

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

REGULAR Meeting #1669 – February 24, 2015

MEETING MINUTES

*******Draft Document Subject to Commission Review/Approval*******

The Meeting was called to order in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT. at 6:38 P. M. by Chairman Ouellette.

PRESENT: **Regular Members:** Joe Ouellette (Chairman), Frank Gowdy, and Dick Sullivan.

Alternate Members: Michael Kowalski, and Marti Zhigailo.

ABSENT: **Regular Members:** Lorry Devanney, and Jim Thurz.

Alternate Members: Bob Slate.

Also present was Town Planner Whitten.

GUESTS: Dick and Kathy Pippin, Steven Smith, and Tom Talamini

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum was established as three Regular Members, and two Alternate Members, were present at the Call to Order. Chairman Ouellette noted both Alternate Members would sit in, and vote, on all Items of Business this evening.

LEGAL NOTICE: None.

ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:

Town Planner Whitten requested the addition of discussion at the end of the Meeting regarding the Commission's consideration regarding towing and car hauling as an equivalent use.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Steve Smith, 2 Cobblestone Drive: questioned how auto garages are MANAGED? Town Planner Whitten indicated all uses are considered in relation to the Zoning Regulations.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/February 10, 2015:

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MOTION: To APPROVE the Minutes of Regular Meeting #1668 dated February 10, 2015, with the following amendments:
Page 1, ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: “A quorum was established ~~five~~ FOUR Regular Members.....”

Gowdy moved/Zhigailo seconded/

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Kowalski/Ouellette/Sullivan/Zhigailo
Opposed: No one
Abstained: Gowdy (absent from 2/10/2015 Meeting)

RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS: None.

PERFORMANCE BONDS – ACTIONS; PERMIT EXTENSIONS; ROAD ACCEPTANCE – R&R Tool and Die, 94 Newberry Road. Request for one year extension to start construction. Original approval was March 11, 2014. One year extension to start construction will expire March 11, 2016:

Chairman Ouellette acknowledged receipt of an e-mail requesting a one year extension of the approval of a building addition for R&R Tool and Die at 94 Newberry Road. Town Planner Whitten clarified that this Applicant has had a lot going on in his life and business since the Commission’s approval; he has requested the one year extension to commence construction.

MOTION: To APPROVE a one year extension through March 11, 2016 to start construction of the addition for R&R Tool and Die, 94 Newberry Road, East Windsor, CT.

Gowdy moved/Sullivan seconded/

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (Gowdy/Kowalski/Ouellette/Sullivan/Zhigailo)

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

NEW PUBLIC HEARING: Jeffrey and Maria Ewing - Special Use Permit to allow a rear lot (per Chapter 408) off of Kreyssig Road, accessed through Ellington (part of a 5-lot subdivision known as Spring Brook Farm Subdivision along East Windsor/Ellington town line). [A-1 Zone; Map 136, Block 75, Lot 11] :

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Chairman Ouellette noted this Item of Business, and the associated item listed under **NEW BUSINESS**, has been tabled this evening. No discussion will occur. Town Planner Whitten clarified that there will be substantial changes required to propose this subdivision, as there are problems with regard to the density incentives allowed under the East Windsor Zoning Regulations. She has meet with representatives from J. R. Russo (representing the Applicant), and the Ellington Town Planner regarding the issues. There is a possibility that this Application will be withdrawn.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Jeffrey E. and Maria B. Ewing – 5-lot Subdivision off of Kreyssig Road (Spring Brook Farm Subdivision) along East Windsor/Ellington town line, with one lot totally in East Windsor. A-1 Zone; Map 146, Block 75, Lot 11]. (*Deadline for decision 3/19/2015*):

TABLED – see discussion under **NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS** regarding an associated Item of Business. No discussion will occur this evening.

