

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting #1646 – January 28, 2014
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Jason Bowsza, Deputy First Selectman, 34 Rye Street: Deputy First Selectman Bowsza reported that on March 31st, at 6:30 p.m. the Board of Selectmen will hold the first of their quarterly Chairman's Meetings. All Chairmen, or their designees, of every board or commission will be invited to share what their board or commission will be working on in the next months. The hope is to build a sense of collaboration between the boards and commissions to have a better informed body of officials.

Chairman Ouellette concurred, noting it would have been better if there had been collaboration with the PZC regarding the expansion of the Broad Brook Elementary School. Decisions were needed to be made immediately that would have benefited from more involvement prior to the presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/January 14, 2014:

MOTION: To APPROVE the Minutes of Regular Meeting #1645 dated January 14, 2014 as written.

Devanney moved/Gowdy seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS:

Chairman Ouellette acknowledged receipt of the following Application:

1. Application of Leslie Hickey for a Temporary Liquor Permit for Literacy Volunteers of Northern CT Annual Wine & Ale Tasting event on Saturday, March 8, 2014 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. at 149 North Road owned by Patrick Soucy. [B-3 Zone; Map 124, Block 16, Lot 27}.

PERFORMANCE BONDS – ACTIONS; PERMIT EXTENSIONS; ROAD ACCEPTANCE:

Nothing presented this evening.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

OTHER BUSINESS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: James Balch – Modification of Approved Site Plan to allow commercial multi-tenant facility consisting of used car sales & service, auto detailing &

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retail sales of detailing products, contractor's office and professional office space at 244 – 250 South Main Street, owned by the Estate of Monica T. Balch & All American Products. [B-2 & A-2 Zones; Map 12, Block 5, Los 87,88 & 89] (*Deadline for decision 2/13/2014*) **POSTPONED UNTIL 2/11/2014**:

Chairman Ouellette noted the postponement of this Application. He also noted the deadline for a decision is two days after the Commission's Meeting. Town Planner Whitten suggested the Applicant may need to offer an extension of the decision deadline.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

BUSINESS MEETING/(1) Plan of Conservation & Development 2014 Workshop – Discussion on Housing:

Town Planner Whitten opened discussion on this workshop on housing options; Chairman Ouellette invited members of the audience to join the Commission during discussion.

Town Planner Whitten explained the purpose of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which must be updated every ten years. East Windsor is due for an update in 2014; an extension has been granted by the State for our update to be submitted in 2015.

Town Planner Whitten reported there are various topics within the POCD; tonight's topic of discussion will be housing diversity; to illustrate the various types of housing options she will offer statistics regarding demographics, income diversity, and status of current housing stock in East Windsor. Town Planner Whitten opened discussion by noting that one of the Core Strategies of the 2004 POCD was Guiding Development - Residential and Village Strategies and Actions. Those strategies included the primary strategy of Refining Residential Development Regulations, and secondary strategies of Maintaining Housing Diversity, and Defining Village Area Development.

Town Planner Whitten provided the Commission and audience with four documents: three provided by Partnership for Strong Communities which summarized Housing Data Profiles for East Windsor/2013, Hartford County/2013, and Connecticut/2013; the fourth was the CERC Town Profile for East Windsor/2013. All documents are available in the Planning Office. Town Planner Whitten offered a synopsis of the data profile for East Windsor/2013:

- Population 11,014 residing within 4,413 households
- Median aged for East Windsor residents is 40.5 vs. 39.8 for Connecticut, and 37.4 for the nation.
- 60% of the housing units are owner-occupied vs. approximately 20% rentals

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- 100% Median Household income was \$66,699 vs. \$69,243 for Connecticut
- Age of Head of Household for Median Income was 25 to 44
- Median Home Value is \$235,200 vs. \$293,100 in Connecticut
- 44% of East Windsor's 1429 rental units cost over \$1,000/month while 23% have a gross rental cost under \$750/month
- 14.3% of East Windsor's units are considered affordable housing. At that percentage East Windsor is exempt from the requirement to provide additional affordable housing units. Town Planner Whitten noted affordable housing has a negative connotation; the new LABEL is workforce housing which is meant to provide housing for the average wage earner.
- Renter Median Income is \$60,247.
- 61% of East Windsor's housing stock is single family homes vs. 33% multi-family.
- 96% of the single family homes are owner occupied while 90% of the multi-family homes are occupied by renters.
- Age of housing stock:
 - Built prior to 1939 - 16% East Windsor vs. 23% Connecticut
 - Built 1940 to 1979 – 41% East Windsor vs. 50+/-% Connecticut
 - Built 1979 and later – 43% East Windsor vs. 27% Connecticut
- 50% of the homes in East Windsor have 3 bedrooms, 50% has 2 or fewer bedrooms
- Foreclosure activity is less in East Windsor than in other urban areas in Hartford County
- Average homeowners household Median Income is \$72,700
- Average Median Income of households holding a mortgage is \$80,599
- Average Median Income of households NOT holding a mortgage is \$39,840.

