

THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION, PLAN OF
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL MEETING, HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2017, AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 210, TOWN
HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410

Present

Earl J. Kurtz, Gil Linder, John Kardaras, Louis B. Todisco, David Veleber

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

Alternate members: Jeff Natale, Jim Jinks

Absent: Sean Strollo, S. Woody Dawson, Vincent Lentini, Edward Gaudio,
John Fischer

- I. CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Kurtz called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
- II. ROLL CALL
Mr. Voelker called the roll.
- III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
Following roll call, a quorum was determined to be present
- IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.
- V. Item 1 - Guest Speaker: Robert Myers, Former Chairman –
Avon Planning and Zoning Commission

Mr. Myers was invited to speak to the group by Mr. Voelker regarding the pre-application review process, GCS Section 7-159b.

Mr. Myers informed the group of his background and his experience with the pre-application review process.

Mr. Kardaras asked how the process differs from the regulation application process. Mr. Voelker explained the procedure:
Prior to a formal application being submitted, the applicant/developer would meet with the Commission members, Planning and Engineering Departments. Police and Fire would also be invited.
Each department would discuss their requirements or concerns with the applicant.

Mr. Voelker, read part Section 7-159b:

“Such reapplication review and any results or information obtained from it may not be appealed under any provision of the general statutes and shall not be binding on the applicant or any authority, commission, department, agency or other official having jurisdiction to review the proposed project”.

Mr. Voelker referred to the email from Mr. Myers, dated March 27, 2017. He reviewed the comments in the email and discussed Item 1 through 5 with the group.

The group asked questions regarding this process and Mr. Voelker and Mr. Myers explained how the process works. Chairman Kurtz asked if there are some standards. Mr. Natale wondered if there is a downside to this process. Mr. Myers explained that having the developer understand the Town’s and commission’s feelings and rules, would eliminate having to do many revisions to a plan after it was formally submitted. This would save money for the applicant and save the Town’s personnel time from having to review multiple plans. Mr. Todisco believes that something like this would work well in our town.

Mr. Veleber questioned what would happen if a percentage of the group does not like the project being presented to them. Mr. Meyers replied that this would be an informal hearing but the guidance given to the developers would be helpful. Mr. Voelker stated that the pre-application process would provide a constructive dialog that would ultimately empower the Commission.

Chairman Kurtz explained that a public hearing would still be held. Mr. Karderis feels this process would allow the commission and/or the public not to get blindsided. Mr. Linder feels the developers would appreciate the savings from having to do fewer revisions and attend fewer meetings. Mr. Meyers feels that this process would give the town a competitive advantage and the town will be viewed by developers as a friendly place to do business. Mr. Linder believed the pre-application process would help to attract more developers to Cheshire.

Mr. Voelker asked the group to review Section 7-159B and advise him as to any changes they would like.

Chairman Kurtz thanked Mr. Meyers for coming.

Item 2 – Plan of Conservation and Development Draft Design District
Regulations

a. West Main Street Focus Areas

Chairman Kurtz stated that this was already covered.

Item 3 – Discussion:

- a. Market Assessment and Marketing Plan for the Town of Cheshire, CT prepared by Arnett Muldrow

Mr. Voelker presented the plan and informed the group copies of the Assessment were e-mailed to all the members.

Mr. Voelker is attempting to set up a meeting with Mike Goman who does this for a living and can talk about the dynamics of this project. A convenient time for him would be 7:30 p.m. Mr. Voelker will notify the Commission of the date that Mr. Goman is available.

Mr. Voelker referred to Section 7, Page 24

- Developing the North End: Cheshire’s Economic Development Centerpiece
- Marketing Cheshire’s Economic Development Opportunities
- Building a Sense of Place: West Main Street as Cheshire’s Walkable Commercial District
- Fostering the Environment – Ensuring Proactive Policies to Encourage Economic Development

Mr. Voelker discussed Page 2, Observations–

- Locals want growth but not change
- “changing retail dynamics”
- Some of the desired uses are more restaurant options, better grocery store options, a walkable downtown area and activities for kids who are not athletic

Page 25 – Section 7.2.1 – Recommendation: Commission a Master Vision Plan for the Interchange Properties

The group had a discussion about the Vision Plan including the permitted uses such as warehouse and distribution

Section 7.2.2 – Recommendation: Develop a Floating Zoning District over the North End

“A Floating Zoning is a tool authorized in State of Connecticut that allows local governments to create a zone that does not have a geographic relationship when it is adopted. Within the zone are parameters that allow for a mixture of uses that would occur as a result of a plan presented by a developer”

Chairman Kurtz stated that if a developer comes in to look at industrial land, this process would allow the Commission to be better prepared in determining the best use for a particular site

Mr. Kardaras asked if we are better off with a floating zone.

The Marketing Plan states: “the purpose of adding a floating zone is to create flexibility without sacrificing staff and community input”

Section 7.3.1 – Recommendation: Prepare an Easy to Understand Tax Implication Table for Commercial/Industrial/Office Development on the Residential Tax Base

Discussion ensued regarding Section 7.3.1 and its benefits for the Town of Cheshire.

Section 7.4 Building a Sense of Place: West Main Street as Cheshire’s Walkable Commercial District

This area has undergone improvements that make it a desirable pedestrian district which includes the historic Ball and Socket Plant that is being proposed as a multi-use center for the arts.

Town Resident Ilona Somogyi, 762 Bethany Mountain Road, spoke briefly about the Ball & Socket Factory. She said that there has been copper poaching at the site and the police are involved.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by M. Kardaras; seconded by Mr. Veleber

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 P.M.

Attest:

Angela Izzo