

NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

November 8, 2023

Vice Chairman Anthony Claffey called the regular meeting of the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

- I. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- II. **ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Commissioners Present

Commissioner Anthony Claffey  
Commissioner Bryan Haggarty  
Commissioner Garret Havens  
Commissioner Jonathon Trister  
Commissioner Stuart Drozd-A  
Commissioner Michael Fox-A  
Commissioner Gia Pascarelli-A

Commissioners Absent

Chairman Domenic Pane  
Commissioner David Lenares  
Commissioner Stephen Woods

Staff Present

Paul Dickson, Town Planner  
Erik Hinckley, Asst. Town Planner/ZEO

Commissioners Drozd, Fox and Pascarelli were seated for Chairman Pane and Commissioners Lenares and Woods.

- III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**  
No Changes
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (For items not listed on the agenda; speakers limited to two minutes.  
None

*Thomas O. ...*  
Town Clerk

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
IN NEWINGTON CT  
223 NOV 13 AM 10:54

**V. ZONING OFFICER REPORT**

Erik Hinckley: I can explain this if everyone is finished with it.

Commissioner Trister: I have a question, 679 Willard Avenue, I received some correspondence to my home, I'm not sure if any of the other Commissioners did.....

Erik Hinckley: I'm sure all of you did, yes.

Commissioner Trister: I didn't think I would be the only one, I didn't know if there was any comment that you could make.

Erik Hinckley: I do have some comments, but the first thing, on the format, it used to be an all access data base, it's getting out of tune, not being supported any more, so we had this upgraded to this permitting system. Everything is getting input there. The only thing we are working on is the output, so I just basically put it into an Excel spreadsheet, just as easy to read, doesn't have all of the different little things on there, so hopefully in the future we will be able to improve the output a little bit, we're working on it.

Paul Dixon: I would just like to add that the goal of moving it, on top of it not being supported, the goal of moving it to the new software, this is where we do building permitting though as well, it does make it far more searchable, far more easy to find, tends to bring the record together and keep it in one place, so that is the kind of goal, on top of this phasing out, it's a modernized system that we have, with the tools that we already have in place.

Erik Hinckley: A couple of items, I'll get to Willard Avenue in a moment, the first one is, in the past there have been some questions about vehicles parking on the 1910 Main Street, across from Churchill, on the grass, that is actually town property so zoning rules are not enforced on town property. Actually it is park property and by ordinance parks can stay open until 11:00 at night, and I discussed with the parks director if he wanted to post no parking signs, and he didn't feel that was appropriate at the time, and the police are aware of it as well, so if they want to enforce it, they can enforce it.

As far as 679 Willard Avenue, that is cemetery property, and the chapel area has a little parking lot which is discussed in the item that some of you got in the mail, complaints have been received on that property in the past, and they were indeed forwarded to the Town Manager because the items cited in here are ordinances, not enforced by the Planning and Zoning Office. This deals with parking which again I do not enforce. The small chapel, there is an area out in front and the biggest complaint here is that people drop off their kids there, and park there for the high school.

Paul Dixon: And one of the other portions, this has been forwarded to the Town Manager, as far as that, but the complaint was that the fence, they installed a gate in it, and the photo that they showed I believe a parks person with a mower mowing just between the two properties, again, a gate doesn't rise to the level of a site plan, zoning enforcement and both are town properties.

Paul Dixon: The parking issue is the gate being used, as such. They are definitely two separate issues on town property. Again, I will communicate with the Town Manager on this as well, and through him it will be disseminated to the people who are responsive to those particular ordinances or not, and once I get an update I can share it with the TPZ. Generally from a planning perspective you will get, when parking can be shared and avoid adding larger parking lots than necessary, but again, that is outside of the Town Planner's office.

Erik Hinckley: Any other questions about anything else on the report. Again, this will be the format going forward until we get it tweaked appropriately. I will keep a list of what is happening now, rather than have a list of every note known to man.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: Any other questions for the Zoning Enforcement Officer?

**VI. REMARKS BY COMMISSIONERS**

None

**VII. PUBLIC HEARING**

- A. Petition 25-23: Special Permit (Sec. 3.15.17) for a banquet hall at 85 Kitts Lane in the Business Berlin Turnpike Zone. Applicant/Contact: Mike Pizzuto (Lincoln Room) Owner: Dilly's Properties LLC (Dale Hume-Rimai)

Mike Pizzuto: The old VFW used to be a banquet hall and I am going to take it over and run it as a banquet hall. There will be electric food warmers, it's not like a gas stove or anything, there is no cooking. There is only warming of food. Inside there is only, well, there is one electric oven, it's a convention oven, and then the other one is an electric food steamer.

