

APPROVED/REVISED
MINUTES
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not a verbatim transcription.

March 10, 2020	Present:	Susan Consentino (arrived at 7:02 p.m.) Joseph Dowdell Joseph Fossi Robert Hendrick (arrived at 7:03 p.m.) John Katz Rebecca Mucchetti, Chair Ben Nneji Charles Robbins, Vice Chair
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Absent:	George Hanlon
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Also Present: Richard Baldelli, Director, Planning and Zoning, ZEO
Karen Martin, Assistant Town Planner
Eileen White, Recording Secretary

The Chair called the Meeting to order at: 7:00 p.m. and gave an overview of the meeting and the meeting agenda. Under New Items, Item Number Three was considered after Item Number Four.

PENDING ITEMS - None

NEW ITEMS

1. Community signboard at Halpin Lane. % Theater Barn

The Chair stated that there was also a letter from the First Selectman for the Commissioners to review.

Ms. Pamme Jones presented for the Applicant. Ms. Jones' presentation said that the Theater Barn would like to add their logo on the sign. She stated that this Application was based on Section 7.2C10 of the Town's Regulations.

Mr. Baldelli presented the Staff Report, which included the background on the 2007 re-write of the regulations which introduced the concept of Community Sign Boards. The signs do not have to comply with size, set-backs, etc., thereby giving them some freedom of getting their event particulars displayed publicly.

The Staff suggestion is that, since Prospect Ridge Rd is a unique one/two-way road and is hardly ever used as cut through, the corner of Halpin Lane and Prospect Ridge Rd be designated as a community sign area. The residential sign regulations for the property across the street were

reviewed. The residential property is permitted to have as many as four free-standing signs of 20 square feet each.

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Fossi seconded, to approve. Motion carried 8-0. Effective Date: March 20, 2020.

2. Stormwater Management regulations overview. % Commissioners Mr. Fossi & Mr. Katz.

Commissioner Fossi gave the presentation on behalf of the Stormwater Subcommittee. He said that this proposed regulation was one of the most important regulations the Commission needed to discuss because of the Town's water quality and water volume. The intention of the regulation is to recharge the water table. Mr. Fossi's presentation included the history of the 2017 Stormwater Management Regulation, which had been rescinded a year later, and the current State of Connecticut guidelines that towns keep their impervious surface levels under 12%.

The Chair stated that the subcommittee spent a lot of time and effort into developing the impervious surface/stormwater management requirement table on Page Three of the handout. She asked that Mr. Fossi go over it to show the thinking behind it, which he did. As an example, if a residential lot has less than 7,500 square feet, 35% impervious surface is allowed. The larger the lot, the more impervious surface that is allowed, but not proportionately.

It was recognized that there will likely be significant costs associated to those residential projects that require additional storm water management as a result of adopting the regulation.

Mr. Fossi suggested that the Commissioners go on the websites of other Towns and see their regulations for comparison. He also stated that 2.5% of Town acreage is covered in roads. It is mostly driveways that are taking up the impervious surface.

Mr. Baldelli stated that any business or commercial enterprise proposing new development has to make sure they have a stormwater management plan.

The Chair stated that the new Inland Wetlands Board members were given the draft and they had no comments.

Ms. Mucchetti also noted that the new regulation includes new definitions of pervious and impervious.

After much discussion about the draft document, it was decided that the Public Hearing would occur on April 14, 2020.

3. #2020-009-VDC: Village District Application per Section 8.3 and Sec.5.1.B. of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations to install a new exterior mounted roof ladder for a property located at 424R Main Street in the CBD Zone. Statutorily received on March 03, 2020.

Owner: Urstadt Biddle Properties. Applicant: Jason Orleman, Manager Urstadt Biddle Properties. For discussion and possible action.

Mr. Andrew Albrecht presented the Application. The Commission received the minutes from the Village District Commission (“VDC”). The VDC approved the Application as submitted.

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Robbins seconded, to approve. Motion carried 8-0. Effective Date: March 20, 2020.

4. Medical/ Recreational Marijuana- Proposed bill. % Staff

Ms. Martin presented an overview of her Memorandum on the Governor’s proposed bill in the State Assembly on Recreational Marijuana. It is currently before the Judiciary Committee. Most of the lengthy bill does not have a Planning and Zoning component, but Section 27 is relevant.

Ms. Martin stated that any municipality may prohibit the existence of a retail cannabis establishment, except a dispensary facility or producer.

Commission Nnjeni asked if the proposed bill had a section on farming. Ms. Martin said it was covered in the bill.

The Chair stated that, when medical marijuana first arose, the Commission decided to have a moratorium for a year to conduct research and ultimately adopted a ban on medical marijuana. They did not consider growing facilities. If this bill passes, by July 1, 2020 the ban will be moot.

Commissioner Robbins said that the Board of Selectmen should put recreational marijuana before the public in a referendum to give some direction to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The Chair said marijuana sales would still have to be addressed in the zoning regulations that gives the parameters of sale.

Commission Robbins will talk to the Board of Selectmen and see what they say about a referendum. Ms. Martin will monitor the proposed Bill and draft a simply-worded referendum.

5. Digital update. % Staff

Mr. Baldelli gave a report on Staff’s efforts to update the Commission’s ability to operate digitally. The Town’s IT Department anticipates having technology in place to live stream Commission meetings by the end of June 2020.

The Town is going to switch to a system called View Permit Cloud and this will allow the IT Department to accommodate the various Commission applications so that all will be digital. None of the Commission’s budget will be spent on this project.

Mr. Fossi motioned, Mr. Robbins seconded, to raise to the Agenda the Staff Update on the Coronavirus. Motion carried 8-0.

6. Coronavirus

Mr. Baldelli reported on the current perimeters for Town Staff and the Town because of the Coronavirus. The Town is not at a State of Emergency, but is ready to do so, if necessary. There are currently no known Coronavirus cases in Ridgefield. His statements included the facts that Staff can go on vacations, but must report back to the Town before returning to work, every effort is being made to keep the buildings clean and that the School Superintendent said that field trips are being cancelled.

Mr. Baldelli also said that this virus does not do well in warm weather, which is unusual. It is anticipated that the virus will dissipate as the warm weather approaches.

The Chair stated that, currently the Governor has put a limitation on the number of people at gatherings (100 people) and the Commission should be sensitive to that limitation going forward.

7. Discussion on the new format and recording of Site Walk Minutes.

The Chair reported that the Town Clerk has asked the Commission to adopt a more formal recording of Site Walks, and beginning with the next site walk the Commission will officially vote on the Site Walk Minutes at meeting.

COMMISSION WALKS

None scheduled.

REQUESTS FOR BOND RELEASES/REDUCTION

No.

CORRESPONDENCE

No.

MINUTES

For approval:

For distribution: March 03, 2020

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Hearing no further discussion, the Chair adjourned the Meeting at: 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen White