

**TOWN OF HADDAM
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT
THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2016
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Steven Bull, Vice Chairman
X	Arthur Kohs
X	Michael Lagace
X	Jamin Laurenza, Chairman
X	Wayne LePard
X	Carmelo Rosa
X	Edward Wallor, Secretary
X	Robert Braren, Alternate
X	Raul de Brigard, Alternate
X	Frank (Chip) Frey, Alternate
X	Liz West Glidden, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Laurenza, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Attendance/Seating of the Alternates

Attendance was taken and all regular members were seated.

3. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

Amendment: Item #6 Approval/Correction of the Minutes to be moved to Item #4 and the balance of the agenda to be followed as printed. Commission was agreeable with the amendment.

4. Approval/Correction of the Minutes

MOTION: Jamin Laurenza moved to approve the 3 November 2016 minutes as submitted. Carmelo Rosa second. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comments

Mark Lundgren distributed and read a one page letter, dated 17 November 2016, outlining why he believes bringing public water to Tylerville by 2020 is unrealistic even though he's committed to economic development in Haddam, especially in Higganum Center. Copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

6. Presentation by Camoin and Associates and Fuss and O'Neill Regarding the Tylerville Market Study

Christa Franzl, Senior Economic Development Specialist, Camoin Associates, and Chris Ferrero, Vice President, Fuss and O'Neill, were present.

In response to Mr. Lundgren's letter, Mr. Ferrero stated what is being done in Tylerville is predicated on some infrastructure needs being completed; in other words, not much will be done until the water issue is addressed. Mr. Ferrero also stated although the sanitary issue is not necessarily a problem as there are functioning septic systems, it is a constraint in terms of adding density. Mr. Ferrero reiterated that until the water problem is fixed, the market will probably not have any interest in Tylerville.

Mr. Ferrero reported the market study, which is through Connecticut Main Street, takes an assessment of what could or could not happen in Tylerville based on the consultant's expertise and input from Mrs. Glidden. Mr. Ferrero stated the study is board all of which says you need more study, but it tries to identify what the opportunities and constraints are in Tylerville. Mr. Ferrero gave a brief outline of what will be covered – 1) Market, 2) Infrastructure and Utilities, 3) Land Use Connectivity, 4) Branded Image, and 5) Open Space. Two copies of the draft report were given to Mrs. Glidden.

Using a Power Point presentation, Ms. Franzi reported the Tylerville Study benefitted from the fact that Camoin is doing a market feasibility and reuse analysis of the Jail site. Ms. Franzi also reported when a real estate/economic analysis is conducted it looks at a region and that information, as well as talking to businesses within Tylerville, were used to create some of the recommendations around land use and zoning for the Tylerville Market Study.

Ms. Franzi covered the following: **Population** – Haddam is limited in terms of young people (20s), which in terms of market demand when it comes to housing and retail spending there's a very singular/specific market. **Economic Trends** – Limited growth due to population - not new demand for services; however, it is not declining. The community is aging and there's not a lot of backfill of young people coming back in. Earnings are strong which means strong spending power. **Residential Market** – Dominated by single family homes (92 percent) and they're at a very high price point. Due to the lack of other housing options for younger professionals or those individuals who do not want to own a single family home, those options are not available for them. Very low vacancy rates, not a lot of properties on the market. Very few rentals and those that are available are not very high quality. Very little activity in terms of new residential development. Believe there are some opportunities for some multi-family market rate rentals or condos and this would hit two different type groups in terms of target markets – existing population who may not want to continue to own a single family home as they continue to age and young professionals/millennials who would like to live in this type of area but can't afford it and would prefer to rent as opposed to own. Some of the challenges with this is there is it's an untested market as there is nothing locally to attract a developer here – no downtown and due to the higher mil rate this area is not on the developers A list (going to Chester, Essex). In terms of office space, there isn't a lot of it in Tylerville itself. Office space is classified by A – extremely high end (probably wouldn't be here even if new structure built), B – little smaller (probably would be here with a new structure; one existing space in Tylerville falls under this classification); and C – lower quality, older, doesn't have modern amenities.

Lisa Wadge asked which office space was classified B. Ms. Franzi stated the data doesn't give that information. Ms. Franzi also stated some of the information is coming from CoStar Group which doesn't pick every single property and it is not a perfect data site either; therefore, there could be more Class B office sites.