Town Planner Whitten suggested the trends in the State and the nation indicate that the population is aging, and the number of school children is decreasing. The goal in Connecticut is to keep the 18 to 35 year old population in Connecticut, but the trend is that they attend school in the state and then leave to find jobs elsewhere. Discussion followed regarding the validity of that data, reasons for younger people moving elsewhere, and options for keeping the younger population.

Commissioner Gowdy suggested the education standing of the East Windsor school system is behind many other towns in the state. He suggested that education is a significant contributing factor for families deciding to locate, or stay, in East Windsor. Mr. Giorgio concurred with Commissioner Gowdy, noting his own experience selling homes. Discussion followed regarding the impact of the education budget on overall town spending, the resident negativity of spending tax dollars on education, and the effect of magnet schools on local school population.

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Town Planner Whitten then reviewed a synopsis of some of the responses to questions raised via the Survey Monkey online questionnaire. The questionnaire was offered at least twice; 300+/- people chose to respond. In general people chose to live in East Windsor because of the housing and neighborhood character, and the majority felt the overall quality of life in East Windsor was good. The majority of the respondents owned their own homes, were born and raised in East Windsor, and resided in the Broad Brook village. The average age of the respondents was 35 to 54, and the majority of the respondents earned over \$100,000/year.

Regarding the housing mix, 50% of the respondents felt there were too many apartments vs. 38% who felt the number was about right, and 10% felt there were too few apartments. In comparison, 27% felt there were too many workforce/affordable units, 48% felt the number was about right, and 22% felt there were too few workforce/affordable units. Regarding housing for older residents 11% felt there too many housing units for the “elderly”, while 56% felt the number was about right, and 32% felt there were too few units for the elderly. Regarding active adult communities, 21% felt there were too many, 53% felt the number was about right, and 25% felt there were too few active adult units.

While the number of respondents was low, in comparison a telephone survey was conducted by the consultant for the 2004 POCD. While it was felt 400+/- people responded to the phone survey it was felt that a phone survey wouldn't work currently as people no longer answer solicitation calls.

Town Planner Whitten then referenced an excerpt from the 2004 POCD – Section 3 – Guiding Development. She noted under the Strategy – to Maintain Housing Diversity, the Action Items are to Retain Adequate Multifamily Housing, and to Permit Age Restricted Residential Development. Chairman Ouellette questioned if Newberry Village had been completed? Mr. Giorgio, the developer, indicated he sold 6 units the previous week, and is ready to start the last phase. Town Planner Whitten noted housing for the elderly is provided via Park Hill (Broad Brook) and Spring Village (Warehouse Point). Town Planner Whitten noted neither complex offers much in the way of “services” for the clients. East Windsor has nothing which would be considered assisted living. Town Planner Whitten suggested Touchpoints and Kettlebrook are really rehabilitation facilities.

Tom Talamini concurred; he suggested assisted living is different from convalescent homes. Assisted living facilities offer residents the ability to live in their own unit yet nursing staff is onsite and the facility offers a community room, etc.

Mr. Giorgio, 40 Barber Hill Road/developer of Newberry Village questioned if there is a need for the assisted living facilities in East Windsor? He suggested assisted living puts a huge burden on the family of the elderly. He suggested the cost of these facilities

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is \$3 - \$6,000/month; the firms offering these facilities is not targeting East Windsor but are putting these facilities in South Windsor or Simsbury. This is a huge drain on the family's assets; people are living too long now. Mr. Giorgio suggested Avery Heights wouldn't be dropping a \$10,000,000 facility in East Windsor. These large corporations target communities which will support \$250,000 homes.

Discussion continued regarding location requirements for such facilities. Town Planner Whitten note a past director of the Housing Authority had indicated the Authority was considering selling the property next to Park Hill for an assisted living facility; conceptual plans had been drawn up by the Authority.

Mr. Giorgio, 40 Barber Hill Road/developer of Newberry Village gave some background information on the progression of assisted living and active adult housing. He noted that the average age of the residents in his project, Newberry Village, is the mid-50s; they don't need assisted living but don't want to mow lawns, etc. Mr. Giorgio felt there was need in East Windsor to offer an affordable priced home.

Discussion continued regarding what comprises affordability.

Mr. Giorgio, 40 Barber Hill Road/developer of Newberry Village suggested its cheap land with sewer availability; the installation of septic systems increases the cost of the homes. Town Planner Whitten noted a recent discussion with the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) suggested they were considering onsite "community" sewer or septic plans which would serve a community of homes. Mr. Giorgio suggested "affordable" housing is a terrible name. He suggested people 24 to 34 are not staying in East Windsor because they can't afford to live here. He suggested the first question people ask when purchasing a home is how the education system is. Mr. Giorgio cited past experiences with past budget votes; parents of school aged children need to get out to vote.

Discussion continued regarding affordability of homes in the \$259,000 to \$299,000 price range, and the changing dynamics of aging families – many of whom want to continue to live locally rather than moving to Florida. Commissioner Sullivan suggested reviewing the in-law apartment provisions; many families want to maintain a multi-generational living arrangement.