BUSINESS MEETING/(1) Terri Hahn, LADA – POCD Commercial Workshop:

Town Planner Whitten provided the Commission with the four development scenarios Mrs. Hahn had submitted at the previous Meeting. She recalled that Mrs. Hahn's intention was to propose uses which would build on existing uses, such as Sofia's Plaza, Walmart, Southern Auto Auction and other auto related uses, and agricultural uses. Future development would then add potential major uses – such as recreational (Bass Pro Shop, MotoCross, Ballpark, Golf Course), medical services (emergency care center, veterinary hospital), larger scale residential (Assisted Living, Senior Housing), a college campus (supported by a walkable community component) and uses which can support the major uses (the college campus might provide staff for the emergency care facility). She requested that the Commission review the scenarios and identify their preferences by placing an orange dot on the proposed business use. Town Planner Whitten invited the members of the audience to join in.

Discussion followed. Steve Smith, speaking from the audience, suggested he drives that route every day. He felt it would be nice to have the business but questioned if the Commission's proposals include the economics associated with the uses? What happens over the next ten years if there is no sustainable business? He cited the hockey rink which has gone out of business in South Windsor. Mr. Smith suggested he does like the mixed use developments in South Windsor, such as Evergreen Walk, although he felt the upscale shops are being replaced with lesser quality retail facilities. Mr. Smith questioned the ability to attract the students necessary to support the college campus, as Asnuntuck and Manchester Community College are both relatively close to East Windsor.

Chairman Ouellette summarized the Commission's intent with regard to this exercise. Future development of the Route 5 Corridor is a goal for the POCD revision, and a continuing goal of the Commission itself. The Commission understands the traffic flow and existing problems along Route 5, however, the Commission is promoting a pro-active approach to encouraging

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future business development within this area while continuing to support existing businesses and respect existing residential and agricultural uses.

Town Planner Whitten noted that the west side of Route 5 is impacted by a considerable amount of flood plain. While no permanent construction can occur within the flood plain uses such as the MotoCross, the Bass Pro Shop, and the ball park can utilize the Route 5 frontage for the permanent buildings and utilize the rear (flood plain) land for recreational activities. She also noted that for mixed use to be successful the residential component must be built as well; residential development has been slow to non-existent for Blue Back Square and/or Evergreen Walk. The intent of Mrs. Hahn's walkable communities close to the college campus and other mixed use areas would include the residential component necessary to support the major uses.

Town Planner Whitten reviewed the uses noted by the majority of the dots and discussed the Commission's preferences.

- **Plan 4- Auto uses on west side** – the Commission would prefer not to permit any additional auto uses within the flood plain area. (See also additional comments under **Auto uses**).
- **Plan 3 – College campus off Wagner Lane** – Mr. Pippin felt that area, which is presently zoned M-1, shouldn't be used for anything other than commercial development. Town Planner Whitten suggested the M-1 uses could be replaced in another location. (The Commission agreed it would like to expand the existing Industrial Park located off of Route 5). Mr. Smith reiterated his question of whom we would attract for students. Discussion continued regarding the cost of four-year colleges vs. two-year community colleges, or the possibility of an existing school preferring to relocate to a more visible area. Town Planner Whitten noted the State has identified the area from Hartford to Massachusetts – which includes East Windsor – as the technology corridor. Commissioner Zhigailo suggested linking the college with some of the other proposed uses. If the college curriculum included medical programs the students could support the medical facilities proposed. She cited the success of UCONN with the support services – restaurants, entertainment, bookstores – surrounding the college campus.
- **Agricultural/recreational uses on west side** – Town Planner Whitten reiterated her statement that businesses such as the MotoCross and Bass Pro Shop could use the Route 5 frontage for buildings while the recreational or agricultural uses would occur on the rear (flood plain) land. She noted the accumulation of dots indicated the Commission and guests felt the recreational/agricultural uses should be located near the South Windsor town line.
- **Medical uses:** The Commission felt they would support the creation of a wellness corridor, which would include businesses such as urgent care facilities, and hospital outsourcing facilities (such as St. Francis Walk-In Clinics).
- **Auto uses:** The Commission noted the auto uses are primarily located in a centralized area and are composed of essentially two types of businesses – the auto auction and support businesses for the auction (dealer repair shops, detailers), and sales of used cars. It was felt that the auto inventory areas would continue to be viable for some time and would continue to be a strong business component of the Route 5 corridor.
- **High-end apartments/residential:** The Commission felt they were in favor of high-end apartments but would prefer they not be located within the business corridor. (See additional comments under **Cinema/Old Walmart/La Renaissance**.) Mr. Talamini, speaking from the audience, questioned how the Commission felt about assisted living

