

WINDHAM PLANING & ZONING COMISSION
Oct. 25, 2012 MINUTES

The Windham Planning & Zoning Commission held its meeting on October 25, 2012 in the Meeting room, Town Hall. Chair Paula Stahl called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. Members present were Dan Lein, Claire Lary, Jean Chaine, Dawn Niles, Paula Stahl and Phoebe Godfrey. Juan Montalvo was excused. Also present were Town Planner James Finger and Code Enforcement Officer Matthew Vertefeuille.

I) Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 27, 2012 were approved on a motion made by Dan Lein and seconded by Dawn Niles. The motion carried unanimously.

Dawn Niles made a motion to amend the agenda to include a summary report from the Zoning Enforcement Officer following the first public hearing this evening and Dan Lein seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

II) Public Hearing on Proposed Changes Affecting General Business and General Commercial Districts

a) Revise Section 32 – General Business District B-2 of the Windham Zoning Regulations and revise the B-2 District Boundary.

b) Create Section 32A – General Business District B-2A with zoning regulations and boundary to encourage and permit business similar to the B-2 District but at a lower density and larger scale.

c) Rezone parcels currently in the B-2 to more compatible contiguous zones:

- 1) Rezone 27 through 50 Holbrook, also 25 Vermont Drive being rezoned from Business B-2 to Residential R-5, also 25-52 Wilson Street from commercial C-2 to Residential R-5;
- 2) Rezone ECSU property at 284 Valley Street from B-2 to Residential R-6 for the dormitory;
- 3) Rezone the rear portion of 55 Bridge Street leased by the Railroad Museum, and the rear portion of property at 75 Bridge Street from B-2 to C-2 (front portions will remain B-1A);
- 4) Zoning change for AT&T parking lot identified as 27, 28, 29 Schoolhouse Lane behind Town Hall – rezoning from B-2 to B1-A;
- 5) Zone change for riverbed and riverbank at 79 Bridge Street along with abutting unnumbered parcel to the southeast, from B2 to Reserved Land.

d) Revise Section 35 – General Commercial District C-2 of the Windham Zoning Regulations and revise the C-2 District Boundary.

e) Create Section 35A - General Commercial District C-2A with zoning regulations and boundary to encourage and permit business similar to the C-2 District but at a lower density and larger scale.

Chair Stahl said this is a continuation of the public hearing started one month ago. We are also working on some general business and general commercial districts, namely Section 32, 32-A, B-2 and creating a new B-2A zone, Section 35 which is the C-2, and creating a new 35-A which is the C-2A, zoning parcels and changes to district boundaries

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At the last meeting we heard comments from businesses and property owners in town. There was concern that many of the vehicle-uses previously permitted would not be permitted under the new regulations. Chair Stahl said she reviewed the comments made at the previous public hearing and based on those comments she is proposing adjustments to the proposed revisions and district boundaries.

She said Joseph Marsalisi, who operates J&S Radio, was concerned that equipment installation would be considered automobile automotive repair. He was concerned that under the new regulations his business might not be able to build a garage for emergency vehicle work as he was planning to do. She said after speaking with Town Planner James Finger and Zoning Enforcement Officer Matt Vertefeuille we concurred that this would be an accessory use of his business and permitted in the new regulations.

In terms of district boundaries, she said both Michael Taylor and Bob Coutu have properties across from each other on West Main Street near Capitol Avenue, and both are requesting that some automobile related uses be permitted as a special permit. What was suggested to Mr. Taylor at the end of the meeting last month was to slide the boundaries of the C-2 to include the properties owned by Mr. Taylor and Mr. Coutu. Mr. Taylor said that would meet his needs. Another property owner who spoke in terms of district boundaries was Mrs. Thomas Gasper on Arnolds Lane who requested that her property stay as B-2 because her property is completely surrounded by commercial. .

Chair Stahl said regarding comments about the permitted uses in the proposed revised regulations, Mr. Coutu requested that his category of business be a special use and he would come to us anytime he wanted to do other work there. She said we have two automotive recyclers in Windham, and both would be in the C-2 zone.

At the last meeting, Mr. Lessenger spoke about his property at West Main Street and Trappella Road. It is right off the exit ramp to the east bound highway. He is requesting that car sales be permitted. She said he is requesting that we allow car dealerships in all of the B-2A. She said that is not what the commission wanted because it is not consistent with Windham's Plan of Conservation & Development. There is also a concern with traffic that would be associated with development on that parcel. Chair Stahl recommends that no change be made to the proposed permitted uses.

