

**TOWN OF HADDAM
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT 06438
THURSDAY, 7 JULY 2022
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Gina Block (Arrived 7:01 p.m.)
X	Steven Bull, Secretary
X	Michael Farina
X	Jamin Laurenza, Vice Chairman
X	Wayne LePard
X	Dan Luisi
X	Edward Wallor, Chairman
X	Alan Chadwick, Alternate
X	Larry Maggi, Alternate
A	Tim Teran, Alternate
X	Bill Warner, AICP, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wallor, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Attendance/Seating of the Alternates

Attendance was taken and all regular members, as well as alternate member, Mr. Maggi, were seated. Upon her arrival, Mrs. Block was seated.

4. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

The agenda stood as submitted.

5. Public Comments

There were no comments from those in the audience.

6. Public Hearing/Public Meeting

There was no public hearing scheduled.

7. Approval /Correction of Minutes

The Commission agreed to table the approval of the 2 and 16 June 2022 minutes.

8. New Business

a. Affordable Housing

Mr. Warner reported that the town is still waiting for the matching funds for the consultant and asked that this matter be tabled. The Commission agreed.

Mr. Warner explained that a two-thirds vote is required in order to add an item onto the agenda. The Commission agreed to discuss the 7 Island Dock Road matter prior to discussing the PIC report.

MOTION: Jamin Laurenza motioned to add to the 7 July 2022 agenda - Modification of 7 Island Dock Site Plan to eliminate: A. Pool, B. Stone Wall, C. Fence (Perimeter), D. Gate and Pillars, E. Tennis Court, F. Gazebo, Trellis, Storage, and G. Greenhouse. Dan Luisi second. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wallor opened the discussion regarding the modification to the site plan for 7 Island Dock Road.

b. PIC Report

Mike Karam, PIC member, was present.

The Commission returned to this item at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Warner distributed copies of the report he drafted titled, Planning Implementation Committee Report – Planning and Zoning / Town Planner, dated 02.22.2022, and Mrs. Batzner distributed copies of the POCD Action Agenda (pages 85-89) to the Commission and to Mr. Karam. Copies on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and the Land Use Dept.

The Commission reviewed only those items pertaining to P&Z (lead and support), noted whether the items were short, mid or long term and their current status (done, in progress or no progress), and recommended some items be reassigned to other commissions/committees (PIC to be notified).

Higganum - Extend Higganum Village District to include Scovil Hoe Buildings (Lead) – Mr. Warner stated the site was originally zoned residential and the idea was for it to be rezoned to allow the uses that were contemplated in the previous grant. However, the Commission amended the zoning regulations to include an adaptive historic reuse which will accomplish what the Commission is trying to accomplish. If it had been rezoned to a Village District, the Green and the Scovil buildings would be opened up to many more uses; therefore, the Commission did some alternative zoning with the adaptive historic reuse which allowed the Commission to have more control. – Done.

Mr. Wallor stated P&Z needs a liaison to the PIC Committee and that he doesn't believe the Commission needs to explain everything that's going on. Discussion followed with Mr. Warner explaining the color coding on his report (green – done; yellow – in progress; and red – have not started work on). Mr. Wallor stated Mr. Warner needs to submit a report as the town planner (Mr. Warner stated he did.) and believes a P&Z liaison is needed in order to answer Mr. Bull's question. Mr. Bull stated the PIC's charge is to report on progress annually. Mr. Karam stated the reason why Mr. Bull is asking the questions is because he's P&Z's liaison to PIC. Mr. Karam noted he's the liaison for the town planner.

Investigate new site for a town garage (Support) – Mr. Luisi asked why so much effort was going into acquiring the Rossi site if the town garage isn't going there. Mr. Warner stated it's not P&Z's item. Mr. Warner also stated P&Z has had meetings where three different sites for the garage have been discussed. Mr. Bull stated this should be in the hands of the Board of Selectmen (BOS). - Done.

Work with new WPCA to develop facility plan (Lead) – Mr. Warner stated there has been a complete change in thinking and the BOS recently created the WPCA. Funding to design a community septic system at HES has been received and a system is being designed which will negate the need to spend \$12 million for sewer to go to Middletown. – Work in progress.

Create a pedestrian plan to connect Reservoir to the Cove (Lead) – Mr. Warner stated as staff to P&Z, he's working with the Higganum Cove Advisory Committee (did not exist when POCD developed) to clean up the Cove and create an activity center there. The latest landscape architectural plan, still to be presented to P&Z, has a connection from Dublin Hill Road over the bridge past Rossi into the Center. Once in the Center, there are existing sidewalks to the Reservoir. – Work in progress.