Commissioner Fox: I was a member for years and we had a big gas stove, it that still here?

Mike Pizzuto: Everything is gone out of that building. The building has been remodeled or it is brand new.

Paul Dixon: I actually included a couple of pictures for part of the report, and we are talking about the kitchen I decided to kind of put it up for everyone to see.

Commissioner Drozd: I see two handicapped spaces. Do we know the number of spaces in that parking lot?

Paul Dixon: Even if the building department says that these spaces need to be a little different, this site has sufficient parking above and beyond what the requirements are. What I would just ask, since we are talking about it, just for the Commission, on the record, if everyone is okay with two spaces getting restriped, as long as it doesn't change the parking requirements, that is perfectly able to be handled by an administrative level. I normally would anyway, but that is something to discuss, if the Commission is okay with it.

About the parking, it is generally when we look at sites that come in for new permits, we provide recommendations, we do not have it listed as a requirement, but it is an item if the Commission feels it is warranted, it could be recommended as a condition. It's kind of a maintenance plan, it's something that I am sure, the occupant, assuming approval tonight, moves forward and works with the landlord, as the site continues to get used further discussions will likely take place.

Commissioner Fox: There was an agreement with the massage school regarding parking, but you indicated that that agreement no longer existed.

Paul Dixon: The previous non-conforming warehousing that was in the back, that has been reoccupied by the current owner. There is a plumbing supply, a plumber who is in there, and that is an interesting site, but there is a plumber in there and then they are looking at options that we have been discussing with that property owner, it's our understanding that they terminated that parking agreement. That does not impact this site because they are the one with the excess parking. That may be an item in the future when the neighbor next door looks to revitalize that property and discussions would have to be held and that research, but again, it doesn't have an impact on tonight's meeting, because even with that prior agreement and those spaces allocated, they still meet the parking requirements.

I would like to run through some items, if you don't mind, I just want to kind of have people understand, people on line or anyone watching, that the applicant has detailed the use as they have spoken, and no sales, no food or beverage except for the people bringing it in, there is one area, like a beverage area that they showed, kind of like a counter top, a nice bar counter top but a counter top, and a fridge in there, kind of self service, however the people using this banquet hall will set it up. This is not something that the operator will be operating out of there and selling beverages. The operation hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M., and Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 9:00 A.M. to Midnight are the target hours that were identified in the staff report.

The next item for you, this was in the packet, this was actually from the last set of building permit plans, there were a couple of items, the vestibule there, that wall isn't there and the redo in the stairs in the back. Those are the items that weren't done but the building official is aware of what has been done to this site so far, and again, the applicant should have a discussion with the building official and the health department as a condition of approval and any other permits required should be obtained.

Everyone is relatively familiar with the site, but we have the front of the site, the building has been repainted, windows are in good shape, the building is in good shape. They have or are going to add additional plantings in the front, keeping within the current beds. The next picture again, the parking lot that we talked about. So this is the interior, from the front, you enter in at that beverage area, just over to the left, and as you can see is a separate room by itself. You just have the entrance area, and this kind of gives you an idea of the space which is very nicely finished. I think this is a good addition to Newington.

As we said, it meets all of the parking requirements for a place of assembly which it would be, and it also meets the more stringent requirements for a restaurant. That is just a point of reference but there is sufficient parking on this site. That is all I have.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: Is there anyone on line who would like to speak in favor or in opposition to this petition?

Commissioner Drozd moved to close Petition 25-23 and move it to Old Business for action. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fox. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion with seven voting YEA.

**VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Pascarelli: It's just an editing change, after my name, it says excused, but I was seated.

Commissioner Trister moved to correct the minutes, removing the word excused from Commissioner Pascarelli's name and accept them as corrected. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Havens. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion, with seven voting YEA.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

None

**X. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Petition 25-23: Special Permit (Sec. 3.15.17) for a banquet hall at 85 Kitts Lane in the Business Berlin Turnpike Zone. Applicant/Contact: Mike Pizzuto (Lincoln Room) Owner: Dilly's Properties LLC (Dale Hume-Rimai)

Commissioner Haggarty moved to approve Petition 25-23 for a banquet hall facility at 85 Kitts Lane with the following condition:

1. The applicant shall obtain all required permits and approvals, building and health departments, as well as any other required approvals from other agencies.

