

ORANGE ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 MEETING

Unapproved Minutes

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission held a meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., a Zoom remote Internet meeting. The following members were in attendance

Oscar Parente, Esq., Chairman
Judy Smith, Vice-Chairman
Paul Kaplan, Esq., Secretary
Kevin Cornell, Esq., PE
Thomas Torrenti, PE

Jack Demirjian, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Tamara Trantales, Administrative Assistant
Bonnie Syat, Recording Secretary

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Chairman Parente welcomed everyone to the Zoom video remote meeting. He noted those in attendance.

Review of the Minutes from the August 25, 2020 Special meeting.

Chairman Parente stated that since the Commission may not have had ample time to review the Minutes. This item will be placed on the next agenda.

There were no additional comments.

Old Business

Commissioner Cornell stated that Zoning Enforcement Officer Jack Demirjian brought up the subject of generators at the last meeting. ZEO Demirjian stated that since the Orange Zoning setbacks as those for any accessory structures under 150 square feet. He stated that he would like to have regulations which state setbacks and other criteria for generators and propane tanks. A brief discussion ensued.

Chairman Parente asked if generators and propane tanks are covered under the Building Code. ZEO Demirjian replied affirmatively and stated that the Building Inspector tells Jack, out of courtesy, when he receives an application for a generator or propane tank. Since there aren't any zoning regulations regarding this issue, applicants are not aware they must speak with ZEO Demirjian as well as the Building Inspector. A brief discussion ensued. ZEO Demirjian noted that people are using generators s more often to prepare for storms. Chairman Parente asked ZEO Demirjian to draft language regarding generators and propane tanks, and to suggest where they should be in the zoning regulations. ZEO Demirjian agreed.

There were no additional comments.

New Business

There was no New Business to discuss.

Report of the Zoning Enforcement Officer

Zoning Enforcement Officer Jack Demirjian stated that in addition to regulations regarding propane tanks and generators, he will draft language relating to Airbnb's for a future meeting. ZEO Demirjian noted that he has issued several abatement orders.

ZEO Demirjian noted that the FedEx Distribution Center on Marsh Hill Road has obtained their Certificate of Occupancy. He stated that the site work is essentially complete. They need to replace some trees which didn't take. He noted that there is a landscape bond in place.

Chairman Parente inquired if the project on 197 Indian River Road is still going well. ZEO Demirjian replied affirmatively. He stated that he would be walking the site later this week. A brief discussion ensued.

Discussion ensued regarding changing the time Public Hearings begin. As there was a consensus from the Commission, Chairman Parente stated that Public Hearings will now begin at 7:00 p.m. ZEO Demirjian stated that he would make the change for future meetings.

As there were no additional comments, Chairman Parente called for a 10-minute recess at 7:20 p.m. The public hearings convened at 7:30 p.m.

CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARINGS: 7:30 p.m. (2)

SITE PLAN APPLICATION- For property known as 329 Smith Farm Road, Smith Farm Road (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 4), Smith Farm Road (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 5), Smith Farm Road (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 6), Neenan Street (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 7) and Neenan Street Extension, submitted by Gyroscope Development Group, LLC.

A proposed residential community that will qualify as assisted housing pursuant to C.G.S. § 8-30g, with 7 buildings and 92 parking spaces to be tied into existing sewer system.

PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS AND ZONING MAP - - Submitted by Gyroscope Development Group, LLC.

To amend the Orange Zoning Regulations to create a new Lascana Assisted Housing District, Article XXV, and to rezone the parcels at 329 Smith Farm Road, Smith Farm Road (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 4), Smith Farm Road (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 5), Smith Farm Road (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 6), Neenan Street (Map 32 / Block 5 / Lot 7) and Neenan Street Extension to the new Lascana Assisted Housing District.