She said we also received a letter from Attorney Douglas Stearns representing Virginia Knight, executrix of the estate of William Knight, requesting that a gas station be a permitted use in the B-2 zone. The property at 1248 Main Street is currently a gas station although it is not open at this time. It is a grandfathered use so it can be used as a gas station for as long as they want it to be a gas station; no change is needed to the proposed regulations.

Chair Stahl shared her draft of a revised proposed district boundary map that shows Mr. Taylor and Mr. Coutu's property as C-2 and Ms. Gasper's as B-2.

Chair Stahl also recommended adding Section 35.4.6 for automotive recycling facilities as a permitted special use provided certain conditions are met. These conditions include that automobile and automotive parts in impounded or other outdoor areas be screened from neighbor's view, and that crushing operations and related activities be conducted in such a way as to minimize noise, and to only occur between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM in certain areas and set back a minimum of 200 feet from all property lines. There may be additional conditions imposed per Section 62, she said.

Chair Stahl then opened the meeting up to public comment.

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Audience comments: 1) Bob Coutu referred to the setback of 200 feet from all property lines. He said the deepest depth of his property is 395 feet. It is 190 feet long making it impossible for him to meet the zoning requirements in order to be able to crush. He said we presently don't crush cars, but we don't want to lose the ability to do that because it is still important to his business. Commissioner Jean Chaine said he has empathy for Mr. Coutu's position, but the problem is that we are trying to do something long range (we are already making an accommodation) and crushing is an incidental aspect to his business. Mr. Coutu wants to reserve the right to make that a main focus in the future, said Chaine. Mr. Coutu said he had a crusher on the premises, but it was obsolete and we got rid of it. We have had portable crushers come in and crush the vehicles.

Code enforcement Officer Matt Vertefeuille said crushing of vehicles has been, for a long time, and will be for a long time a part of the general business that they do there. He said it is part of his license. Jean Chaine said I came away from the last meeting thinking that it was an ancillary part of the business, an occasional thing. Tonight he has said that he wants to make it more so in the future. Mr. Coutu said that is part of what we pay the license for. It is part of what we pay our insurance for. It is part of our business. Code Enforcement Officer Matt Vertefeuille said the way these business work now most of them do not have the crushing equipment on site just because it is expensive to maintain etc. It is more affordable for mobile crushers to come in and crush up a bunch of cars and ship them out. It is not an everyday thing, he added.

The commission discussed the proposed setback of 200 feet as found in Section 35.4.6. It was determined to adjust the setback from 200 feet to 150 feet.

ZEO Matt Vertefeuille referred to Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 124 Section 8-2. It says that the zoning regulations shall not prohibit the continuance of any non-conforming use, building or structure existing at the time of the adoption of any regulations. The regulations shall not provide determination of any non-conformity etc.

2) Jeffrey Viens spoke in favor of Mr. Coutu's business. He said part of the commission's purpose is to help support business, not discourage it.

3) Mayor Ernest Eldridge said he felt that the 200 foot setback is too restrictive and 150 feet is more appropriate. Regarding noise, he said the town has a noise ordinance in place and that should control any excessive noise.

As there were no other comments, the public hearing was closed.

A discussion was held regarding Section 35.4.6 requiring a setback of a minimum of 150 feet. Dawn Niles made a motion to approve the language in Section 35.4.6 changing the 200 foot setback to 150 feet as proposed by Chair Stahl. We don't need to vote on this separately as we will be voting on the entire package said Stahl. We will do it altogether and when we do the final motion we will make reference to this language. Dawn Niles said she didn't have a problem with the language pertaining to District Boundaries.

Paula Stahl made a motion to adopt the proposed changes affecting general business and general commercial districts and their district boundaries as presented at the September 27, 2012 public hearing

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with the following adjustments: Section 35.4.6 be inserted. Automotive recycling facility, subject to the following: a) automotive and automotive parts in any impoundment area or outdoor storage area shall be screened so as not to be visible from any street or abutting property. b) any crushing operations and related activity shall be done in such a way as to minimize noise, shall only occur between the hours of 8:00Am and 5:00 PM, and shall be in an area set back a minimum of 150 feet from all property lines, c) and may have additional conditions imposed per Section 62.

