

**SUFFIELD PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
March 21, 2016**

Present: Mark Winne
Ginny Bromage
Patrick Keane
Gina Pastula, Alternate
Brendan Malone, Alternate
Jeff Peak, Alternate

Absent: Jacek Bucior
James Henderson
Mark O’Hara

Also Present: Bill Hawkins, AICP, Town Planner
Eleanor Binns, Administrative Secretary
Gerry Turbet, Town Engineer

The proceedings of this meeting were voice recorded.

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Winne called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He then asked Ms. Binns to take a silent roll call. In the absence of Mr. Bucior, Mr. Henderson and Mr. O’Hara, the chairman appointed Mr. Malone, Ms. Pastula and Mr. Peak to serve as full members for the meeting. Ms. Bromage then read the legal notice into the record.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

File# 2016-2: Request for 13 lot subdivision located at 785 Mapleton Avenue. Map 51H, Block 42, Lot 23. Applicant - Briarwood Homes, Inc.

Attorney Joseph Flynn of Alfano and Flynn, represented the applicant Elzear Roy who was present as was the engineer on the project, Nat Sreenath of Sreenath Associates. He described the twenty acre parcel which was approved by the commission to be rezoned from a PDA to an R-25 in December of 2015. The proposed development is for thirteen lots on a cul-de-sac road with access from Mapleton Avenue. Mr. Flynn suggested that the staff review their reports because the details of the subdivision were included in those reports and if there were questions, he, Mr. Roy and Mr. Sreenath could address the questions and/or concerns.

Mr. Hawkins read his report into the record. He described the property as a total of 19.88 acres including 4 acres of wetlands. The abutting properties to the north contain single family homes (803 & 831 Mapleton). The property at 831 Mapleton also has agricultural fields that are used for growing hay. Properties to the west, south, and across Mapleton to the east contain single family homes. The plans call for construction of a 920 foot cul-de-sac road (Matthew Drive) laid out in a hook configuration with the cul-de-sac on the north side of the parcel and lots on both sides of the street. There will be 7.21 acres of open space which is about 36% of the parcel. Water, sewer, and electric utilities will be brought in from Mapleton Ave. Other proposed conditions are as follows;

- Lot Configuration: According to the lot yield calculations of the R-25 zone the property could accommodate up to 18 houses. Since this is a traditional subdivision each lot is required to have 125 feet of frontage and 25,000 SF of developable area.
- Waivers & Sidewalks: The applicant is seeking a partial waiver for sidewalks to be located on one side of the street and a full waiver from installing sidewalks along Mapleton Avenue.
- Open Space: The 7.21 acre open space parcel is on the west side of the property behind the lots. This area includes the brook and is proposed to be left in its' natural condition under the control of a Homeowners Association (HOA).
- Street Lights: There are three street lights proposed for the subdivision. Two are on the new road with one on the cul-de-sac and the other on the curve in the road. One street light is proposed at the entrance of the new road on Mapleton. There is another street light near lots 10 & 11.
- Street Trees: The plans show a total of 37 street trees which are a mix of red and green maples.
- Buffers: The plans show a 30-50 foot wide agriculture buffer along the northern property boundary. Also shown is a 25 foot wide buffer of white pines on a two foot berm along Mapleton Avenue.

Mr. Hawkins noted that if the commission votes to approve the application, they should consider the following:

- Grant the partial waiver for sidewalks on one side in the development and grant the request for a waiver for the installation of sidewalks on Mapleton Avenue in accordance with Section 308.a of the subdivision regulations.
- Standard subdivision conditions of approval would apply.

There was discussion about leaving mature trees on Mapleton Avenue and supplementing them with additional maple trees rather than building up a berm with pine trees. Mr. Winne suggested that the houses that will be on the corner of Mapleton and the new street have their front doors facing Mapleton as he felt it would fit in better with the character of the neighborhood. The driveways and garages would still be on Matthew Drive.

Mr. Keane brought up the sidewalk on Mapleton Ave. in light of the recent fatality on that road. There was discussion about the fact that there are no other areas on Mapleton to connect to on that street and the town would have to maintain the sidewalks.

Mr. Turbet then read his report into the record. He noted that the drainage was based on a comparison of the site flow to total flow from the entire drainage area. He also stated that he did not entirely agree with the calculation assumptions and has requested an update. He felt that pre and post development peak flow calculations for the range of storm events need to be done for the entire subdivision area, as well as calculations to address water quality. He pointed out that waivers should be requested for gutters, curbs and streetlights on Mapleton Avenue and a bond estimate needs to be submitted.

Commission members discussed the need for more detail on the drainage.

Chairman Winne then opened up the hearing to anyone speaking for, against, or having general comments on the application.

They were as follows:

Edward Rodzen, 831 Mapleton Ave. stated that he farms the abutting property and wants to be sure there is an adequate buffer so that the homeowners will not have complaints about the farming. He is requesting the maximum buffer be required.

Mel Chafetz, 803 Mapleton Ave. has concerns about drainage onto his property. The house which is being constructed now is higher than his lot and closer to the front than the original farm house and he feels that this is causing additional water to drain on his property. He is in favor of leaving existing trees on Mapleton and supplementing them rather than a berm. He also stated that developments should not have had sidewalks waived because there now would be more sidewalks on Mapleton from previous development.

Commission members again brought up concerns about the drainage and would like to see this addressed more thoroughly. There is a house currently being constructed on the northeast corner of the lot because the lot was approved already as a building lot for one house.

The drainage of this lot is of concern to Mr. Chafetz.

Mr. Turbet showed members a drawing that showed the grading on Mapleton that was done recently when the road was repaved. The information was entered into the file.

Edward Rodzen stated that he would like the agricultural buffer to be at least 50 feet. He currently grows hay but would like the opportunity to do other types of farming or to have animals.

With no further comments presented, Mr. Winne asked for a motion to continue or close the public hearing. Mr. Malone made a motion to continue the public hearing to the April 18th meeting in order to have more information particularly in regard to the drainage. Mr. Keane seconded the motion which passed unanimously 6-0-0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

File #2016-2: Public Hearing was continued to the next regular meeting.

File # 2015-10: Request for a text amendment to add a new section V.X. Large Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations to the Zoning Regulations. Applicant- Zoning and Planning Commission

This text amendment public hearing was continued from the February meeting so that the Town Planner could review some of the comments from the Commission. The proposed amendment was not changed from last month's submission.

The proposed text amendment would address large scale arrays greater than 250 kilowatts up to 1MW on properties of at least 5 acres in the R-45, R-90, PDIP and I zones by way of a special permit/site plan review.

Mr. Hawkins met with the town's Economic Development Commission and their feeling was that they do not want these systems to be in industrial zoned areas because of the possible loss of tax revenue. He has still not been able to determine definitively what the tax implications would be. He also has not been able to find any similar regulations in other Connecticut towns. Mr. Hawkins advised the commission that they could withdraw the application at this time until more information becomes available. There are no pending large scale solar applications at this time

and any systems larger than one megawatt are under the jurisdiction of the siting council, not this commission.

Ms. Pastula moved to withdraw file# 2015-10 a text amendment to add section V.X. to the zoning regulations. Mr. Keane seconded the motion which passed unanimously 6-0-0.

Discussion of Bylaws

Copies of the current bylaws with suggested changes were distributed to the commission members. The wording pertaining to proxy voting for officers was simplified and Mr. Hawkins had submitted a copy of Article XII to Carl Landolina, the Commission's counsel, for his review. Mr. Landolina did not feel that the Commission could require the individual recording the meeting to make copies for all as currently stated in the bylaws. A letter from Tom Frenaye with his comments was read into the record. He felt that Article XII which has rules governing photography and video/audiotaping of meetings which was adopted in 2001 does not meet current Freedom of Information laws. He also suggested that there should be a policy for appointing alternates and that the commission should have a time for public comment on the agenda aside from the public hearings on applications.

Commission members discussed having a standard procedure for all commissions having to do with taping of meetings. They also felt that a section of public comment should be added at the beginning of the agenda and that the chairman could continue to appoint alternates in a balanced way to allow for as much participation as possible. Mr. Hawkins will review the bylaws with the selectman's office for consistency and report back to the commission.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Appointment of members for West Suffield Design Review Board and Town Center Design Review Board

Mr. Hawkins advised the Commission of vacancies on these two advisory committees. The makeup of these boards is very specific. Windsor Locks Town Planner and Suffield resident, Jennifer Rodriguez is a certified land use planner and has agreed to serve on the two boards and West Suffield business owner, Frank Grillo has agreed to serve on the West Suffield board.

Ms. Bromage moved for the appointment of these individuals to the respective boards for a four year term until March of 2020. Ms. Pastula seconded the motion which passed unanimously 6-0-0.

VII. REPORTS

Chairman - None

Town Planner – Mr. Hawkins and Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon led the Commission in a discussion on the development of the Ffyer Place property which is in the Town Center Village District. Whenever there has been interest in a commercial venture coming into this area there have been issues with the zoning that is specific to the TCVD. The suggestion was made that the Commission might want to consider looking at ways to amend the regulations for that specific property. Commission members expressed support to help develop this property effectively and would be open to having an informational discussion with any interested developer.

Mr. McMahon also explained the new legislation to promote Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts that might fit in well with the Town Center Village District. TIF directs tax revenues generated within a TIF district for investment in the district. The idea is that the town could use

all or part of incremental tax revenue for projects within a TIF District. He explained this is not an additional tax on property owners but that it is a flexible economic development tool and part of the process would be for the Planning and Zoning Commission to give an advisory opinion on the TIF district plan.

VIII. MINUTES

Mr. Malone made a motion to approve the February 22, 2016 regular meeting minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Peak and approved with Mr. Keane abstaining because he was not at the meeting, 6-0-1.

IX. CORRESPONDENCE – Letter from Tom Frenaye was discussed under bylaws

X. AJOURNEMENT

With nothing further to come before the commission, Ms. Bromage made a motion to adjourn at 9:30 pm; seconded by Mr. Malone. The motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.

Submitted,

Ginny Bromage, Secretary

cc: Assessor, Building Official, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Director, Selectmen, Town Clerk, Town Engineer, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Commission Counsel