

WINDHAM PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
February 26, 2015 MINUTES

The Windham Planning & Zoning Commission held its meeting on February 26, 2015 in the 2nd floor auditorium. Chair Paula Stahl called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Members present were Jean Chaine, Claire Lary, Ed Pelletier, Scott Lambeck, Michael Graff and Paula Stahl. Also present were Code Enforcement Officer Matthew Vertefeuille and Town Planner James Finger.

I) Approval of Minutes

a) The minutes of January 8, 2015 were approved. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Scott Lambeck and seconded by Ed Pelletier. The motion carried unanimously.

b) The minutes of January 22, 2015 were approved. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Jean Chaine and seconded by Claire Lary. Voting in favor of the motion were Jean Chaine, Claire Lary, Ed Pelletier, and Paula Stahl. Scott Lambeck and Michael Graff abstained. The motion carried.

c) The minutes of February 12, 2015 were approved. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Michael Graff and seconded by Scott Lambeck. Voting in favor of the motion were Michael Graff, Scott Lambeck, Jean Chaine, Claire Lary and Paula Stahl. Ed Pelletier abstained. The motion carried.

d) The minutes of November 20, 2014 were approved. Motion by Claire Lary and seconded by Michael Graff. Voting in favor of the motion were Claire Lary, Michael Graff, Jean Chaine, and Paula Stahl. Ed Pelletier abstained. The motion carried.

II) New Business

a) Access Community Action Agency, 1315 Main Street, Willimantic - Formal Subdivision Plan. Take receipt and schedule for hearing.

A representative for the Access Agency was present, but she did not speak to the application.

Ed Pelletier referred to lot #3 on the plan. He said the proposed building appears to be over the building setback line. Is that something our regulations allow, he asked. Chair Stahl said that it is allowed when it is an internal property line.

Scott Lambeck referred to the lot in the upper back portion of the property. He said we had some discussion regarding the driveway and it appears that the driveway was not changed. It appears to be the same driveway as originally shown on the plan, he said. Chair Stahl agreed.

Planner Finger said the surveyor indicated that he hasn't received word regarding any changes to the driveway, and he is not at liberty to make a change without his client's consent. Planner Finger said he has reviewed the history of the property and this was done a long time ago. Chair Stahl said it doesn't matter; now is the time to make appropriate changes to the property lines.

Ed Pelletier also commented that the plan should contain notes regarding easements etc. Chair Stahl agreed that a corrected plan should include easements and cross easements as well as other notations. This plan doesn't appear to be any different from the plan that we reviewed at the last meeting, she said.

After some further discussion, the Commission took receipt of the plan and scheduled a public hearing on March 26, 2015.

b) Family Dollar Store, 161 Main Street, Willimantic – Preliminary Site Plan Review.

Doug Murray of Hunt Real Estate located in Abington, MA spoke to the proposed plan to construct a new building on a vacant lot (former Uncle Ken site) located at 161 Main Street in Willimantic. He said the property is approximately 2.2 acres in size, and we will be taking the front portion of the property for a new Family Dollar Store. We are proposing a single story 8,320 square foot pre-engineered metal building. He said the design of the building will be a prototype design used by Family Dollar and will include their typical elevations. Family Dollar is planning to build a store on the front portion of the property, and they have asked us to present their prototype building for review. The owner wants to reserve the rear portion for potential future development on the remainder of the site.

Philip Henry of Civil Design Group LLC said the site is comprised of five lots (totaling 2.2 acres). He said the plan is to consolidate the lots and then re-configure the property. We are taking the front portion (1.07 acres) for a Family Dollar Store along Main Street. We are proposing a 8,320 square foot building and 27 parking spaces. It is a pre-engineered metal building. He said there will be one access from Main Street; however we are also proposing access for potential future development in the rear. He identified the location of the refuse area and said the mechanicals are located in the rear of the building. He said the front entrance is facing west toward the parking lot. We have an above ground storm water detention facility and we will be providing landscaping (shrubbery and trees) along Main Street that will wrap around to Elm Street.

Ed Pelletier asked if the property along the back is going to be owned by the Dollar Store or will it be owned by somebody else. Mr. Henry said the current owner would retain ownership, but there will be an access easement through the Family Dollar site so that lot will have access from Main Street. Planner Finger said he felt that the access to the rear lot is not ideal. Chair Stahl said the subdivision plan will have to show how access will be achieved to that lot.

