

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING HELD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 7:30 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING ON TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2014, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Sean Strollo, Vice Chairman; Gil Linder, Vincent Lentini, Louis Todisco.

Absent: Lelah Campo, S. Woody Dawson, Edward Gaudio, John Kardaras.

Earl Kurtz, Chairman, entered the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Alternates: Jon Fischer, Diane Visconti Absent: Leslie Marinaro

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Strollo called the regular meeting to order at 8:02 p.m.

Mr. Strollo read the fire safety announcement.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Strollo 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. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – P.H. 5/12/14 and Special Meeting 5/12/14

MOTION by Mr. Todisco; seconded by Mr. Linder

MOVED to accept and approve the minutes of the Public Hearing of 5/12/14 and Special Meeting of 5/12/14 subject to corrections, deletions, additions.

Correction: Roll Call – change to read “Mr. Strollo called the roll.”

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Speaker: Mr. David Fink, Partnership for Strong Communities

**Subject: Demographic trends in relation to inclusionary zoning
(moved to later in the meeting)**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2. Zone Text Change Amendment
<u>Town of Cheshire</u>
To amend Section 23, Definitions
Add: Recreation Active and Recreation,
Passive
To amend Section 30 Schedule A, Permitted
Uses, Item 29A
NO ACTION. P.H. 6/9/14 | PH 2/24/14
PH 3/10/14
PH 3/24/14
PH 4/14/14
PH 4/28/14
PH 5/12/14
PH 5/27/14 |
| 3. Resubdivision Application
<u>Kathie A. Welch</u>
Reservoir Road
3 (2 new) lots
SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 6/9/14 | PH 5/12/14
PH 5/27/14
MAD 7/31/14 |
| 4. Zone Map Change Petition
<u>BeMore Investments Inc.</u>
314 West Main Street
From R-20 to R-20A | PH 5/12/14
PH 5/27/14
MAD 7/31/14 |

MOTION by Mr. Todisco; seconded by Mr. Linder

MOVED that the Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission finds that the applicant has demonstrated that the proposed change is consistent with and will be in harmony with the Cheshire Zoning Regulations, Zoning Map and 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development, and hereby approves this application, The reasons for this change are:

1. Development under the R-20A zone will effectively eliminate a nonconforming Retail use.
2. The design standards and the special permit procedure required within the R-20A zone will enable the development of uses that are in harmony with the established development pattern of the West Main Street corridor and the surrounding area.

The effective date of this change is June 13th, 2014, at 12:01 a.m.

Discussion

Mr. Linder commented on Attorney Corey's excellent presentation to the Commission, and his citing the pros and cons of spot zoning. Mr. Linder is comfortable with approving this application.

Mr. Todisco is in favor of this application, and said he is usually concerned with re-zoning a small area. However, given the information of counsel and the staff report, paragraph #3, the facts are laid out with this particular area with R-20 and R-20A zones. Also, this particular site has been used as a florist for over 80 years; it never had a

residential use since zoning; and it has been a defacto commercial zone. Because of the specific conditions, this is not spot zoning, and is reasonable to approve.

Ms. Visconti stated that staff, town attorney, and applicant's counsel did a good job with this application. She looked at the Plan of Conservation and Development, page 8, Community Goals, part 3, and read an excerpt into the record.

Mr. Lentini is in agreement with comments from other Commissioners, and stated the zone change is in harmony with the neighborhood, and he will vote in favor.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

5. Special Permit Application
Robert C. Schechinger, Jr. ASLA
267 Finch Avenue

PH 5/27/14
MAD 7/31/14

MOTION by Mr. Lentini; seconded by Ms. Visconti.

MOVED that the Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission finds that the proposed changes to the plans entitled "Chapel for Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, 269 Finch Avenue, Cheshire CT, Proposed Chapel Addition: Modification to Special Permit", dated April 21, 2014, and revised through May 24, 2014, prepared by Biff Schechinger, ASLA, 772 Farmington Avenue, Farmington CT 06032, will maintain compatibility and harmony with the campus of the Franciscan Sisters and the surrounding area satisfying the requirements of Section 40 of the Cheshire Zoning Regulations and hereby approves this application.

Discussion

Mr. Todisco commented on the fact that these are small changes to a major project which was approved a year ago. The project is improved on a marginal basis by reducing the building envelope and saving trees.

It was noted by Mr. Voelker that the reason for this application was the bell tower and additional overflow parking.

Mr. Lentini is in favor of the application. He said the overflow parking has received no objection from Suffield Court neighbors, and there will be a tree barrier.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

At this point in the meeting, Chairman Kurtz invited David Fink to give his presentation to the Commission.

Town Planner Voelker introduced Mr. Fink who is affiliated with the Partnership for Strong Communities.

Speaker: Mr. David Fink, Partnership for Strong Communities
Subject: Demographic trends in relation to inclusionary zoning

Mr. Fink distributed information on *Housing Data Profile-Cheshire, Suburban Connecticut Key Indicators for Housing, Land Use, Transit and Economic Growth, and Income and Jobs in Connecticut*.