Also changes made to the proposed district boundaries by extending the C-2 line to include properties owned by Mr. Coutu and Michael Taylor and keeping the property on Arnolds lane owned by Mrs. Gasper as B-2.

Dawn Niles seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion were Jean Chaine, Dawn Niles, Dan Lein, Clare Lary and Paula Stahl. Phoebe Godfrey abstained. The motion carried.

III) New Item – Discussion regarding Camp Horizons

Code Enforcement Officer Matt Vertefeuille asked that this item be added to tonight's agenda. He said he was asked to discuss with the commission a small change being considered at Camp Horizons. He said he has been meeting with the camp and their engineer to try to work out the game plan going forward for the next five years. He said he is addressing the issue of what uses are being utilized there now and is addressing the properties that have been added, as well as any work that has been done. He said the plan that was submitted in 1996 and 1997 is currently on file now. He said he asked Camp Horizons to redo this plan. Essentially it will be a little bigger because they have added a couple of borderline properties, he said. The permit was first granted in 1997 and renewed in 2006. He said there are two existing small buildings which they want to demolish and recombine into a single building, and relocate to another area on the grounds. He said they know they have to come back to the commission for a new special permit as their permit has expired. At this time they will bring in a new master plan. They are looking for permission to move forward, and just for this winter to move these two buildings and rebuild another one. The commission has the option to say no, that the commission doesn't think this is a good idea until you come back with a complete plan. He said the two buildings would be moved to a location not near any neighbors. It would actually be near the Spector property that they own. He said in his eyes it would not be disturbing anything as far as the neighbors go. They are looking for permission to go and do that part of it while they are waiting to get all the plans done. He said they could probably submit a complete package at either the December or January meeting. In the meantime, they wanted to know if it was okay with the board to go ahead and start that. That is what we are asking tonight, he said.

Commissioner Dawn Niles said she spoke with the director of the camp and told her that the commission would like a site visit as soon as possible. She was very open to that. Mr. Vertefeuille said we are talking about doing a site walk for the board, and in addition we are going to be conducting neighborhood meetings in the next couple of weeks. We are trying to set that up now, he added.

Commissioner Dan Lein said they are not here tonight and you (Vertefeuille) are making a request for an approval. Mr. Vertefeuille said I don't want to go ahead and approve it unless the board is okay with it.

Planner Finger said Mr. Chaine has been involved with the neighbor's concerns. At the last meeting there was a group of people who wanted to speak about it. He said I have also received a letter from Mr. Kornacki who spoke at the last hearing raising questions. He said he prepared a draft in response, but is

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waiting for clearance from the board before he sends it out to make sure I am not compromising the board, said Finger. I tried to answer the questions raised, among which was the issue of non-conformity, where if it is not under Section 3.10 for non-conforming uses, than what section is it. He said he has answered that. He said he knows that the board has had some concerns and since we may be subject to an application very soon, he didn't want to put the board in jeopardy of compromising themselves and commenting about something that may be subject to a special permit, or a hearing, or some other action.

Commissioner Dawn Niles said what we are being asked tonight is for permission to recombine two small buildings on the site into a single building relocated to another location on the grounds. They would not be doing anything that the two buildings aren't already doing. We're not talking about non-conformity, we are talking about whether we let them demolish the two and replace them with one building. Planner Finger said that is relating to non-conformity. The issue is when you combine two non-conforming buildings into one non-conforming building. Campgrounds are permitted by special permit, said Finger. In order to try to address the concerns, I have prepared a draft letter, it hasn't gone out yet, but I have to reply to the complaints. The neighbors raised many concerns, and we are not ignoring these concerns. Commissioner Chaine suggested sending a letter to reply to the inquiries, he concluded.

Mr. Vertefeuille said Chris MacNobe's comment was that it was approved under a special permit in 1997 and in 2006.