The Commission felt they would like to pursue consideration of some type of assisted living.

Mr. Giorgio, 40 Barber Hill Road/developer of Newberry Village suggested the Town needs to form a joint partnership with a national, or local, developer who can bring that national partnership to the table. Maybe the land has to be donated; maybe the facility should contain 100 units with a community room and healthcare facilities.

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Discussion followed regarding rental prices for elderly units. Comparisons were made to the \$1200/month for Mansions at Canyon Ridge (a conventional non-age restricted apartment complex) vs \$5 - \$6,000/month for assisted living facilities.

Discussion then turned to housing diversity.

Mr. Giorgio, 40 Barber Hill Road/developer of Newberry Village suggested if you can build 4 houses on an acre and it's next to the baseball park then you get another type of housing. Town Planner Whitten noted the Commission had considered cluster subdivisions in the past but then disliked them because of the density. Town Planner Whitten suggested the density of Broad Brook is 12 to 13 units/acre (based on the density of the apartment complexes). She suggested the Commission had talked about creating village district zoning, one of which would be in Broad Brook. She noted there are some large tracts of land in Broad Brook which would lend themselves to higher density development.

Discussion continued regarding those who want to maintain the rural/farming character of East Windsor vs. those who want denser development.

Deputy Selectman Bowsza noted there are ways to preserve the land by selling development rights, which is what PA 490 was created for. Town Planner Whitten noted one of the goals of the town is to preserve farmland. She also noted transfer of development rights allows the infill of density in other areas which have the infrastructure to support development.

Discussion also turned to TOD development – transit oriented development. Town Planner Whitten recalled the State has been looking at the Warehouse Point section of East Windsor to put a rotary to support TOD in Windsor Locks.

LET THE RECORD SHOW Commissioner Slate arrived at 8:40 p.m.

Town Planner Whitten returned discussion to housing diversity.

Mr. Giorgio, 40 Barber Hill Road/developer of Newberry Village suggested when he has been before the Wetlands Commission he has been told a lot isn't big enough for a lawn and he felt that wasn't true; maybe we need to allow smaller lots which would allow more diversity. Mr. Talamini suggested Mr. Giorgio was speaking from a developer's perspective. Mr. Giorgio then described his own lot, which has several acres. The house has been located to the rear; with the frontage requirement he can't subdivide and provide another building lot for a family with kids in school. Mr. Giorgio felt something like that could be done by Special Use Permit.

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Commissioner Gowdy cited that apartments were thought to impact the school system, yet there have been only three children from the Mansions at Canyon Ridge attending

East Windsor's schools. He noted the Mansions at Canyon Ridge is the second largest taxpayer in East Windsor. Commissioner Gowdy cited an approved application for another 480 units on Route 5; he questioned why more apartments shouldn't be encouraged? Town Planner Whitten noted both developments referenced are, or will be, high-end apartments. Deputy First Selectman Bowsza suggested that people tend to live in apartments on a durational basis, and then move on to homeownership or move elsewhere.

Discussion continued regarding the need to maintain a balance of housing options. Chairman Ouellette requested information to give the Commission an understanding of the variations of density and diversity; he suggested perhaps aerials of various projects would be helpful. Town Planner Whitten reported she will hire a consultant to do a workshop on the subject. Chairman Ouellette suggested perhaps there were handouts available from the previous POCD project. Mr. Giorgio offered examples of high density developments in Windsor and elsewhere; he also offered examples of building something like his current development, Newberry Village, but with separate units on two floors.

Commissioner Slate noted he had previously served on the Housing Authority, during which time they had drawn up plans for an assisted living facility at Park Hill.

Town Planner Whitten noted the following items/topics for continued discussion:

- Alternatives to density and location requirements
- Consider eldercare and alternative housing options for the elderly, including assisted living
- Revisit in-law apartments
- Consider smaller lots, higher density, mixed use, change frontage requirements
- Consider community septic/sewer systems

BUSINESS MEETING/(2) Discussion – Adult Regulations (Tabled):

BUSINESS MEETING/(3) Signing of Mylars/Plans, Motions:

Motions:

- **Herb Holden Trucking, Inc. and owner Northern Capital Region Disposal Facility, Inc. (NORCAP)** – Renewal of existing permit, and Modification of Site Plan/Special Use Permit for earth products removal at property located at the rear of Wapping Road. [M-1 & A-2 Zones; Map 27, Block 49, Lot 17C].

Mylars:

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- **NEW BUSINESS: Northeast Truck Sales** – Modification of Approved Site Plan to allow used truck sales at 179 South Main Street, owned by Donald Corkum. [B-2 Zone; Map 32, Block 21, Lot 69].

Town Planner Whitten noted the CFPZA (Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies) Annual Conference will be held Thursday, March 13, 2014 at Aqua Turf, Southington, CT. Cost of the event is \$42/individual.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Gowdy moved/Devanney seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Planning and Zoning Commission