Ms. Franzi continued with her presentation: **Economy** - Healthy real estate market anywhere is roughly 10 percent which Haddam is at. There currently isn't a lot of activity in this market, but there is growth in the office market industry. Over the next ten years this industry should grow at the regional level offering opportunities for Haddam should town officials decide to go in that direction. **Retail** – After talking to some of the local businesses and looking at where other shopping centers are a local retail trade area was created. Heard there are the multiple Haddams: Tylerville – interesting businesses pulling in a more regional market (people coming in from other metros to the specialized services); Higganum – local market (local residents); Haddam Center – public services (library, town hall, historical society). Strong spending power. Tylerville has strong traffic counts that are good to support small businesses, but not that a national retailer would like to see. The lack of roof tops is a challenge as retailers like to see a certain number of residents within walking or driving distance from their location. In terms of the way retailers think – quality food, single family homes. **Tourism** – The regional draw is about 1 to 2 hours

travel time and attractions are Gillette Castle, Valley Steam Train, Goodspeed, b and b's, high quality restaurants, and secondary activities especially on a rainy day. **Retail Gap Analysis** – Looks at local spending. Full service restaurants number one opportunity in terms of spending power as well as clothing stores. Discussed farm to table movement. Restaurants are extremely difficult noting this area is more a suburban location without a lot of other things to do after a meal and the area is seasonal (need to find a way to attract people here). **Maker Environment** – There are some businesses that are attracting people to the area and this environment is hard to create. This could be a “brand” to help draw additional people. Not a strong market demand for any one use; however, there is a demand for high quality modernizing or updating of existing space, need to reinvest in the more tired properties, and differentiate the market – mixed use development.

Mr. Ferrero discussed what elements will provide an environment to attract business. Mr. Ferrero stated although Saybrook and Bridge Roads are the area of attention, there's a tie in three complete different market environments: 1) entertainment and theatrical component, 2) ecological and recreational components of the river, and 3) the potential for commercial and mixed use in the little downtown. Mr. Ferrero noted the study is based on assuming some of the major infrastructure components are resolved. Although there are currently no septic issues other than limiting density, there are different alternatives – small treatment plants or community septic systems – to increase density.

Mr. Ferrero picked up the presentation and reviewed the following: **Telecommunications** – Connectivity is needed, especially fiber optics. **Mobility** - From Route 154 to the Goodspeed Opera House is approximately a one-half to three-quarter mile walk and would be an easy walkable and bikeable area, but not at this time. **Connectivity** - Lack thereof. 1) Use of roads as environments – carrying cars, pedestrians, and bicycles as well as being lined with trees and benches, etc., and this combination is called “Complete Streets” – Saybrook and Bridge Roads. 2) Market viability of parcels that are consolidated together is tremendous; and if this is a consideration, this is called a “Block and Grid System” where parcels are interconnected and helps to keep people off the main road. Using a concept drawing, a possible scenario of a road way going through the State DOT property and coming out further down on Bridge Road allowing frontage on undeveloped parcels. Some of these parcels could be used for single use such as office, industrial, housing (preferably as this will satisfy a market need – multi-family - in the area and would provide feet on the street). Retailers want on street parking as it creates – a) traffic calming, and b) provides parking the retailers need. **Environmental** – There are wetlands and steep slopes in the area; in particular, the hillside view as you drive over Bridge Road to Saybrook Road. Mr. Ferrero stated the hillside dominates the view shed and referred to it as an icon and a need to utilize it. **Open Space** – Helps a place be a place. Tylerville is mostly devoid of this. There are various types of open space – green fields, little parks, passive recreation – and the creation of “Gateways”. A suggestion in terms of the hillside – removing a few select trees and creating a trail system (making it become a destination) and possibly up light certain components of the hillside creating a vertical icon. Aware ownership is an issue. Discussed the creation of a small town square with the removal of three parking spaces with the Swing Bridge Plaza. **Zoning** – Is a mix of residential and commercial (primary) with some industrial, but does not insure Tylerville develops as the town potentially would like it to happen. Density bonuses, allowances for parcel consolidation. Until changes are made to zoning, there's no way to stop certain types of development. **Opportunities** – How to define Tylerville Center. Zoning regulations acknowledging mixed use, but they are not yet saying what the form is, such as retail on the first floor with residential on the second floor. Housing Opportunity District (HOD) overlay zone is a great attempt at looking at a) affordable housing, and b) higher density component mixed with mixed use in the residential zone. Nothing in this zone that guarantees a development you want.

Mr. Ferrero stated the study is small and offers guidelines only; and when the town decides to go further in the process, additional studies will be required. Mr. Ferrero suggested buildings along Saybrook Road be two to three stories retail/commercial first floor other areas in the district one to three stories no first floor commercial requirement (in back of and top of Saybrook and Bridge Roads). Parking – most places over parked and a multi-family residential apartment of one or two bedrooms one parking space o.k.; those of two, three, or four bedrooms two parking spaces. This would be a way to save real estate. Residential density and open space – usually a component of a percentage of open space. 15 units per acre is a good residential density to look for and of that within the internal component 250 square feet per

unit is a good industry standard for the internal open space provided on a site by site basis. Design Criteria – all things associated with a downtown study. Community would become engaged in developing the guidelines. Mr. Ferrero suggested as the Commission goes through the process they can do certain things such as making the area look good, operate well, infrastructure adequate enough to support development, and telling the business community that you're open for business and what they're allowed to do (take out the unknowns for developers).

