

**CITY OF TORRINGTON
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
November 12, 2008**

Present: Richard Calkins, Chairman
Greg Perosino, Member
Doris Murphy, Member and Inland Wetlands Liaison
Greg Mele, Member
Jim Bobinski, Alternate
Donna Greco, Alternate
Christine Mele, Alternate

Also Present: Martin Connor, AICP, City Planner

Absent: Paul Summers, Vice Chairman

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Richard Calkins called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT

2. **Attendance/Announcement by Chairman:**

Chairman Calkins announced present and serving on the Commission this evening will be Doris Murphy, Jim Bobinski, Greg Perosino, Greg Mele, Donna Greco, Christine Mele and Richard Calkins. Also present is City Planner Martin Connor, AICP.

Mr. Connor reviewed the information on the \$20,000 grant the City has received to update the Plan of Conservation and Development. Approximately ten firms submitted RFQs to provide the services on this project. The search has been narrowed down to two firms, and the Committee recommended the firm of Planimetrics. Mr. Connor wrote a memo to the Mayor and the Purchasing Agent informing them of the choice, and it will go before the City Council on Monday evening. On Thursday, December 4, 2008, 6 p.m., a kick-off meeting is being planned, the Planning and Zoning Commission and all other City Land Use Boards and Commission members will be invited as well.

Mr. Calkins stated it is important to have input from other Land Use Boards. Hopefully this document will be converted into a format that is user friendly and helpful. One of the things Mr. Calkins inquired about is how we need more public input. Mr. Connor noted the public format will be informative as well as fun, with an exercise to show how we will go about doing this in the future. An invitation will be forthcoming, Kim Barbieri is designing the invitations..

b. Economic Development Commission / Torrington Development Corp

Mr. Greg Mele reviewed some of the feedback he has been getting from the Economic Development Commission, which has to do with sign heights and sign limitations. It appears that Architectural Review Committee brings forth their recommendations and input to developers to lower the sign down to 16 height maximum, which they have agreed to do in their preliminary meetings with ARC. When the applicant then comes before this Planning and Zoning Commission, the regulations show a higher level acceptable, and it appears that

developers do not realize the ARC is just recommendations, and they have no power or authority to enforce that height. That may be an area to review, the signage, or define it differently.

Mr. Calkins noted this is a difficult area, if the regulations say a 16 foot sign is allowed, that's all you will see, same if it is 20', 25' or 30'. Whatever the maximum allowable height is, that's what will be applied for. In certain areas, a 16 foot sign may give you the same visibility as a 25 foot sign.

Discussion followed on signage and definitions of educational use, and the process of applications going through the Planning and Zoning process.

3. Minutes for Approval:

a. 10/22/08

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to approve the 10/22/08 minutes, seconded by Mr. Mele, unanimously carried.

4. Old Business:

- a. Update Plan of Development and Zoning Regulations
- b. Special Exception 08-211 and Site Plan 909
 - Applicant: SWAMI Corporation
 - Location: 1083 East Main Street
 - Proposal: New hotel construction with associated parking, utilities and storm drainage. 25% reduction for parking spaces required (Public hearing closed)

Discussion followed amongst Commission members. (#800)

MOTION by Mr. Mele to APPROVE Special Exception 08-211 and Site Plan 909

Applicant: SWAMI Corporation
Location: 1083 East Main Street
Proposal: New hotel construction with associated parking, utilities and storm drainage. 25% reduction for parking spaces required with the following recommendations and conditions:

- 1. No Zoning Permit shall be issued until the land sale with the Housing Authority of the City of Torrington has been completed and proof of the lot line revision is filed with the City Planner's office.
- 2. The applicant shall address the comments from Ray Drew, Administrator, Water Pollution Control Authority, contained in his 10-15-08 e-mail memo to the City Planner. A sewer permit for the project shall be issued prior to issuance of a zoning permit.
- 3. The applicant shall submit a bond estimate to be reviewed and approved by the City Planner for the proposed landscaping and a separate bond estimate for erosion and sedimentation controls. A bond in a form acceptable to the Corporation Counsel shall be posted prior to issuance of the Zoning Permit. 25% of the posted landscaping bond shall remain in place for one year after the landscaping plan has been fully implemented to ensure successful growth of the plantings.