Planner Finger expressed concern with the access to the site especially into Elm Street. He said there might be a problem with vehicles coming out into the travel lane. He also felt there would be a problem regarding delivery truck access. Getting in might be okay, but getting out into the travel lane could be a problem, he added. Code Enforcement Officer Matt Vertefeuille said he did not have a problem with Elm Street; however it is a 1-way street, he added.

A discussion ensued regarding the detention area

Ed Pelletier referred to the detention area and asked what the depth would be. Mr. Henry said the detention area, as designed, is 4 feet deep to the highest point, but the water will never be that high. He then referred to the site grading and drainage plan (sheet 5) and reviewed elevations. He said there would be less than 3 feet of water in a 100 year storm and we will have a 4 foot fence around the perimeter. Mr. Henry said we are going to be locating a trunk line that will go down Ives Street and eventually will cross the street and empty into the Willimantic River. We are going to tie into that and use it as an overflow, he said.

Planner Finger asked if the detention basin could be relocated to the back of the property as that would free up the front piece of the property so it could be used for something else. Mr. Henry said Town Engineer Joseph Gardner did not want us connecting to the drainage system. He wanted us to manage all that storm water up front.

Chair Stahl said the plan doesn't comply with Section 74.3 especially with site layout and building design. She said she is delighted that Family Dollar wants to build a store here. I welcome development on a vacant lot, but it stills needs to meet our regulations. In terms of site layout, the building needs to be oriented to the Main Street side of the lot and there should not be a blank façade against the street. Detention basins should be located throughout the site and should not be in one big pond area. Ed Pelletier questioned the possibility of having underground storm water storage. Mr. Henry said that would be cost prohibitive and Family Dollar has limits regarding the costs. Chair Stahl said underground storage would give you a lot more area to develop.

The discussion continued regarding building design etc. Jean Chaine commented that the building looks like a warehouse. He added that the building faces a street, but it is the wrong street. The building should face Main Street.

Chair Stahl said the Commission requires that national franchises use New England prototypes when designing their buildings. She said we can look at the façade, but it needs to be a very attractive façade on Main Street. Mr. Hunt said this is their prototype. We can look at some other prototypes. Mr. Hunt said Family Dollar requires us to submit their prototype. If it is not acceptable, then Family Dollar will review other options. The Commission was in agreement that Family Dollar consider another prototype for building design.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding possibly reorienting the building on the site. Mr. Henry said they looked at different scenarios and this appeared to be the best option. The Commission suggested different locations as to where to place the building especially as it related to delivery truck traffic. Mr. Henry discussed delivery truck maneuvers. He said deliveries are made during regular business hours, but not during peak hours and are only made once a week. He added that he didn't anticipate any problem with deliveries because the proposed driveway is 36 feet wide, and usually a driveway is 24-30 feet wide.

Mr. Henry agreed that they will review all the Commission's concerns, comments and suggestions and incorporate any changes that might be feasible. He said they will return to the Commission with a corrected plan in one month.

c) Zoning Regulations

The Commission deferred discussion to another meeting.

d) Reports from Zoning Enforcement Officer

CEO Matt Vertefeuille reported on the following:

- 1) We are moving forward with plans to develop the vacant Tin Tsin parcel. The RFP has been approved by the Town Council. He said he is working with town staff.
 - 2) Solar Farm located on Williams Crossing Road in Lebanon, CT.
 - 3) Aaron Daily, UCONN intern has been working with the ZEO. He is reviewing the Town Plan of Conservation and Development and offering comments. Mr. Vertefeuille said he will review his comments with the Commission at a future work session.
 - 4) Update on the No Freeze Shelter. Mr. Vertefeuille explained that when the Commission approved the Special Permit, we talked about having them come in every year and make a report. They recently had a problem with their heating system and carbon monoxide, and the landlord respond to the issue. Mr. Vertefeuille said he checked police records and gave a brief review of emergency type calls made to the shelter. He said up until last week he had no complaints relating to the shelter. When the shelter is closed during the day, guests may congregate at nearby businesses. He said he feels that the shelter has been a huge success.
- Jean Chaine said when the No Freeze Shelter came before the Commission for this location a year ago the concern was that having the shelter there would deter future businesses from establishing there; but it doesn't appear that that has been a problem. On the other hand, if guests are seeking warmth in area businesses such as the laundromat, that could be a problem. Mr. Vertefeuille said he will ask the Director of the No Freeze Shelter to come before the Commission in June to give a report covering the last full year.
- 5) The new Economic Development Director should be starting in the beginning of April, 2015.

As there was no further business the meeting was adjourned. The motion to adjourn was made by Ed Pelletier and was seconded by Jean Chaine. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Lillian Murray, Clerk