Ventres stated this project was ongoing.

Mr. Thomas stated for a number of years, the Commission has scheduled public hearings for 8-24 applications, just so the public has notification. Mr. Brownell agreed the Commission should schedule a public hearing for this application, as it has been the past practice.

**Motion by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Gillis to schedule a public hearing on January 11, 2011, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange for 8-24 application, acceptance of Grove Street as a town road. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**C) Application 10-17, Special Exception Review to construct a pavilion at 15 Great Hillwood Road/East Haddam Senior Center. Assessor's Map 65, Lot 100.**

**First date: December 14, 2010**

**Last date: February 16, 2011**

No one representing the applicant was present at this meeting.

Mr. Ventres informed the Commission that he spoke with Ms. Joanne Rocznik, and she requested this be reviewed separately from the park. The Lions Club will construct the pavilion. Mr. Ventres stated the senior center has no real outdoor area, and the pavilion would be an outside recreational area.

Mr. Thomas asked why this would not be an 8-24 application. Mr. Ventres replied that it should be, and he would make this correction. Mr. Thomas stated it would be difficult for him to make a decision on this application, without knowing the whole plan for the park. He commented that other applicants have to show their whole plans. Mr. Curtin stated this was just a building, and it could stand alone. When the senior center comes back for another application, they will have to be subject to the building that is already there.

Mr. Matthew asked if for some reason the park never gets built, if this pavilion could stand alone. Mr. Ventres stated it could. He believed there were three different concepts of what the senior center plans to build. Mr. Curtin stated there is already a building there, this is really just an amenity. Mr. Matthew agreed with Mr. Curtin. Mr. Brownell asked Mr. Ventres to have the senior center representatives come in for the first meeting in January, and to have them bring in the three plans.

**Motion by Mr. Curtin to set a public hearing on January 11, 2011, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange to hear Application 10-17, (8-24 Application), Special Exception Review to construct a pavilion at 15 Great Hillwood Road/East Haddam Senior Center. Motion seconded by Mr. Matthew, and passed unanimously.**

## **6. SITE PLAN REVIEW**

**A) Continued: Application 10-15, Jeffrey Ohr, 23 Woodland Road, Site Plan Review to demolish and rebuild a year-round residence. Assessor's Map 66, Lot 90.**

**First date: November 23, 2010**

**Last date: January 26, 2011**

Mr. Ventres presented the GIS map and reviewed the area on the map. Mr. Ohr addressed the Commission. Mr. Brownell commented that the applicant was taking down the two buildings.

Mr. Ventres read into the record a letter dated 12/14/2010 from Ms. Davidson of Chatham Health District, which gave conditional approval based on whether the building inspector will issue a building permit without a footing drain. Mr. Ventres noted that if the soil is sand and gravel, the building inspector can issue a permit without a footing drain. Mr. Curtin indicated that the homes in the West Cove subdivision next door were built without footing drains.

Mr. John and Jeff Ohr addressed the Commission. Mr. Brownell asked if the road went all the way around. Mr. John Ohr stated the road dead-ended, as he understood it, even though it is shown on a map. It was noted that there are many "paper roads" in various associations.

Mr. Brownell noted that this is a year-round house now. The application was for knocking it down and re-building another year-round home.

Mr. Brownell opened the hearing to the public.

Ms. Mary Ann Naples questioned if the sewage system would be sufficient for the house. Mr. Ventres explained that was what Chatham Health District reviewed. He stated they analyzed the perc rates, the soils, etc., and there are safety factors built into the design. Mr. Curtin confirmed that there are many safety factors built in.

Mr. Gillis believed they were stretching the limits by constructing such a large house on a quarter of an acre. Mr. Ventres stated it was not stretching the limits, because the soil was very good in this area. Mr. Matthew stated it was approximately .33 acre. Mr. Curtin stated this plan meets or exceeds the zoning requirements.

Ms. Naples stated the new house would be right on top of hers. Mr. Brownell noted that it would be located where the existing house does now. Mr. Curtin stated there was not a regulation that prevented it. Mr. Ventres stated as far as the criteria for the site plan review, it did meet the requirements.