4. The mutual driveway access easements shall be reviewed and approved by Corporation Counsel before filing the approved mylar site plan on the land records. The executed easements shall be filed on the land records.
5. It is recommended that the applicant follow the advice of Fire Chief, John B. Field, Jr., contained in his 9/25/08 letter to the City Planner on the project. The future interconnect to the Housing Authority of the City of Torrington property, when built, should be completed, maintained and capable of handling the weight, height and width of fire apparatus responding to this location. It should be identified for emergency utilization only. MOTION seconded by Mr. Perosino.

Motion carried with Commissioners Bobinski and Murphy opposed.

6. **Public hearing scheduled for November 12, 2008, 7:30 p.m., Council Chambers, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT**

- a. Special Exception 08-212
Applicant: India Mills/Living Water Ministries
Location: 58 Migeon Avenue
Proposal: Church use

At 7:45 p.m. Chairman Calkins opened the public hearing and stated serving on the Commission this evening will be Commissioners Jim Bobinski, Doris Murphy, Greg Mele, Donna Greco, Christine Mele, Greg Perosino and Richard Calkins. Also in attendance is City Planner Martin Connor.

Commissioner Mele read the legal notice that was published in the Republican American.

India Mills of Living Water Ministries, 47 Water Street, Torrington, appeared before the Commission and verified the public hearing sign was posted and submitted the mailing receipts.

Ms. Mills explained their proposal to move their church on Water Street to 58 Migeon Avenue, as they have outgrown their current space. No exterior changes are proposed. They will occupying the portion of the building formerly occupied by a fitness gym.

Mr. Connor reviewed his memo dated 11/6/08 to the Commission (#1634).

At 7:59 p.m. Chairman Calkins declared the public hearing closed.

MOTION by Mr. Mele to APPROVE Special Exception 08-212

Applicant: India Mills/Living Water Ministries

Location: 58 Migeon Avenue

Proposal: Church Use with the following condition and recommendation:

1. The applicant shall file an application for a sewer discharge permit, a fee (if required), will need to be paid prior to issuance of a zoning permit for the change of use.
2. Per Fire Chief John B. Field Jr., it is recommended that the building be equipped with a complete and compliant fire protection system. It is also recommended that the applicant install a secure Knox brand lock box to the exterior of the building near the main door to allow fire fighters quick access to the building in times of emergency. The Fire Department requests that the Fire Marshal perform an inspection for code compliance prior to occupying the space. Motion seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

5. **New Business:**

- a. Special Exception 08-215
Applicant: Vincent J. Avallone
Location: 61 Main Street
Proposal: Change of use to music instruction (former real estate office)
(Set public hearing date)

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to set a public hearing date of December 17, 2008, seconded by Mr. Mele, unanimously carried.

- b. Site Plan 916
Applicant: Friar Associates Inc. for the City of Torrington
Location: 140 Main Street
Proposal: Construction of new two story stair tower and modify parking lot

MOTION by Mr. Mele to table this item, seconded by Mr. Perosino, unanimously carried.

- c. Approval of 2009 Commission Meeting Calendar

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to approve the 2009 calendar, seconded by Mr. Mele, unanimously carried.

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to add an agenda item by 2/3rds vote regarding the Torrington Development Corporation, discussion, seconded by Mr. Mele, motion carried.

Mr. Perosino discussed the Commission's vested interest in the Torrington Development Corporation, and he sits on that Board as well, and nothing seems to be moving, he is frustrated by this ten year plan and he would like to move this forward in quicker manner.

The Commission will invite Bill Baxter from the TDC to the next meeting.

7. **Adjournment:**

MOTION by Mr. Perosino to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Mele, unanimously carried at 8:28 p.m.