Reason for Approval:

The proposed application meets the criteria of the Town of Newington zoning regulations.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fox. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion, with seven voting YEA.

Mike Pizzuto: I have a question, the sign, the electric sign out front, is that approved?

Vice-Chairman Claffey: You can meet with Erik or Paul at a later day, or tomorrow morning and they will put you through the process of that.

Mike Pizzuto: Thank you very much.

Erik Hinckley: There is a building permit which requires a zoning sign-off. A zoning permit and a building permit, at the same time, when you are ready, we'll be happy to help you.

## **XI. PETITIONS FOR PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULING**

- A. Petition 26-23: Special Permit (Sec. 3.4.7) to convert a pre-1920 single family residential dwelling at 202 Deming Street into two residential units in the R-20 Zone. Applicant/Owner Salvatore J. Visconti Jr. and Paula J. Visconti Contact: Paula J. Visconti.
  
- B. Petition 27-23: Special Permit (Sec. 3.13.0 and 3.13.7) and site plan for a restaurant with an accessory drive through at 79 East Cedar Street in the Business Town Center Zone and Town Center Village Overlay District: Applicant: Cedar Street LLC, Owner: Newington Sovereign Bank Plaza LLC, Contact: Cary Gagnon.

Paul Dixon: There are two petitions that are noted, the Special Permit to convert a pre-1920 single family dwelling at 202 Deming, they are working on their submittal, so they are likely to be at the December meeting, and the next one is the Special Permit for the restaurant and accessory drive through at 79 East Cedar Street. Right now they are scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month, however they are still providing, updating plans, so as we get closer to that I will provide any updates, but right now they are looking to move forward, but there are updates that are required.

## **XII. TOWN PLANNER REPORT**

Paul Dixon: Currently we have the applications that I always encourage anyone listening to look at them and see what is out there, kind of a way to keep up to date.

We have land use training, I'm going to keep this on for the next couple of meetings, however Commissioners need training and we'll kind of work that through, and I'll talk to any individual Commissioner. There are two opportunities, November 16<sup>th</sup>, there is a land use training session at CRCOG, it's virtual for 1.5 credits and then the other one is Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, a full day 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., one at UConn Center, I believe that is in Haddam. That one actually covers all four full credits. There is a registration fee if you are interested and of course, the Town Planner's office, that is part of the budget to cover the registration for Commissioner training. So if it is something that any of the Commissioners are interested in, please let me know, we are coming close to the deadlines.

Other than that, just some information, we have been continuing to work with 3333 Berlin Turnpike. As I noted previously, they revised the landscaping, we are working with them on that. Again, trees needed to be removed because of water that needed to be removed, these are more utility driven than anything else and then they are currently working on some other updates to their site plan, all can be handled administratively. If there is anything that rises to the level of the Commission, I'll have them bring it to the Commission. The other item to update, the sewer line has started going in for the carwash.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: That's at the bottom, right?

Erik Hinckley: It's going to go out that new road they put in, it's going to go out Myra Cohen Way, and up into the street.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: From way down there.

Erik Hinckley: They have to go past the state road because they are going to put a trench in there.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: I wondered about there being such big equipment out there, for just going from one side of the road to the other. That proves me wrong.

Commissioner Trister: An expensive little venture.

Erik Hinckley: Yes that is.

Paul Dixon: I will keep communicating with the projects that are going on, and as I get more updates on timing, because I know that some of the Commission, and the public are always interested in what is going on, so as I get more information, I will be providing updates to the Commission and therefore to the public.

Commissioner Trister: Question, I'm just curious about the completion, weeks, months?

Paul Dixon: For the sewer, I would typically say.....

Commissioner Trister: That building is completely done and ready to go I would assume, been that way.

Paul Dixon: So as soon as it gets done, as far as MDC sign off, they will have to go through that process.....

Erik Hinckley: And they will have to go through a c.o. process with the Town, and there are things that will have to be bonded, etc., etc.

Paul Dixon: That is all I have for my report, unless there are questions for me.