Lisa Wadge, White Knight Development, owner of three parcels in Haddam, commended Ms. Franzi and Mr. Ferrero for their work noting that she took part in the study, but not a lot of developers did participate or attend the meeting. Ms. Wadge thanked the Commission for starting the process and dialogue that she started ten years ago. Ms. Wadge spoke about her investments in Tylerville and how it was done.

Ms. Wadge reported she will be bringing to the Commission an application for a 90 unit, six building multi-family development. Ms. Wadge stated one of problems in Tylerville is the lack of people. Ms. Wadge also stated Tylerville Village has restaurant space ready to open; however, nine deals have fallen through - banks are difficult (lending is tough) and asked for help in making the taxes, insurance, and the rent roll.

Ms. Wadge spoke in regard to water in Tylerville noting that all three of her properties have clean water and have obtained public well permits from the Dept. of Public Health. Ms. Wadge stated for Tylerville Village the water is filtered, there's no contamination, and it's clean, but she still has four empty spaces. For the 85 Bridge Road property there's a public water supply well, water is clean, is not impacted, and there's a well permit; however, the traffic count is not high enough to support a business. Ms. Wadge stated she previously had a person interested in purchasing the property and putting in a business, but due to harassment by the Historical Society, the purchaser backed out and moved the business to Deep River. Ms. Wadge also stated a demolition permit is being sought; however, she needs to wait until February before the property can be marketed. Ms. Wadge noted the structure cannot be restored as it's too close to the road and is a beehive oven structure (structurally unsound; not connected at the top or the bottom). Ms. Wadge reported she has a proposal to construct a new building with mixed use, but will have to wait. Ms. Wadge stated although water is important, there isn't sufficient traffic counts for the businesses to stay open in Tylerville.

Ms. Wadge, a water engineer and certified well operator, talked about an interim plan and recommended the Commission continue working with Ms. Franzi and Mr. Ferrero.

Joe Bergin asked Ms. Wadge about her comment concerning the traffic counts. Ms. Wadge stated there are plenty of cars; however, the traffic does not stop in Tylerville.

Ms. Wadge stated Tylerville Village used to be busier with people and somehow that's been lost. Mrs. Wadge also stated the town needs to get people to the river and need to get them on sidewalks (apologized to Liz for fighting her on that as she's seen people from the Saybrook at Haddam using the sidewalk). Ms. Wadge commended Liz on getting everyone together to talk.

Mr. Kohs asked what the units will be – rental? Ms. Wadge stated 90 units, six buildings, two bedrooms each, no difference between those who pay less than the regular people, all identically made and dispersed as a colonial type of structure to match with the White House and the assisted living next door.

Ms. Wadge suggested P&Z hold an informal meeting with developers before a large amount of money is spent (buyers do not want to spend that). Mr. Laurenza stated if the application fits the regulations, the Commission cannot deny it. Mrs. Glidden stated this would be a special permit. Mrs. Glidden also stated based on a previous recommendation that an HOD overlay be placed on the property, she believes the Commission would be receptive to the proposal. Mr. Ferrero spoke in regard to HUD funding and how town regulations can assist. Ms. Wadge stated she has to keep the Dept. of Public Health, DEEP, and the town happy and it's a process; and she would like the Commission's input (not an endorsement). Ms. Wadge also stated the Connecticut Water Co. has agreed to take over the water supply system on the DBP property (Saybrook Road and Brookes Court); and she'll have to build the system their way.

Mr. Lundgren stated he's a customer of a number of businesses in Tylerville and talked about traffic congestion. Mr. Lundgren asked if an incremental approach could be taken, such as a turning lane down the center of Bridge Road. Mr. Lundgren also stated if the steam train continues coming up to Tylerville, sidewalks will be beneficial. Mrs. Glidden stated that was Mr. Ferrero's point in regard to the auxiliary roads. Discussion followed in regard to funding, such as LoCip and Transportation Alternative Grant; and the potential walkway on the north side of the Swing Bridge. Mr. Wallor asked why the walkway has to be on the north side of the bridge. Mrs. Glidden stated it's due to the way the bridge is balanced. Mr. Wallor stated on East Haddam's side there's rock on the northern side of the bridge. A brief discussion followed.

7. Chairman's Report

None.

8. Scheduling of Hearings

Public Forum, Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) – Thursday, 1 December 2016, Haddam Elementary School, Auditorium, 272 Saybrook Road, Higganum, Drop-In Open House – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.; Presentation and Discussion – 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Mrs. Glidden distributed copies of the flier advertising this forum.

9. Town Planner's Report

None.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Steve Bull moved to adjourn. Carmelo Rosa second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

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Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 1 December 2016 at Haddam Elementary School.