Establish public/private partnership between Town and property owners to finance building of sewers to generate redevelopment in the Village Center (Support) – Mr. Warner stated due to the development of a community septic system, this would be irrelevant now. Mr. Wallor stated this item has been resolved. Mr. Warner stated anything to do with sewer has been totally changed since 2018 because the town now owns HES. – Item has been transformed into community septic at HES. Done.

Encourage the re-use of vacant under-utilized buildings in Higganum (Lead) – Mrs. Block stated she feels very strongly that this should be an EDC task. Mr. Farina stated EDC has no authority as members are not elected, but appointed and there's a very small budget. Mr. Wallor stated he did not believe the reassignment of tasks was a P&Z issues but rather a PIC issue. Mr. Karam stated this process is a part of many committees; and if P&Z feels the task should be reassigned, that's the recommendation that should be written in the report. – Recommendation to change Action Item lead to EDC.

Tylerville - Create new zoning regulations for Tylerville (Lead) – Done.

Work with new WPCA to develop a Facility Plan to be used to apply for clean water funding extending public water and/or sewer service to Higganum and Tylerville (Lead) – The water is done. Not doing anything with sewer due to very good soils. - Sewer initiative abandoned due to great soils. Done

Develop a cohesive look for Tylerville with improved wayfinding, lighting, building design guidelines, etc. (Lead) – Done

Create a pocket park or public gathering area or community open space in Tylerville (Lead) – Discussed Lisa Wadge's project having a piazza for people to gather (Brookes Court, 03.17.2022 P&Z minutes), the ice cream shop, Oh, Fudge!, (outside tables), and Eagle Landing (State owned, public). Discussion followed in regard to the town not having property to create a pocket park. Mr. Laurenza suggested it be left on-going as the town may be able to purchase a piece of land in the area. Mr. Wallor recommended EDC handle this task. Mr. Laurenza, Mrs. Block, and Mr. Karam felt this task should remain P&Z's as its part of the planning process. Mr. Wallor stated P&Z doesn't have the authority to purchase property and the lead should be changed. Mr. Laurenza stated if a change in the lead is being recommended, it should be to the Town Planner with P&Z second. – On-going. Currently no town owned land. Recommendation of lead change to Town Planner with P&Z second lead.

Haddam Center - Support redevelopment of the Jail in accordance with the 2017 Fuss and O'Neil Brownfield Report (Lead 2) – Building Committee cited as the lead; however, the committee no longer exists. Mr. Laurenza, Mr. Wallor, and Mr. Bull felt the lead should be EDC, P&Z, and BOS. Discussion followed regarding work that has taken place at the Jail – new roof, removal of tree, etc. Mr. Warner stated a study was done on the building and there's a design for a museum and some apartments. Mr. Warner also stated the structure cannot be sold without going to the legislature and more than likely they would not allow it without the town paying the appraised value for the building the entire 50 acres of land. Discussion followed in regard to actively leasing the property (Mr. Warner was doing so prior to COVID, but the problem lies in locating a developer who will invest their money to develop a property they don't own). Mr. Warner stated Wood 'n Tap was interested, but COVID changed everything. – Recommend the lead be reassigned to EDC with P&Z still as second lead and the BOS. On-going.

Haddam Neck - Create a working group of PZC and Haddam Neck representative to review current Zoning Regulations – Determine if special district zoning is appropriate (Lead) – Mr. Wallor stated he didn't see any future progress taking place in Haddam Neck and it should be left alone. Mr. Warner stated Haddam Neck is nice the way it is. - No progress. No plans to do anything in the future.

Investigate current zoning designation of former Connecticut Yankee site as Industrial - consider a less intense zoning classification (Lead) – Mr. Warner stated there would be huge ramifications to down zone CY to residential as this is one of the town's major taxpayers. Mr. Warner also stated the area will never be redeveloped as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would need to release the land and it will never happen. Mr. Wallor asked who would want to drill a well into that. – No progress. P&Z has no interest in doing anything.

Small Commercial/Industrial Areas – Complete creation of industrial park at intersection of Routes 9 and 81 between existing industrial park and commercially zoned property (Lead) – Mr. Wallor stated he didn't believe the Commission could go any further with this as there is a residence between the two parcels of land (GCI and Three Oaks Plaza). Mr. Warner stated there has been public conversation about industrial parcels. – No current plan to act on this.

Evaluate/identify possible locations of additional industrial land not disruptive to nearby residential uses/roadways, and establish an industrial zoning district (Lead) – Mr. Warner stated prior to COVID, a presentation outlining the various areas where potentially industrial could be expanded and there was nothing except for an area near the Killingworth town line that has suitable land for industrial but no utilities. Mr. Warner also stated it would be a shame to develop the site. Mrs. Block asked about the zoning for East Coast Auto Salvage. Mr. Warner stated it's residential and the property sold with the same use. Mr. Chadwick asked if the sand pit (WFS) would fit into this type of zone. A brief discussion followed. – No progress.

Create a “Route 81 Commercial Corridor Zone” that allows the current commercial uses to continue while encouraging cohesive, attractive, development (Lead) – Mr. Wallor stated there are a number of residences north of Dino's that are commercial zoned. – No progress. No plan.

Explore zoning options that would allow/encourage more mixed use development in these areas (Lead) – Mr. Wallor stated he believes this should be left alone noting some of the properties mentioned in the previous item may wanted to put in multi-family (duplex). – No progress. No plan.

Catalogue all lots within commercially zoned areas that have strictly residential buildings and/or uses and rezone these parcels as residential. Maintain commercial zoning for lots with current commercial uses (Lead) – Previously discussed. – No progress. P&Z will not do anything unless someone comes before them with a request.

Rural Residential Areas – Reduce street lighting, encourage “dark skies” policies (Lead) – This is within the zoning regulations. – Done.

Create open space zoning classification, rezone land that is deed restricted as conservation lands (Lead) – Mr. Warner stated this has been completed. – Done.

Getting Around – Undergo a wayfinding campaign (Lead) – Mr. Bull recommended this be an EDC task. Mr. Farina again noted that EDC does not have any authority nor do they have a significant budget. – Recommend EDC be made the lead on this Action Item.

Playtime, Exercise & Relaxation – Continue to expand opportunities for recreational access to the Haddam Meadows. Resist any future effort to use this space for freight/commuter rail (Support) – Not discussed as item was skipped.

Where We Live – Explore development of a new zoning district that allows “cottage style” development – smaller homes/lots (Lead) – Mr. Wallor stated he believes the Commission is currently doing that. Mr. Warner stated the Village District allows for smaller lots if you can make the well/septic work. – On going as applications come in.

Community Support, Seniors – Identify lands close to goods/services that would be suitable for public senior housing (Lead) – High Meadows Senior Housing, both villages can do this through affordable housing, and zoning regulations allow for senior housing. – Done.

Implementation Committee – Form a POCD Implementation Committee (PIC) (Support) – Created. Done.

PIC will develop/administer brief training session on the POCD (Support) – Not discussed.

Mr. Karam thanked the Commission for taking the time to review their action items as this is what should happen with every commission/committee.

c. Modification of 7 Island Dock Site Plan to eliminate: A. Pool, B. Stone Wall, C. Fence (Perimeter), D. Gate and Pillars, E. Tennis Court, F. Gazebo, Trellis, Storage, and G. Greenhouse

Chris Bartler and Kyle Bartler, both of Paramount Properties BBD, LLC, were present.

Mr. Warner stated the wellness center is nearing completion on the inside and very close to being ready to obtain their Certificate of Occupancy (CO) and move clients in. Mr. Warner stated the outside needs work and they have provided a list of some of the items that would like to remove from the site plan. Mr. Warner also stated some of the items are recreational amenities, such as the pool, that the applicant can't be forced to provide, but the fence, the stone wall and screening items are another matter.

Mr. C. Bartler stated they would like to remove the fence so the facility doesn't look like a prison and not have a fortified wall around it; they'd like to retain the aesthetics of Haddam. Mr. C. Bartler stated he didn't believe the patients coming to the facility would find the fencing appealing either and could be potentially detrimental to their mental health. Noted patients can sign themselves out at any time.

Mr. K. Bartler talked about better curb appeal and how a fence would not make the facility as luxurious and nice as they would like it to be. Mr. K. Bartler briefly spoke in regard to the lack of funding at this time for amenities such as the fence, pool, etc. Mr. C. Bartler stated whether they have the funding or not he personally doesn't like the fencing; however, if the Commission requires it, it will remain. Mr. K. Bartler stated if there's a need for the fence, they will do what they have to make it happen, but the fencing will look ugly.

Mr. C. Bartler stated the facility will have 36 beds and noted that 200 bed facilities do not have fences around them. Mr. C. Bartler stated they are not a State Medicaid facility and will not be bringing in people from outside systems; they will be bringing in local and insurance based patients.

Mr. Warner stated there's a long history with this project: the zone change was approved before COVID with a different owner, a special permit and that owner has disappeared, and now Paramount Properties have stepped in to complete the project. Mr. Warner stated the new owners did not propose the fence it's just what they bought.

Mr. Wallor stated he drives by the property numerous times per day and sees the construction fence and that he remembers what the site looked like previously and doesn't believe a fence is required. Mr. Wallor also stated once the landscaping is complete, he believes the site will look better. Mr. Luisi agreed.