**XIII. COMMUNICATIONS**

Vice-Chairman Claffey: I have a question, I notice that from the other towns, we changed some things on the day care, I think at the last meeting.

Paul Dixon: So at the last meeting we started, because the state law has changed and that is why, all of the towns are doing that. So, that will be in front of you, I have sent the letters to CRCOG.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: I was upset that the day care is now out of our jurisdiction, and you can't tell them, so they can go anywhere they want to go now.

Paul Dixon: Again, these are a little different with the family group child and the family home child care. You are talking 7 to 12 for the group version of it, and then 6 and below for the other version. Presented at the last meeting, sent to CRCOG and will be in front of this Commission, and I'm looking at the December date for that, to have that in front for a hearing, a public hearing for the change to the regulations.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: Does anyone have any questions on these letters. I didn't see anything because they just, I saw a few things on affordable housing, district changes for West Hartford, that is the only one that worries me.

Paul Dixon: The notices I get are the inter-municipal ones that are within 500 feet and it is abutting us or if water or other systems impact our town. The CRCOG ones, it's good to see what trends are going on out there, and if any members have any questions about the trends or see something that looks interesting that they would want to look into, that is another reason for these to be on the agenda as well. Just to see where the trends for the state are going, or at least for our region.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: Just thought of this, when is our POCD due again?

Paul Dixon: Actually I think it was just updated, so 2030, it's every ten years so for the next update, it's 2030. Amendments can be done before that, but the full change is 2030.

**XIV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (For items not listed on the agenda; speakers limited to two minutes.)**

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: I have been to the meetings in person, I have listened to them over the phone via Zoom which I am doing now, I heard, I think it was Commissioner Manke who asked at the last Council meeting, asked our Town Clerk if anything could be done to enlarge the screens. When he was out knocking on doors, some of the complaints that he was hearing was about not being able to tell who is talking and it is great that you can see the agenda, which takes up I would say 75 to 80 percent of my 45 inch screen, but it's like Hollywood Squares, and unless a Commissioner identifies themselves, I don't know who is speaking, and the microphones,



I don't know if the Commissioners aren't speaking into them because I can hear Commissioner Claffey, who I am assuming was seated for Chairman Pane, and I can hear the Town Planner, I can hear Erik, and maybe one or two others, and it's very difficult. Is there something that can be done, can you check with the Town Manager and see what the problem is. We paid hundreds of thousands of dollars from what I remember for the audio-visual in both the Helen Nelson Room, and this room, and I know Covid had a lot to do with the way things are set up, but, I don't know, maybe it's just me and I'm the only one watching, maybe it's time to get hearing aids, and a magnifying glass, or sit closer to the TV, but I just thought I would mention it because I did hear Councilman Manke asking James about it, after the last Town Council meeting. Thank you very much.

Vice-Chairman Claffey: It's a great point, I don't think it's our purview, but Rose makes a great point. She has probably made it for five years now, and it amazes me that it still hasn't been taken care of.

**XV. REMARKS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Fox: Thank you, if I'm not mistaken, this is the end of a lot of terms, so I want to thank those whose terms are ending for their service, and I would also like to congratulate Commissioner Trister, who definitely will not be here at the next meeting, on his election as our Mayor. Congratulations and best of luck to you, you will probably need it. Thank you. Have a good night everybody.

Commissioner Trister: Thank you Commissioner Fox, this will be my last meeting and I have really enjoyed serving with all of you on this Commission, and I think the work that we do here is really, really important, and we do it really well. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with you in my new role, so thank you everybody.

Commissioner Haggarty: Congratulations Mr. Trister.

Commissioners: Congratulations.

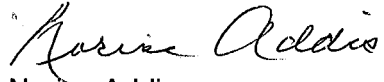
**XVI. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN**

Vice-Chairman Claffey: I do hope that this board can continue to cross lines that we have done for many years, from when I sat as an alternate, to when I sat as a regular member, to even now, I just hope it goes to the future of the town, to what grows, to what needs to be pulled back, needs both sides, both parties to discuss it. I don't know anyone's terms, so I don't know who will be here, who will not, but I do hope, through the Planner and the ZEO and the new Mayor can continue the broad brush that Chairman Pane has done for many, many years and prior to him, the ones that preceded him also did. Thank you.

**XVII. ADJOURN**

Commissioner Fox moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis,  
Recording Secretary