

WINDHAM PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

DATE: January 27, 2011

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Windham Town Hall, 979 Main St., Willimantic

A G E N D A

I. Call to Order

II. **Approval of Minutes** - November 18, November 23, December 9, December 16, 2010, and January 13, 2011

III. New Business DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

1. **Public Hearing** and possible action on **Revisions to Subdivision for Willimantic Service District and Proposed B-4 Health Care District, related definitions, and map designation**
2. **Windham Hospital Subdivision Application** take receipt and schedule public hearing for February 24, 2011.
3. **Windham Materials LLC - 167R, 199, & 255 Plains Rd. Windham Center**
Continuation of existing earth excavation permitted under Sec. 75.2.2

IV. Revisions to Windham Zoning Regulations - DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

1. Parking Standards
2. North Windham Retail Area
3. RPO-HC
4. Other commercial areas
5. Time table for proceeding

V. Routine Business - DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

1. Correspondence
2. Miscellaneous

VI. Adjourn

Paula Stahl Chair

Town of Windham

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission
FROM: James Finger, Town Planner
DATE: January 24, 2011
SUBJ: Planner's Report

*Please call 860-465-3041 to let us know
whether or not you are coming to the meeting.*

New Business

Subdivision and Zoning Revisions – In response to the Hospital's desire to subdivide their property, several revisions to our subdivision and zoning regulations are necessary including a new zoning district – **Health Care District B-4**, and the designation of this area on the Willimantic Service District zoning map.

Through a cooperative effort with concerned parties, the Commission has developed these changes, and new zone in the context of the PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

• Page 1-1 of the POCD - "Guiding Philosophy" reads:

"...our vision is to promote economic development through smart growth and forward thinking while meeting the needs of multiple stakeholders and interested parties...."

This philosophy requires community involvement and commitment from both the Town and stakeholders to engage in the processes we outline to help shape Windham's future. The Hospital and other medical professionals are major stakeholders in the Town's economic development plan. A key for growth of the Hospital and other medical professional offices is the need for flexibility for future growth to attract other medical professionals to enhance the Town.

• On page 1-2 of the POCD under "Community Goals", it reads:

"Expand, Diversify and Improve the Town of Windham's Economic and Employment Base

With the closing of the mills, and indeed the closing of the mill-economy as an era, we recognize the need to diversify our job base. While traditional notions of diversification are to be considered, we are also aware that a large portion of that diversification flows from the collective future we identify. Therefore we advocate not only diversification in terms of industries and job types, but diversification in terms of change over time, as we move through different stages in our community's growth."

The creation of a Health Care District is to recognize the growth in demand for medical services that has not existing to this point. The Hospital and other medical professionals require a regulatory process that promotes flexibility to meet changing medical practices.

• Page 1-3 of the POCD - "Community Goals" reads:

“Provide Balance in Growth - Growth will take place across various sectors, geographic regions, income brackets and industries or clusters of business activity. As a town, we need to work together to find a balance across these dimensions that helps diversify our economic base, while tapping opportunities that emerge serendipitously. By indicating our desires in a balanced way, we can more thoughtfully address opportunities that might pull too heavily on our resources in one direction or another. At the same time, we recognize that the future cannot be predicted, and thus investment opportunities might arise in unexpected ways, and we need to have a fluid vision that allows us to aggressively tap potential when it reveals itself.”

This statement captures the essence of the issue that the Hospital and adjacent medical facilities must remain a vital part of the Town’s core, not in the rural areas of town. To retain this flexibility and vitality, the Planning and Zoning Commission finds it necessary to provide creative zoning and subdivision rules that accommodate the growth of this important economic engine.

•Page 1-4 of the POCD - “Priority Areas” supports the proposal:
“Our first and foremost priority is to increase and enhance Business and Economic Development in the community. We recognize that many of the goals outlined above require the engine of economic growth to become sustainable.”

Changes to the Zoning and Subdivision regulations will enhance economic activity by allowing the Hospital and adjacent medical facilities to grow and employ residents in our area while allowing public and private partnerships to finance new office building projects.

• Page 3-1 of the “Business and Economic Development” section of the POCD states:
“Economic Development in the form of retail, office and industrial development is important to Windham. The town should work towards retaining existing businesses, encouraging their expansion, and seeking appropriate new development. The focus should be on businesses that provide:

- Job opportunities at fair wages,
- Goods and services for residents and regional patrons,
- A positive fiscal effect for future years,
- Encourage a strong city center, and
- Development in keeping with Windham’s rural character
- Opportunity for local ownership
- Locally produced goods and services
- Environmental sustainability”

The Hospital and adjacent medical facilities exist as local businesses that pay fairly good wages, and they also provide needed services to residents and regional patrons. The impact of jobs and taxes (from the private partners who develop the office uses) have a positive fiscal impact, and the location of the Hospital in the “West End” supports the downtown area.

• Page 3-2 of the POCD in the “Business and Economic Development” suggest strategies and goals that are important in this transition:

“Economic Development

- Use community’s assets to attract new businesses
- Seek businesses that create jobs with good wages
- Partner with ECSU and UConn for research and technology centers
- Promote the available technology of Windham’s proximity to high-speed fiber-optic internet connections
- Seek businesses that have long-term positive fiscal impact;
- Seek economic development that will be an asset to the town for generations
- Become ‘business friendly’ by proactively providing regulatory information and assisting businesses through the development process”

All of these citations from the Town Plan of Conservation and Development support the efforts to revise the regulatory framework to embrace the proposed growth at the Hospital and adjacent medical and professional offices.

With these goals and recommendation identified in the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development, if the Commission is favorably inclined to approve these changes as follows:

..... that the Windham Planning & Zoning Commission approve the revisions to the Windham Subdivision Regulations, Windham Zoning Regulations and Windham Zoning District Map as presented at the January 27th Public Hearing as they are consistent with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

Windham Materials LLC - 167R, 199, & 255 Plains Rd. Windham Center –

This is an update on the continuation of the existing earth excavation permitted under Sec. 75.2.2.