



TOWN OF ROXBURY CONNECTICUT

Zoning Commission

29 North Street • P.O. Box 203 • Roxbury, CT 06783-0203

ROXBURY ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MARCH 12, 2018 MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Conway called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.
Members Present: James Conway, Alan Johnson, Drew Loya and Elaine Curley
Members Absent: Kim Tester
Alternates Present: William Horrigan and Cheryl Rosen
Alternates Absent: David Miller
Public Present: Bonnie Bradley, Matthew Keys and Mark Zerbe
Staff Present: John Cody, ZEO and Karen Eddy, LUA

SEATING OF MEMBERS

Chairman Conway seated members Johnson, Loya, Curley, Rosen for Tester and himself.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting - February 12, 2018

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting as presented. Motion by Loya, seconded by Johnson and unanimously approved.

BUSINESS

Mamie's Restaurant - Application to amend Special Permit

Chairman Conway stated he has no problems with this application.

MOTION: To approve the application by Mamie's Restaurant to amend their special permit to expand the interior space of the restaurant. Motion by Conway, seconded by Johnson and unanimously approved.

VOTE

- Johnson – No problem with this application. A good opportunity to expand the business.
- Loya – Great for Roxbury and this business.
- Rosen – Great chance to improve a beloved institution.
- Curley – Application is appropriate for Roxbury.
- Conway – Gives support and encouragement of this expansion.

Zone D - Proposed amendment to the Zoning Regulations

A Public Hearing is scheduled for April 9, 2018.

ZEO Report

Mr. Cody noted that most of his time has been spent on wetlands issues and the proposed subdivision.

He noted that the topic of Air B&B's will be addressed at the next COG workshop on March 29th.

Mr. Cody stated he is looking for direction on regulating and monitoring Air B&B's and noted that Warren is working on regulations. He distributed a packet on "Regulating Short Term Rentals" which summarized research done by Jocelyn Ayer of NHCOG. He commented that many other towns are looking for direction on this issue.

Elaine Curley asked about the distinction between and B & B and Air B& B's. Mr. Johnson expressed concerns

about the impact on neighbors and feels the town must have the ability to monitor them. Chairman Conway commented that they have free reign now and understands that homes are being rented without the owner living there. Alan Johnson noted that in some cases 4-5 units in one house are being rented.

Ms. Rosen felt that trading of vacation homes is a different issue.

Chairman Conway noted that homes are being bought as investment properties to be used as Air B&B rentals. It was also noted that B & B's are owner occupied whereas Air B&B's are not. He feels the main issue is the length of stay.

John Cody noted that the town and the state are losing out on hotel taxes and he discussed the town charging fees.

Historic Barn Regulations

Mr. Cody explained that this regulation is in the wrong section and should be renumbered and moved to the section that includes all zones. As this is a correction, no amendment or public hearing is required.

Motion to renumber and relocate this regulation to the section that includes all zones. Motion by Chairman Conway, seconded by Mr. Loya and approved.

Chairman's Report

Zone A – Amendments

Alan Johnson questioned whether changes to the Zone A regulations will have the support of the town. He spoke of the serious resistance to the Smart Growth proposal. Chairman Conway remarked that the possible Zone A amendments were entirely different in that they would not favor any one person or entity, but rather provide changes that would open up the center of town.

Elaine Curley opined that there was a lack of understanding between what the Smart Growth was attempting to do and the way it was interpreted by some people. Chairman Conway reminded that the town-wide informational meeting which was held to clarify the goals of Smart Growth was very poorly attended.

Mr. Johnson cautioned that we don't want to get too far along in the process only to find there is serious resistance in town. Chairman Conway reminded that COG has been recommending that the town consider a Village District concept for a long time. He asked the commission whether they want to go forward with developing amendments to Zone A, with the goal of encouraging smaller lots and smaller homes, etc. He suggested that the amendments be formalized and then presented to the town.

The details and particulars of what the amendments might look like were discussed at length including parcel size, house size, setbacks, road frontage, interior lot size, shared driveways, minimum circle size, housing cost, etc. Ms. Rosen wondered whether such changes might encourage more spec building as an unintended consequence. Chairman Conway reminded that this would return Zone A to the previous minimum lot size of two acres.

It was noted that the cost of building a 2,400 sq. ft. home would be in the \$410 - \$520 range. The notion of changing the zoning to allow for smaller lots to encourage the building of smaller, more affordable homes would be an intended outcome. Ms. Rosen questioned whether there might be opposition from abutting landowners to dividing adjacent properties into smaller lots.

Elaine Curley noted that COG's model of a village district includes sidewalks and neighborhoods. Mr. Horrigan suggested that this would foster a Hamlet style town center. He noted the problem of the schools being under pressure to increase class size and add more children to keep the schools viable. Elaine Curley agrees with the idea of providing an environment that will encourage young families to move in to town.

Problems associated with shared driveways were noted, but on the positive side they provide less curb cuts. Chairman Conway pointed out that only the first 100 feet would be shared between two lots.

If these types of amendments are implemented in Zone A, the potential number of new houses that could be built on larger parcels is estimated to be between 10 and 15. Chairman Conway reiterated that the point is to create alternative housing options for the town.

COMMUNICATIONS

The amended Meeting Schedule for 2018 was distributed showing an adjustment to the November meeting date.

Chairman Conway briefly mentioned the regulations from the COG referrals that are being considered in other towns; Slaughterhouse in New Milford and Food Trucks in Woodbury.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. by Curley, seconded by Loya and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Eddy

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Land Use Administrator

These minutes are not considered official until approved at the next meeting of the Roxbury Zoning Commission