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- facilities? The Commission favored the assisted living facilities, but also preferred they be located somewhere other than the Route 5 corridor. Discussion followed regarding clustered housing and the consideration of the density factor which allows concentrated development while maintaining associated open space. Town Planner Whitten suggested the Commission revisit the concept of clustered housing, and discuss the density factor in more depth.-
- **Round-about vs. intersection at South Water Street and Route 5** – Town Planner Whitten suggested Mrs. Hahn has used the round-about as a divider between areas of commercial uses. Commissioner Zhigailo cited that the aging population likes the small malls, such as Geissler’s Plaza, as it contains multiple smaller business uses rather than large businesses which require a lot of walking. Discussion followed regarding developing a target market related to potential business development. Mr. Pippin suggested the round-abouts are difficult to navigate with larger (tractor trailer) vehicles.
 - **Cinema/Old Walmart/La Renaissance:** Town Planner Whitten noted Mrs. Hahn had suggested tying the uses of these three parcels together. Potential uses could include a high-rise residential tower at the cinema site, and bigger retail uses on the other parcels. Commissioner Sullivan suggested the need to encourage uses which won’t compete with, but would rather feed off, the Super Walmart. Commissioner Zhigailo felt there was a need for rental of commercial kitchen space for smaller businesses which couldn’t bear the cost of the commercial kitchen on their own property. She suggested the La Renaissance site already has the commercial kitchen; a small business person could rent use of the space to bottle their own product. Discussion continued regarding the topographical access limitations to all three sites.
 - **Hotels/Restaurants:** The Commission felt both uses should be concentrated near the highway exits, and the north end of Route 5 near the Burlington Coat Factory.

The Commission continued to discuss various scenarios for potential development. They acknowledge the existing traffic problem, but noted the State has proposed to perform a traffic study of the area. The Commission also acknowledged additional development will bring additional challenges along with it, but they remain committed to conscientious growth along the Route 5 business corridor.

Continuing discussion of the POCD Commercial Workshop will follow at the next Commission Meeting.

MOTION: To TAKE A FIVE MINUTE BREAK

Gowdy moved/Sullivan seconded/

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (Gowdy/Kowalski/Ouellette/Sullivan/Zhigailo)

The Commission RECESSED at 8:40 p.m. and RECONVENED at 8:46 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- **Extension of POCD revision date:** Town Planner Whitten advised the Commission she has spoken with OPM (Office of Policy and Management) regarding an extension of the POCD revisions. It was noted that East Windsor has significantly amended its POCD twice within the recent ten year period. It is believed that the extensions would move the revision date forward, therefore, the request for an extension of submission of the current POCD revision may not be necessary.

- **Request for clarification of Towing and Car Hauling as permitted uses/similar uses:**
Town Planner Whitten is requesting the Commission to consider if either of the following potential uses would be similar/equivalent to existing automotive uses:
 - ❖ **Towing** – towing vehicles for police or residents from one location to another, towing would be a stand-alone business rather than an accessory use to another auto use, no vehicle sales or vehicle repairs associated with the towing business.
 - ❖ **Car hauling** – vehicles collected from various sites and either stored on the carrier on the collection site or offsite, and then delivered to another site.

Town Planner Whitten noted there is no dealer's license associated with either of these proposed uses.

Discussion followed. Commission members cited concern for location of the use, visibility from street, duration of storage, number of vehicles being stored. Possible comparable permitted uses were discussed.

The Commission felt they needed more information to make a determination as to a comparable use; they requested Town Planner Whitten to investigate the uses further. The Commission felt the person pursuing the towing business could apply for a text amendment, while they requested further research on the hauling business.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Commission was reminded of the following event:

- Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies 67th Annual Conference, Thursday, March 26, 2015 at the Aqua Turf Country Club, Plantsville, CT. – Principal speaker: David Fink, Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities.

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BUSINESS MEETING/(2) Signing of Mylars/Plans, Motions: Nothing presented.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 9:15 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Planning and Zoning Commission
(2236)