

East Lyme Zoning Commission

Regular Meeting

May 4, 2000

MINUTES

FILED IN EAST LYME TOWN

CLERK'S OFFICE

5/11, 00 at 1:15 AM/PM

L. A. Blevins, etc.
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

The East Lyme Zoning Commission held Public Hearings(2) and Regular Meeting on May 4, 2000 at the Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Ave., Niantic, CT. Mr. William Weber chaired the meeting. Mr. Weber called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

PRESENT: Chairman William Weber, Norman Peck, Ed Gada, David Chamberlain, Shawn McLaughlin, Alternates Donna Orefice, Robert Bulmer., and Mark Nickerson.

Absent: Athena Cone, William Mulholland, Zoning Officer

Also Present: Rose Ann Hardy, Ex-officio

GENERAL

1. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Delegations

George MacPherson, 419 Boston Post Road, East Lyme, CT noted that the neon sign at Kentucky Fried Chicken had been removed. He also noted two new neon "Open" signs at the Shell and the laundramat on Boston Post Road.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of February 24, 2000 and April 6, 2000.

Motion (1): Mr. Peck moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of April 6, 2000.

Mr. Chamberlain seconded the motion.

Vote in favor: (5-0), Mrs. Orefice abstained.

Acceptance of the February 24, 2000 Minutes was tabled until the next meeting

2. Application of Edward Tomaszek for a Special Permit to excavate gravel to create a pond at 56 Stones Ranch Rd., East Lyme, CT, Assessor Map 23, Lot #1.

Mr. Weber reviewed the letter from Zoning Official William Mulholland. Mr. Peck stated that the 7:00 AM starting hour was early and not consistent with the start times of projects in the past. He suggested a start time of 8:00 AM, keeping the neighbors in mind and in fairness to other projects. He also supported Mr. Mulholland's recommendation for a \$2,000 performance bond.

Motion (2): Mr. Peck moved to approve the application of Edward Tomaszek for a Special Permit to excavate gravel to create a pond at 56 Stones Ranch Road, East Lyme, CT, Assessor Map 23, Lot #1 with the following conditions:

1. Hours of operation: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.
2. A performance bond in the amount of \$2,000.
3. No fuel storage on the premises.

Mr. Chamberlain seconded the motion.
Vote in favor (6-0), Unanimous

Effective upon publication.

4. Application of Granville R. Morris to amend the East Lyme Zoning Regulations to allow "guest houses" by Special Permit in RU-40 and RU-80 zoning districts.

Public Hearing was continued.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Proposed Gateway Planned Development District

Jeanne Davies, Director of Planning addressed the board regarding Gateway Planned Development District. She provided Commissioners with an informational packet and requested comments and questions from the Commission.

Mrs. Davies stated that discussion, research and planning has been ongoing for a period of 4 years with regard to GPDD. She noted that the purpose of the GPDD is to coordinate the development of properties in that district under separate ownership and to set an image for Flanders business district as a gateway to the Town and region.

The proposed GPDD is a commercial/industrial zone, and partly residential zone, abutting the Pattagansett River, with limited frontage on Route 161 and having its own aquifer. The District as proposed would be planned to include support services, restaurants, business and printing services, day-care, hotel, hair salon etc.) and interact with the Flanders 4-corners business area, hi-tech, industrial or educational types of businesses in and around the GPDD. The proposed zone is served by municipal water and sewer.

Mrs. Davis stated that one property owner could conceivably put in a large commercial/retail building and parking area. The Town would not realize an efficient use of the property, the environmental impact would be negative, and the Town would not get the best tax benefit.

The GPDD would encourage second-story development, hi-tech and light industrial businesses. The image of the town would be promoted through aesthetics of the district by establishing architectural guidelines within the regulations. The GPDD is proposed to create an atmosphere that will encourage industrial development.

Mr. Weber informed Alternate Mr. Nickerson that he could participate in this discussion even though he is not seated on the Commission this evening.

Mr. Peck inquired if retail should be included as a permitted use. He expressed concern that retail in that district could drive well-established small business out of business. He added that he would like to see the district promoted Fortune 500 or other top companies to the district rather than large retail chains. He also noted that a well-planned and well-executed marketing plan is essential.

Mrs. Orefice expressed concern with respect to the impact retail in this district would have on Niantic Village business area.

Mrs. Davies stated that the Commissioners need to evaluate what policies they want to apply to the district. She stated that Mr. Peck may be correct in restricting retail which would detract from the business/retail districts of Flanders and Niantic. The Commission may want to consider retail space that existing businesses in Town could expand into. She stressed that this would be a policy decision for the Commission to make.

Mrs. Davies also noted that there is a net retail loss in Town at this time. People shop elsewhere because East Lyme does not have a variety or mass of retail.

Mr. Peck stated that with the GPDD marketed and promoted for hi-tech or top businesses, what follows will be an improvement of business, an increase in the value of properties, increase population during daytime hours without any retail in the district.

Mr. Weber inquired if any market analysis had been conducted at this point. Mrs. Davies stated that she would contact John Shapiro, a partner in Abel, Price & Shapiro of New York. This firm does economic development analysis for towns and they had done one as part of the Yale Charette. She stated that she would check further into what the market is for this type of development.

Mr. Weber also noted that the architectural style of the initial building would set the style for what structures follow. He also noted that the draft proposal allows for single bedroom multi-family dwellings and questioned the need for this type of housing. Mrs. Davies noted that single-bedroom housing would provide housing for single persons or couples who are working in businesses within the GPDD and provide support to the Flanders Village retailers.

Another of the concepts Mrs. Davies discussed was the Regional Transport Center. This concept would be marketed to promote reduced traffic on Route 161 by providing interrelated traffic access between a rail stop or commuter bus connection.

Mrs. Davies stressed that the best route to follow is to be proactive, i.e. establish what you want in the district, get public input and feedback and then do the marketing plan before the Town is forced to be reactive when a developer comes in with an application.

Further discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Mrs. Davies distributed the Smart Growth Plan for the Commission to review and comments and to be discussed at the next meeting.

2. Proposed Amendment Section 28 "Amendments to Regulations and Zoning District Map".

Tabled until the next meeting

3. Subcommittees

a. Proposed Amendment Section 20.26

The Commission agreed to go forward with the Proposed Amendment.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Correspondence - None
2. Any business on the floor, if any, by the majority vote of the Commission - None
3. Zoning Official - None
4. Comments from Planning Representative - None
5. Comments from ex-officio - None
6. Adjournment

Motion (3): Mr. Chamberlain moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 pm.
Mrs. Orefice seconded the motion.
Vote in favor: (6-0), Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,



Anita M. Bennett
Recording Secretary
11 May 00