Chairman Parente stated that this Public Hearing was opened at a Special Meeting on August 25, 2020. Attorney Andrea Gomes, representing the Applicant, introduced her team for the record. She displayed photos of similar housing developments. Commissioner Torrenti commented that the buildings with the dormers appear to be "top heavy". Discussion ensued regarding the design. Jarrett Crooks, Director of Architecture at Paul B. Bailey Architects, LLC, stated that the buildings are townhouses over flats. Discussion continued.

Bill Kenny, principal of William Kenny Associates, is a Landscape Architect. He discussed the photographs and the planting plans. He stated that there would be screening, particularly in the western corner of the property. Screening would consist of a double layer of tall evergreen trees, as well as a privacy fence. Six-foot trees will be planted, which are expected to grow to be 30-50' tall. A brief discussion ensued. Mr. Kenny noted that the screening will be helpful in blocking headlights. He stated he will guarantee 6' screening and trees above the fence. It was noted that the trees will be a deer resistant species.

Commissioner Smith inquired if there is a maintenance plan should some trees die or are destroyed in a weather event. Mr. Kenny replied affirmatively. Attorney Gomes stated that the plant maintenance note is already in the proposal. She added that they will comply with the Commission's requests as well. Attorney Gomes noted that this developer truly cares about the Orange Community and wants to be a good neighbor.

Chairman Parente asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Smith stated that this is a great team. They have offered a thorough presentation. She asked if they would consider renaming the Lascana district to a more generic name. Discussion ensued. Chairman Parente and Commissioner Cornell stated that they would prefer a generic zone name as well. Discussion continued regarding possible names for the zone. Attorney Gomes stated that they would like the map to clearly distinguish the area. After more discussion, it was decided that the zone would be called Assisted Housing District.

Chairman Parente stated that regarding the oversized dormers on three buildings, new drawings would be required if it's going to be revised. He stated he was hesitant to close the Public Hearing if more information would be introduced. Discussion ensued. Mr. Crooks stated that the dormers face the rear elevation. He noted that if the dormers were reduced in size, it would affect room sizes. Commissioners Smith and Torrenti agreed that it isn't a "deal breaker" and they will move forward without revisions.

Commissioner Smith asked ZEO Demirjian if all pertinent signoffs have been obtained. He replied affirmatively. He stated that the approval is conditional on the West Haven WPCA approval. A brief discussion ensued.

Carol Martin, Gyroscope Development Group, stated that she has given this project a lot of thought. She noted that many precautions have been incorporated into the plan to ensure that this project is accommodating to the residents of Smith Farm Road.

Chairman Parente stated that this Public Hearing was opened at a Special Meeting on August 25, 2020. A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Judy Smith to close both Public Hearings, the *SITE PLAN APPLICATION* and the *PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS AND ZONING MAP*, for 329 Smith Farm Road, a proposed residential community that will qualify as assisted housing. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Smith, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that he was impressed with the entire application. It was well designed. They have made a large effort to accommodate the neighbors. Commissioner Kaplan thought the layout without common hallways is very nice. He added that it is harmonious with the neighborhood and will fit in nicely.

Commissioner Cornell stated that under the 8-30g statute, the team has developed a high-quality project. Commissioner Smith stated that it clearly meets our Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Commissioner Torrenti stated that this proposal was nicely done. He noted that Attorney Gomes and her team have done a very professional job. Chairman Parente agreed, stating that this is a great opportunity for the town.

ZEO Demirjian read a portion of the POCD, page 73, into the record. Chairman Parente stated that they are committed to reaching the goal set by the State of CT. He noted that this project significantly brings us closer to our Affordable Housing goal.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Tom Torrenti to accept and approve the *SITE PLAN APPLICATION* and the *PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS AND ZONING MAP*, for 329 Smith Farm Road, a proposed residential community that will qualify as assisted housing, subject to the following conditions: There must be an agreement with the West Haven WPCA allowing the Assisted Housing District to utilize their sewers. Also, the revised landscape maintenance plan must be submitted. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; Smith, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Judy Smith to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Smith, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Trantales,
Administrative Assistant