**Motion by Mr. Curtin to approve Application 10-15, Jeffrey Ohr, 23 Woodland Road, Site Plan Review to demolish and rebuild a year-round residence, with the conditions that the Chatham Health District's requirements must be followed. Seconded by Mr. Salicrup. Voting: Mr. Saraco abstained, all other voting members - aye. Motion passed.**

Mr. Ventres stated he would send the approval letter. The applicant would have to file the mylar within 90 days.

**Mr. Brownell called for a brief recess at 7:53 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:55 p.m.**

## **7. DISCUSSION**

### **A) Signage**

Mr. Casner reported that they have been working as a subcommittee (along with Ms. Patty Stricker) to look at some signage issues. He hoped they could make the regulations work better for everyone. One issue they looked at was interior-lit signs. He stated they were allowed in most of the adjacent towns. He stated they found some resistance in interior-illuminated signs, so they worked on some things that businesses have requested. Their last meeting was on October 6, 2010.

Mr. Casner stated he would like to review some of these items, and requested input from the full Commission on some of the items. He stated they would like to have 10x16 illuminated "Open" signs. Mr. Brownell stated the Corner Family Restaurant has one now. Ms. Stricker stated these signs should go off at 10:00 p.m., or earlier when the business is closed. She stated the intent was to let people know when the business was open. She stated that was a change that would affect some businesses that currently leave them on all night.

Mr. Gillis noted that Shagbark's lights are left on all night. The Commission briefly discussed internally illuminated signs, and page 2, "Illumination" paragraph was changed.

*TAPE CHANGE (1B)*

Also in the Illumination paragraph: Add “and CBIG” after “IG” in the third sentence.

Mr. Gillis commented about Shagbark’s signs for Anderson windows and Benjamin Moore paint. Ms. Stricker suggested that it might possibly be incentive based advertising.

Mr. Saraco voiced concern about having several internally illuminated/neon signs, in rural East Haddam, might not be what many people want. Mr. Ventres suggested they add language before adding in a number here. Mr. Curtin suggested allowing two, until they get the rest of the language worked out.

Mr. Brownell asked how the Commission felt about internally illuminated signs. Mr. Gillis stated if Shagbark turned off their signs when they were not open, that would make a big difference to him.

Mr. Brownell stated once they open up the box for internally lit signs, there was no going back. Mr. Gillis stated his belief that a 10x16 “open” sign was the least we could do for businesses in this town. Mr. Brownell disagreed with internally lit signs. Mr. Casner believed the businesses in town needed and wanted the “open” signs. He stated that most surrounding towns have them. Mr. Ventres noted that internally illuminated signs were allowed in Moodus center. Mr. Salicrup stated that the “open” signs might be a good compromise.

Mr. Curtin asked if the “open” sign on the family restaurant was objectionable. Mr. Gillis stated he wished it was located on the first floor, but he did not find that objectionable.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding internally lit lights. Mr. Curtin asked where the locations were that were looking for the signs. Mr. Casner stated the corner was where the hub really was, and where this was requested.

Mr. Brownell asked if other avenues have been explored for signage. Mr. Casner stated that businesses have been coming to the EDC requesting this. It was noted that the NorPro building would likely be split into at least three establishments. Mr. Saraco stated that would equate to 6 neon, etc. lights. Mr. Ventres stated in that type of case, it would be beneficial to have a directory sign listing all of the businesses, with downsplash lighting on it. Mr. Gillis noted that the lights could be turned off when the building was closed.

Ms. Stricker stated she would change the language in this section, and she asked Mr. Saraco what to change. Mr. Matthew questioned how many businesses have asked for internally lit zones. Mrs. Deb Mathiasen responded that three companies have requested this. Mr. Curtin asked what zones they are in. Mr. Casner stated they were in different zones. The Commission stated they would want the light attached to the building.

Mr. Gillis asked if anyone else supported the 10x16 open signs. Mr. Matthew asked if they were talking about a limited number of locations. Mr. Thomas stated he would like to see this paragraph re-written before he answered. Mr. Gillis believed that some would benefit from it, and it seemed like they were cut out.