Mrs. Block asked if there is any outdoor activity anticipated with the patients. Mr. C. Bartler stated they do, patients will be taken to different locations or can walk across the street to the Haddam Meadows. At maximum capacity 20 people in a park or in the back yard of the facility. Mrs. Block asked if a patient were going across the street to the Meadows would they be supervised. Mr. C. and K. Bartler stated absolutely, patients are fully supervised and there will always be a tech with them. Mr. C. Bartler stated he believes the ratio is one tech to every ten patients. Mr. C. Bartler also stated due to the facility being high end, the staff to patient ratio will be very high.

Mr. LePard stated he felt the pool and tennis courts would be perks. Mr. C. Bartler stated they are perks and perhaps at a later date they could be added, but they would like to get the facility open and feel the flow before dumping any more money into the project or digging any additional holes. They do not want to rush in and they want to take their time.

Mrs. Block asked if there are changes to the landscaping plan in light of the proposed changes (eliminated items). Mr. C. Bartler stated some minor changes and that he could present the Commission with a drawing if they would like to see one (noted that he does have the original plans). Mr. Warner stated the landscape plan is a work in progress, it was not presented to the Commission originally, it was left that one would be prepared (which is taking place), and essentially it's turf grass, the front islands will be mulched and planted, etc.. A requirement of the CO is that it either be completed or be bonded. Mr. C. Bartler stated that have received pricing for the landscaping and have their attorney holding the money (\$12,000 for landscaping; \$15,000 for material). Mr. Warner stated the town would hold the bond not their attorney. Mr. K. Bartler stated they are not trying to put the landscaping off as there is a lot of dirt getting into the new building. Mr. C. Bartler stated they want to get something basic down now and in the spring look at their capital and revamp, if possible. They will hydroseed now, place regular seed down later, and will propose more elaborate landscaping around the back to the Commission at a later date. Mr. Wallor stated they should hydroseed in the fall. The Bartlers stated they will be doing it any way even if they have to water as the facility needs to be presentable to the patients and the town.

Mr. Farina stated he believes the Gateway Commission would be happy if there wasn't a fence. Mr. Warner stated the trees have filled in substantially along Saybrook Road and towards the back it has filled in heavily (private residence to the rear).

MOTION: Jamin Laurenza motioned to approve modification to the site plan to eliminate: A) Pool. B) Stone wall. C) Fence (perimeter). D) Gate and pillars. E) Tennis court. F) Gazebo, trellis, storage. G) Greenhouse. **Condition:** Subject to comments. Applicant: Paramount Properties / Hope Garden – 7 Island Dock. Map 26 Lot 007A. Ed Wallor second. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Chairman's Report

Mr. Wallor had nothing new to report.

10. Scheduling of Hearings

No hearings scheduled at this time.

11. Town Planner's Report

Zoning Enforcement Matters – 1292 Saybrook Road – The new property owner has brought in a tremendous amount of fill, approximately 5,000 cubic yards, over the past six months. The operation has been shut down; however, once the Cease and Desist Order was issued, he really moved forward to try to finish the work. The most egregious work is the property owner had contractors cut down trees on the railroad tracks and on the river side and DEEP is going forward with enforcement actions and fining him a significant amount. Gateway and DEEP issue will be the leads on this matter. **Former Sibley Property, 114 Walkley Hill** – House was sold about a year ago and the new owner received permits to put in new kitchen, master suites, pool, etc. Historical Society and residents happy the structure is be renovated.

Residents on the street have been watching the progress, but have now heard it's going to turn into a wellness facility for 3 to 5 tenants for very, very high end private payment. The residents came up with this theory because they Googled the property owners name who happens to own a very, very high end facility in Essex. The residents have made several calls to the BOS, the Land Use Dept., and the newspaper. Mr. Warner spoke to the property owner, who is quite upset, and it's a single family house with plenty of land for her five dogs to play. The information has been communicated to the residents, but they do not believe it. Currently nothing is taking place on the property and if it does, the Commission will address it at that time. A brief discussion followed with it being noted that a special permit would not be required as there is a whole body of law regarding these types of facilities and what the difference was between the 7 Island Dock Road facility and a smaller facility (bedrooms and septic system).

21 July 2022 Meeting - Cancellation – Mr. Wallor reported that several Commissioners will be on vacation and voiced concern over the potential of a lack of a quorum at the 21 July 2022 meeting. Mr. Wallor stated he would like to cancel the meeting.

Upcoming Building Project – Mr. Warner reported an application has not yet been filed; however, there will be an upcoming project on Route 81 that the Wetlands Commission will hear in August and P&Z will hear in September. No further information available at this time.

12. Adjournment

MOTION: Wayne LePard motioned to adjourn. Jamin Laurenza second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

PURSUANT TO THE BY-LAWS OF THE HADDAM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION, ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS – SECTION 1, NO MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 1 September 2022.