Commissioner Jean Chaine said the last project which received approval in 1996 didn't get initiated until 2006 with an extension on the permit that had expired with the assumption that they were going to put up what they asked for 10 years earlier. That building is not today what they asked for 10 years ago. That particular building is now being used for something other than what they said it was going to be used for. The track record of that particular business is such that they seem to be operating in a way of "catch me if you can". There are things going on that irritate the neighbors that would not be irritating the neighbors if they were following the regulations that they had signed up on. He asked, why hasn't a cease and desist order been issued to Camp Horizons to stop using that building as a conference center. That has nothing to do with their mission. Matt Vertefeuille responded that he didn't have enough information to give them a cease and desist order. Mr. Chaine said they are advertising that as a conference center on their web page. Vertefeuille said he did not have a copy of that. Mr. Chaine said if I show you the ad, will you issue a cease & desist order. Vertefeuille said he didn't know if he would issue a cease & desist, but given evidence of a non-permitted use, he would respond. There are other ways to respond other than issuing a cease & desist order, said Vertefeuille. Mr. Chaine said if we are going to have a meeting with the neighbors, I would prefer in order to have this handled at one time, to have a session with the neighbors here along with any discussion about the regulations so that everyone is on the same page. I think we can clear things up so that the neighbors understand what the regulations are and that we have a clear understanding of what the concerns are.

Chair Stahl said because this is a plan that was approved a long time ago and because there are concerns with the neighbors she said she is not personally comfortable moving forward with any construction there until we have a complete plan before us to discuss all of their goals in a public hearing format where we hear what citizens and neighbors have to say and what Camp Horizons has to say and balance the two. She said she is not comfortable having them do additional construction work after hearing the concerns of the neighbors. It seems like a very reasonable project, but I am not comfortable with it, she said.

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Commissioner Dan Lein said his concern is that this item is not on our agenda and if it was he feels more citizens would be here. If the permit has run out, then it has run out. He said their construction history is making the PZC cautious about granting permission to relocate those buildings without careful consideration.

Chair Stahl said while we are on the Camp Horizons issue, at our last meeting a lot of people were here and wanted to talk about concerns with Camp Horizons. I suggested a meeting devoted to Camp Horizons; however I didn't know that the camp is going to be coming in with a full plan in December or January. I feel it would be better to wait and have them come to speak at the public hearing, as only what is said during a public hearing can be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Jean Chaine said when that business location became non-conforming it was a summer campground. Today it is no longer a summer campground. It is a youth camp for individuals with special needs. They have also associated themselves with an activity for assisted living and it is part of that business. It has changed from a non-conforming campground to a non-conforming facility that was not dreamed about at the time that it was put in.

Chair Stahl said when the commission starts its discussion on possible revisions to the residential zoning regulations, we need to take a hard look at what we are permitting in neighborhoods, she said.

Commissioner Dan Lein asked what do we do first. Chair Stahl said she was hoping to look at non-conforming issues at the next working meeting (11/8/2012). Commissioner Niles said lets have the site visit, ask what we need to ask, and get them in here. Chair Stahl suggested doing that as part of the public hearing process and the master plan.

Commissioner Niles agreed.

Commissioner Jean Chaine referred to Section 3.10. He asked if we could somehow tap into what the concerns are on Section 3.10 as it is currently being applied. Chair Stahl said in order to make any changes to 3.10 we would have to have a public hearing. Chaine suggested that the commission come up with proposed language and seek input from the residents. Chair Stahl said we have a lot of non-conforming business, but as we change the regulations we will have fewer and fewer non-conforming businesses. Those are also the ones who are impacted. We need information from people who are impacted. Chair Stahl said a lot of people recognize that the appropriate time to make a statement is during the public hearing so they wait. She said the commission shouldn't just hear from one group of people on the 3.10 issue because there are many people who are affected by Section 3.10. We need to hear from everyone, not just one group.

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III) Public Hearing for Windham Mills, 310 & 322 Main Street – Proposed Planned Development District zoning application to permit up to 40% residential use.

Karl Nilson, the consultant representing Lock View, LLC, said during the course of the many discussions that we have had various paperwork has come before the commission. The paperwork which we are submitting at this time includes the history of the site, a description of the former projects; the Security Pacific Plan, and ATC Partnership plan. Also included is the IHZ Market Study, and a memo from the Economic Development Commission supporting the proposed change to the zoning regulations. There is also a letter of support from Jana Butts who is a professional planner.

Martin J. Connor, AICP, Planning Consultant, representing the applicant on the proposed PDD permit said at a previous meeting he read a letter dated September 2, 2012 into the record which included a planning report prepared for the Windham Mills PDD. It states that an application was submitted to the Windham PZC for a proposed new Article V, Section 58, Windham Mills Planned Development District. He said they have reviewed Article V, Section 51 of the Windham Zoning Regulations and believe that the proposed Windham Mills PDD conforms to the requirements of Section 51. In addition, we have reviewed the 2007 Windham Plan of Conservation & Development and feel that the PZC can make a finding that the Windham Mills PDD is consistent with the POCD.

He then went on to review proposed Article V, Section 58: Section 58.1 describes the proposed adaptive reuse and improvement of the Windham Mills Center at 322 Main Street. The intention is to create a mixed-use community with a residential multi-family component. The residential component, not to exceed 40% of the existing floor area of the entire property, is designed for occupancy by singles, retired individuals and couples, empty nesters and others wanting apartments with easy access to Downtown, encouraging pedestrian traffic and reducing the need for automobiles and associated traffic. An opportunity will be provided for artists and other craftsman who may wish to reside in work/live units. Proposed Section 58.2 describes the permitted uses in this new zone. Proposed 58.3 describes the Lot Area, Shape and Frontage requirements. Proposed Section 58.4 describes the Height Limit of buildings in this new zone. Proposed 58.5 describes the Maximum Coverage and Bulk. Proposed Section 58.6 describes the Standards for Multi-family Residential Development.

Mr. Connor said that after reviewing the other zoning districts, we do not believe that an existing zoning district can appropriately be established to allow the redevelopment of this historic and unique property, with existing buildings on site encompassing 283,000 sq ft. (of floor area). He states that the property is of sufficient size to create a mixed use community that will allow for the inclusion of a residential multi-family component not to exceed 40% of the existing floor area. He further states that the site is in conformance with the minimum requirements of Section 51.3.4 as the property exceeds the minimum required five acres for a Planned Development District. He then went on to review Sections 3.3, 3.4, 5.4, 5.5, 6.3, and 6.6,

In summary, we believe our proposed PDD conforms to the requirements of Section 51. We believe the commission can make a finding that the Windham Mills PDD is consistent with the POCD. The full redevelopment of the Windham Mills Center, including a residential component will help to put the necessary “feet on the street” to support existing businesses Downtown. We urge the commission to adopt the proposed new Article V, Section 58, Windham Mills Planned Development District as submitted.

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Mr. Connor said as a result of questions that had come up, he wrote a letter dated September 18, 2012 regarding the Proposed PDD. He said his client, Lock View, LLC, owner of the Windham Mills Business Center, would like to further modify proposed Article V Section 58 to clarify which existing buildings within the property may be used for multi-family residential development. We propose that residential multi-family uses shall only be permitted in Buildings 2 West, 2A, 4&5 within the existing Windham Mills Business Center. He said we have amended proposed Article V Section 58.6 to clarify that. He then asked the chair if he needed to read the proposed regulation into the record, or could we assume it is part of the record. The chair concurred that it is part of the record.

Mr. Connor mentioned that he had heard that the Town of Windham had applied to participate in a Main Street Center program called "Come Home – Downtown". He explained that this is part of the CT Main Street program, and the CT Housing Finance Authority to help finance mixed use development – just what the Mills are trying to do. He then distributed copies of the program to the commission. Mr. Connor then went on to review the benefits he believes that the Mixed Use Housing at Windham Mills will offer the community. He also spoke about the ways the PDD will further the Town and State Plans of Conservation and Development. He referred to a program entitled Livable Communities for All Ages sponsored by the Connecticut Commission on Aging & Connecticut Conference of Municipalities to be held on November 1, 2012 at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, CT. He also entered into the record Draft Conservation & Development Policies: A Draft Plan for Connecticut covering 2013-2018. Mr. Connor said the PDD will reuse vacant historic buildings contributing to the character of the town while enhancing the community. The first principal is the growth management principal that states "Redevelop and revitalize Regional centers in areas with existing or currently planned infrastructure; and as we know we certainly have the infrastructure at the Mills. He said he wasn't going to read in the whole growth management principal, but recited one sentence; Encourage local zoning that allows for a mix of uses to occur to create vibrant central places where residents can live, work, and meet their daily needs without having to rely on automobiles as a sole means of transportation. That's going to be a growth management policy for the State. So before they spend more than \$200,000 on any project within their State agencies, they will have to review these growth management principals and make sure it's within at least one of them. The second growth principal is even more fitting. It says "expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs. So the State policy will be: "to support adaptive re-use of historic and existing structures for use as residential housing", and that's exactly what the Mills is trying to do. Another part of that is "market urban communities to people who are likely attracted to working or living in urban environments, such as young people and empty nesters". Also "promote affordable housing as mixed use and part of transit oriented development within walking distances of public transportation facilities. He asserted that he felt the Windham Mills project meets State goals, and may qualify the Town for funding should there be a need. He continued stating that he knew that the Town was interested in Historic preservation, and mentioned that he is part of the CT Trust for Historic Preservation, and they have an article in their September/October issue talking about Willimantic; so its enlightening to see that your Town is mentioned – and is on the map for what we're to talk about.

Before turning the presentation over to the engineer, he re-stated that he felt their project was going to help the Town with its Downtown revitalization. He explained that he felt the benefits of mixed use at the Mills was in increasing pedestrian activity to support the downtown businesses, it certainly will help to preserve an historic structure for up to 40% of an underutilized complex of buildings; its going to help the Town create a more vibrant community with an additional housing alternative; it makes use of existing infra-structure; the new housing on-site will be energy efficient; and will enable people who are

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living there to walk downtown instead of always driving their cars; its better for the environment and reduces sprawl; and hopefully reduces our dependence on foreign oil. It's consistent with the growth management principals of the State's Plan of Conservation and Development. He asserted that they (Mills) felt it was consistent with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development adopted in 2007, and he felt that the Mills housing would set up the Town nicely to look as the "Come Home Downtown" program mentioned earlier with the CT Main Street Center because it asks what we're doing to promote housing Downtown. Also, he explained that it provides livable community for all ages. He then introduced Mr. Hrica, the project engineer to discuss the site plan and to address the parking issues.

Kenneth Hrica, professional engineer and licensed land surveyor with Hrica & Associates, said we are proposing a zone change for two separate parcels known as 2A and 2A1. He said the Planned Development Zone is limited to four buildings. That would be building 2A, 2-West, and 4 & 5 within the existing Windham Mills Business Center. We are proposing residential development in buildings 2A, 2West, and buildings 4 and 5. The utility area which would provide the electrical component will be located on the first floor of 2A. The first floor of building 2-West will be commercial. Building 4 would also have the first floor as commercial. The first, second and third floors of building 5 will be completely residential. As part of this concept there is a covered structure that we would like to convert into the residential component. It is right on the river and it could be a picnic spot, etc. It would make a very nice area for the people who live there to go and look over the river. Mr. Hrica said back in 2009 the commission approved a parking plan that contained 442 parking spaces. The conceptual plan includes the implementation of that parking layout. The conceptual plan has a mixture of commercial and residential uses and requires 429 spaces. We have a 21 space deficit, said Hrica. We did not use any provisions in the regulations for different uses that might occur there at different times of the day. The parking plan for the retail assumes that with every residential space and with every commercial space we can still provide the parking. The commercial aspect of this plan is 30% of the gross floor area in all of the buildings on site. He said the residential aspect is 23% of the parking requirement on site. They only require 23% of the parking space, he said.

Commissioner Jean Chaine referred to building 5. He pointed out there is no ground floor. Mr. Hrica said the first floor is actually the ground floor. Mr. Chaine asked about the right-of-way for the bridge. Mr. Hrica said there is an easement between parcel 310 and 322. He said we are still using the site plans that were approved. Nothing has been removed from those plans.

Audience comments:

- 1) Jeffrey Viens said he would like to see this move forward. We can't let Mansfield beat us to the punch every time (the Town of Mansfield is building a downtown Storrs Center which includes mixed uses). He said this would be one giant step for Willimantic.
- 2) John Walker spoke in support of the proposed PDD. I think this will be an attractive plan and I think the board should move forward with it.
- 3) Pam Viens said she would like to see this move forward.

Chair Stahl asked for questions from the board. Dan Lein asked if the applicants did a study as to the senior component that may avail themselves to this type of housing. Mr. Connor said seniors would have fewer cars and they are looking for these types of places to live so that they don't have to drive their car every day. He said we feel that we are meeting the current regulations as they stand. Dan Lein referred to traffic. Is there an issue with traffic on the street and with vehicles leaving the building. Will there be a traffic signal, he asked. Mr. Connor said it might be appropriate to ask the state to look at

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signalization. Chair Stahl said whatever is proposed to be developed there still has to receive zoning approval. She said we are not approving this for a build out without further review. The zoning agent will have to sign off whether or not there is sufficient parking etc. They still need ZEO approval for this project to go forward, she said.

Commissioner Phoebe Godfrey said our packet included a letter from an individual stating that a hotel at this location would be beneficial. Mr. Connor said parking might be an issue. Phoebe Godfrey then referred to a letter from Jana Butts regarding rentals. Mr. Connor said Ms. Butts is referring to incentive housing, and we are not proposing incentive housing in this development. Chair Stahl said one of the things with residential is that you cannot specify the income levels of people. She said it could be very expensive housing, or it could be subsidized housing per the regulations. There is no way that you can stipulate one or the other.

She said one of her concerns is that the commission has been working very hard to create a mixed use development in our immediate Downtown, the area that we consider our Downtown, which runs from Jillson Square to Bridge Street. She said our goal has been to encourage residential in the immediate Downtown. She said the regulations that we wrote about 1 year and several months ago encourage residential development in our immediate Downtown in order to get a vibrant Downtown going. She expressed concern that we will be over-saturating the market with residential housing. Phoebe Godfrey said the more housing, the more attractive an area is going to become. She said UConn will be hiring hundreds of new faculty next year. Windham needs to position itself as an attractive place for them to live, she said. Commissioner Dawn Niles said she felt this is a very good plan. They have done everything we have asked them to do. She said having quality housing in the extended Downtown would enhance the entire Downtown,

Tom Briggs said there are different types of housing. Having varied types of housing is good for a town. You are going in the right direction, don't stop now, he said.

4) Christopher Brechlin said he supports a development like this. He said his University of Connecticut graduate student peers are among the highest paid in the country, but they can't afford to live in Storrs. He emphasized that Willimantic would be an attractive place for graduate student to live, especially if quality housing were nearby. He said the development that is being built at UConn right now isn't friendly to graduate students.

5) Jeff Veins said there is a need for housing and we have to get this project going.

Planner Finger said we have received four letters supporting this project; The Economic Development Commission, Jana Butts - a Certified Professional Planner, the NRZ, and Matthew Piolunek. They all spoke favorably of the proposed plan.

As there were no other comments, the public hearing was closed.

Dawn Niles made a motion to adopt the Windham Mills Planned Development District (PDD) as submitted - Article V, Section 58, and Section 58.6 Standards for Multi-Family Residential Development as permitted in Buildings 2 West, 2A, 4 & 5. Dan Lein seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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IV) Other Business

a) **Incentive Housing Zones** - Dawn Niles said the State is allotting money and she asked how close are we from submitting paperwork to the State. Chair Stahl said Planner Finger, Jana Butts and Attorney Rich Cody are working on this.

b) The town has been working on a trail project along the **East Coast Greenway** for many years and should be nearing completion. This will connect Hop River Trail that ends at Mackey's down to Bridge Street following the river. An easement, in favor of the town, is needed for the trail.

Claire Lary made a motion to approve the following resolution:

Be it hereby resolved pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24 that the Windham Planning & Zoning Commission recommends that the Town of Windham accept an easement from CT Exeter, Inc. on a portion of the property identified as 259 Columbia Ave., Willimantic, CT. The property will be used for developing a recreation trail for hiking and to be used as a bikeway. This is consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation & Development as it will provide the public with access to recreation.

The motion was seconded by Jean Chaine. Those voting in favor of the resolution were: Claire Lary, Jean Chaine, Dawn Niles, Dan Lein, Phoebe Godfrey and Paula Stahl.

c) **Referral from the Town of Mansfield** regarding zoning amendments on non-conformities. Planner Finger distributed copies of the amendments to commission members.

d) Commissioner Jean Chaine asked if it would be beneficial to ask for public comments at each meeting. Chair Stahl said more Planning & Zoning Commissions do not have a spot for public comment on their agendas. She said most of our work is regulatory. Planner Finger suggested that the public could forward correspondence to the commission which then could be read at the meeting.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 P.M. Because of the Thanksgiving holiday the next PZC meeting will be held on November 15, 2012

Respectfully submitted,
Lillian Murray, Clerk