According to Mr. Fink the housing market has changed drastically in the last few years, and many other towns are similar to Cheshire. In suburban Connecticut, 3/4ths of the towns are dominated by single family housing, with little multiple unit housing.

Cheshire's housing stock is 84% single family homes. In 1970 about 40% to 60% of housing was built for the baby boomers who purchased these single family houses. Now, these baby boomers are ready to downsize, and many communities are looking to explore how to handle their housing needs of rentals or condo living. Many towns are applying for State planning grants.

On page 3 of the Cheshire Housing Profile, Mr. Fink pointed out that the town's affordable housing is 3.2%; 24% of housing units are studio up to 2 bedroom units; and this is the same variety as in other towns.

Mr. Fink advised that towns are getting grants, hiring a consultant for about \$20,000 to identify sites and assess the local housing market, hold public meetings for input and education on the housing needs of the community, what they would be and where they could be located. The burden to do all of this falls on the zoning commission.

It was explained by Mr. Fink that the process is for towns to become more proactive, engage in looking at a variety of housing needs, what residents want, i.e. more multi-unit housing and rentals, and other housing options.

Income and Jobs in Connecticut – Mr. Fink pointed out the data on households and incomes, and said Cheshire is like 2/3rds of the Connecticut towns. Other towns have received grants which are useful to engage in the process of looking at housing needs. The data reflects the income of average people who want to work and live in the same community, such as firefighters, police officers, teachers, office workers etc.

Ms. Visconti commented on information that one-half of Connecticut residents want to move out, and she questioned why, and if this affects Cheshire.

In response, Mr. Fink reported that Connecticut is the #4 state for loss of the 25-34 age population; that the job growth is not robust in the State; and we need to have successful, educated labor force in order for business to stay here. In 2000, people aged 65 + made up 14% of the State population, and in 2030 they will make up 21%. These people need housing. The State of Connecticut is either #1 or #2 in ranking of 50 states with people wanting to leave the State.

Modification of zoning regulations was a topic raised by Mr. Fink who said there are many tools available – i.e. floating zones, inclusionary zoning with affordable housing. The Home Connecticut Program permits overlay zoning on sites ½ acre to 20 acres. There is more density, with 20% of the residences as affordable housing units.

Connecticut housing prices are high, the 6th highest median home value in the country; ranks 8th in highest rental costs; and the demand outstrips the supply. Many towns are looking at Home Connecticut Zones, and certain locations work well with housing in town center areas near bus lines, stores, recreational areas, schools, churches.

With younger people leaving the State and the loss of population and effect over time, Mr. Todisco asked whether this would bring down housing prices.

Mr. Fink replied that we are seeing this now, and since the 2008 crash, the prices have reached a plateau. There are many sellers and few buyers. In a recent issue of *Connecticut Economy Magazine*, Mr. Fink cited information that towns with a wider array of housing options and people in them, tend to retain higher property values.

With regard to rental units, Mr. Fink noted that 94% of people were “renters” at one time. However, many towns do not want rental units because it is believed property values will go down. Mr. Fink reported that trends show school enrollment going down between now and 2025, and Cheshire’s school enrollment is expected to decrease by 25%.

A “floating zone” was described by Mr. Voelker as a designated use in various zoning districts, with an option for a development entity to create certain types of housing, that could be located in certain areas of a town.

Mr. Fink informed the Commission that Old Saybrook CT created the first Home Connecticut Zone, with creation of 16 units, and is now creating 182 units near the train station. The town had a town wide conversation on the need for more housing choices; educated its citizens; everyone understood what was to be done; and they found the right location for the housing. Other towns can do the same, and it takes 1 to 2 years to get everyone involved and understanding the concept.

There are five communities with Home Connecticut Zones – Old Saybrook, Hamden, Bristol, Colchester and Simsbury, and each went through a different process to educate people about the zone and all the facts and effects.

On behalf of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Chairman Kurtz thanked Mr. Fink for his informative presentation.

6. TABLED APPLICATIONS

- a. **Special Permit Application**
Ricci Construction Group
50 Prinz Court
Sec. 30, Sch. A. Para 5.
In-Law apartment
SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 6/9/14

- b. **Subdivision Application**
John Hilzinger
Cheshire Street
2-lots
SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 6/9/14

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Special Permit Application**
David Riccio
95 Brookside Place
In-Law apartment
SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 6/23/14

2. **Zone Map Change Petition**
Ball & Socket Arts Inc.
493 West Main Street
I-1 to S.A.R.D.D. zone
To allow existing vacant manufacturing
Facility to be used as an arts center with
Mixed uses to include restaurant and
Retail space.
SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 6/23/14

3. **Special Permit Application**
Ball & Socket Arts Inc.
493 West Main Street
Special Adaptive Reuse Development District
And Special Adaptive Reuse Development
SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON 6/23/14

4. **OTHER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION BUSINESS**
 1. **Monthly Report – Zoning Enforcement Officer**
The report was accepted by the Commission.

 2. **Other.**

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Strollo; seconded by Mr. Todisco

MOVED to adjourn the regular meeting at 8³⁵ p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk