

Windham Planning & Zoning Commission

November 19, 2015 Minutes

The **Windham Planning & Zoning Commission met** on November 19, 2015 at 7:00 PM - Windham Town Hall, 979 Main St., Willimantic, CT. 06226 in the 2nd Floor Auditorium.

I. Call to Order - seating of alternates

Acting Chair Jean Chaine called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. . Commission members present were: Jean Chaine - Acting Chair, Claire Lary, Edward Pelletier, and Scott Lambeck. Commissioners Michael Graf, and Paula Stahl were excused.

The Chair designated Alternate Scott Lambeck as a voting member for the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes for October 22, & Nov. 12, 2015

Claire Lary made a motion to approve the minutes of October 22, and Scott Lambeck seconded the motion; all present voted in favor - except Commissioner Pelletier who abstained because he was absent from the meeting.

Next, Scott Lambeck made a motion to approve the minutes of Nov. 12, 2015 and Claire Lary seconded the motion; all present voted in favor - except Commissioner Pelletier who abstained because he was absent from the meeting.

III. New Business: (*DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION*)

1. Recommendations on proposal for 804 Main St. - The Commission heard a presentation from Mr. Hernandez about his proposal to establish a non-profit Community Development Corporation to develop the property into a pocket park with pads for mobile food vendors. He explained that he had originally proposed using several shipping containers and converting them into the basic structure to provide small apartments above some commercial use. However, he learned that the 160 sq. ft. dwellings that he proposed would not comply with the minimum dwelling size; so this was withdrawn. He added that as he reviewed the B-1 Downtown Business District, it talks about the Downtown being pedestrian friendly, and the regulations allows for a park operated by a non-profit 501 c3. The park would provide a walking path down to Riverside Drive, and then people could access the parking that's available there.

Mr. Hernandez then explained his background with various non-profits citing work with SAMA, the Path Academy, and the Northeast Development Corp that has recently been involved in rehabilitating the Hurley Building. Now he requests that the Town donate the land to a Community Development Corporation that he plans to set up, so he can then apply for grants, or receive donations. The long term plan is to establish a bodega as illustrated in the handout he distributed. He said he also envision it to include a few pad sites for some food vendors - similar to a wood fired Pizza vendor in Yantic. Although seasonal, this could add to

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the excitement created by the third Thursday events, and would generate economic activity. Much discussion ensued.

The Chairman referred to the minutes and comments of the Economic Development Commission where they recommended giving Mr. Hernandez up to nine months to develop his concept with certain deliverables and commitments. The Chairman said he hoped that the Planning & Zoning Commission could support the project based on the Economic Development Commission's comments. He then asked the Commission members for comments.

Commissioner Lary said that as she looked through the Plan of Conservation and Development, it doesn't really talk about creating a park downtown. It does say to develop a civic park at Jillson Square. It also talks about supporting community events focused downtown such as 3rd Thursday Street Fest, and to facilitate plans to develop a whitewater park with parklands along the river. This concept is close to the goal. It doesn't quite fit, but we don't have anything else to consider.

Commissioner Pelletier asserted that the Planning & Zoning Commission does not have any authority to consider or comment on how the Town sells its land - or any conditions of sale. The Planning & Zoning Commission is only supposed to focus on whether the site plan conforms to the regulations. In this case - we don't have a site plan to look at. This is just an idea without a plan. He asked why the Planning & Zoning Commission is being asked to make a recommendation on this.

Planner Finger replied that when he assisted on developing the Request for Proposals (RFP), he anticipated that a developer would be submitting a definitive plan to the Town. So, the Planning & Zoning Commission would have a role in looking at it for conformance to the regulations as well as the Statutory 8-24 review and recommendation. In this case - it's just the concept.

After much discussion, the Commission decided to vote in favor based on the review of the recommendations from the Economic Development Commission. The Planning & Zoning Commission voted that the proposal was not inconsistent with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. The Planning & Zoning Commission reserved the right to review the final plans to ensure that it is consistent with the zoning regulations. Commissioner Edward Pelletier made a motion to recommend that the Town proceed with the conceptual proposal as outlined by the Economic Development Commission, and Scott Lambeck seconded the motion; all present voted in favor

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2. 8-24 Review of proposal to install Electric Vehicle Charging Stations and purchase Electric Vehicles for municipal fleet use. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Jean Chaine made a motion to recommend approval as follows:

Be it hereby RESOLVED pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24, that the Windham Planning & Zoning Commission recommends that the Town of Windham proceed to secure grant funds to establish two electric vehicle charging stations. The plan is to install one dual head charger for three municipal fleet electric vehicles (also to be acquired through the grant), and one dual head charger for the public to be located at a municipal parking lot.

This will reduce the Town's dependence on fossil fuels, and will add to the network of electric vehicle charging stations available in the community. Reducing energy consumption, and increasing the Town's energy self sufficiency is consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development.

Commissioner Scott Lambeck seconded the motion, and all present voted in favor including Jean Chaine - Acting Chair, Edward Pelletier, Scott Lambeck, and Claire Lary

IV. **POCD RFP** Postponed discussion

V. **Zoning Regulation revisions** Postponed discussion

VI. **Report from Zoning Enforcement Officer** - none

VII. Routine Business

1. Routine Business

2. **Miscellaneous** - *annual schedule of meetings for 2016*, the Commission voted to have its work-session meetings on the second Thursday of each month, and its - Business meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month - except for November and December when they will meet on the third Thursday because of the holiday schedule for those months. These dates are: Jan 14th, & 28th; Feb. 11th & 25th; Mar. 10th & 24th; Apr. 14th & 28th; May 12th & 26th; June 9th & 23rd; July 14th & 28th; Aug 11th & 25th; Sept 8th & 22nd; Oct 13th & 27th; Nov. 10th & 17th; Dec 8th & 15th.

VIII. **Adjournment** The meeting Adjourned at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by James Finger