Mr. Curtin stated he has been by the corner restaurant, and unless he saw the “open” sign, he would not know it was open.

It was suggested that the Commission discuss other items, and come back to this.

Mr. Saraco asked about the ones that were grandfathered. Mr. Ventres stated that Eddie’s Auto Body and Shagbark were grandfathered.

The Commission discussed “maintenance”. Mr. Saraco suggested that if the lights were illuminated, they should be maintained in proper working order.

Mr. Curtin asked what residential development signs were. Mr. Ventres stated that the Board of Selectmen did not want to maintain some of the signs, such as the West Cove sign.

The Commission discussed temporary political signs. Mr. Thomas believed that may be a freedom of information issue, and the Commission may not have jurisdiction over it. Mr. Brownell stated they would have to get input from the attorney.

The Commission discussed Section 12.5.B. They discussed Eddie’s Auto Body. It was noted that he would be allowed up to four signs, rather than two. Mr. Casner stated they should then measure the square footage of the façade. Mr. Casner stated he would re-do his calculations so the numbers would be accurate. Mr. Casner asked if the square footage would require the gable end.

The Commission discussed the Gristmill plaza, and a directory. Mr. Ventres commented that they have a directory sign, but he asked about the portable signs. Mr. Brownell suggested a directory sign where individual businesses could advertise weekly specials, etc. Mr. Casner stated they would work on this. It was suggested that there could be one sign per business.

Mr. Saraco asked how many lit, internally lit, externally lit signs are permitted. He stated he would like to understand if there were two, four, and how many signs could be allowed. Mr. Curtin believed it would be important to break this up so the applicants and businesses can easily determine what they can have.

Mr. Matthews questioned the portable signs. It was suggested that Item 12.5.B-4 should be 10-square feet, per side. Mr. Ventres stated he would pull the minutes from that discussion on portable signs.

## **8. ZEO REPORT**

Mr. Ventres distributed the write ups on the proposed purchase of open space properties. Mr. Brownell asked how much taxes would increase with this open space purchase. Mr. Ventres stated it was outlined within the document, but the basic formula was \$20/year for a house assessed at \$200,000. The increase would be \$30/year for a house assessed at \$300,000.

Mr. Ventres stated there had been a letter from Mr. Todd Gelston on the Taylor Lane subdivision. He stated he had distributed copies of the letter to the Commission at the last meeting for review. Mr. Ventres stated he

went out to this subdivision during the recent heavy rain, after raining for hours, and the system was working. Mr. Ventres stated that Mr. Curtis has been out there for a modification, and it was determined that it was built to the plans.

Mr. Ventres stated he responded to a call on Sillmanville Road. There are four cottages. The Building Official shut one building down for mold, heating, and dangerous carbon monoxide levels. Mr. Ventres spoke with the property owner and informed her that none of the four cottages are approved for year-round occupancy.

Mr. Ventres distributed copies of the budget and year-to-date spending. The Commission has really not tapped into the engineering or legal lines, but there is a pending court case for Orchard Road. The Commission reviewed various budget lines. Mr. Brownell noted that the State fees line increased. Mr. Ventres stated he could send a draft to everyone. He asked if there were any comments, to please let him know as soon as possible, as he needs to respond back to the Board of Finance before the next meeting.

Mr. Ventres stated he plans to call the Town of Haddam regarding public improvements. He received a letter dated 11/15/2010 from Ms. Liz West Glidden. It takes all of the road improvements and refers them back to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Matthew asked about the public hearing for the proposed regulation changes. It was noted that this was done at the last meeting. The Commission discussed the procedure for regulation changes. It was noted that even at the public hearing, the Commission can still discuss, agree or disagree on any of the proposed changes. It was important to note that there cannot be any substantial changes proposed by the Commissioners once the public hearing is closed. Otherwise, the Commission would be obligated to hold another public hearing.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Gillis to adjourn at 9:48 p.m. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pattavina