

THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION, PLAN OF
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL MEETING, HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2017, AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 210, TOWN HALL,
84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410

Present

Sean Strollo, Gil Linder, John Kardaras, Louis B. Todisco

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

Absent: Earl J. Kurtz, S. Woody Dawson, Vincent Lentini, Edward Gaudio,
John Fischer, David Veleber, Jeff Natale, Jim Jinks

- I. CALL TO ORDER
Vice Chairman Strollo called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.
- II. ROLL CALL
Mr. Voelker called the roll.
- III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
Following roll call, a quorum was not reached
- IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

Due to lack of quorum, Mr. Voelker held a discussion on the following:

- a. Draft Amendment for New Section 36, Design District Regulations
Section 36.1 – Statement of Intent

Mr. Voelker informed the members that Mr. Meyers was at the last meeting to discuss with the group the pre-application review process and an approach design-as-you-go-method with an informal meeting.

Section 36.2 Procedure for Establishing the District: A Design District may be created through the following process:

- A. Applicants shall first develop a Master Plan with Special Regulations and obtain a preliminary review by town staff including Planning, Engineering, Police and Fire Departments and any other relevant agencies.

Comment: This is similar to what we do right now in the STD and similar to what we did in the North End.

- B. Applicants shall then submit the Master Plan and draft Special Regulations to the Plan and Zoning Commission for a non-binding review authorized under Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-159b as may be amended. The Master Plan should include a narrative describing how this plan satisfies goals set forth within these regulations and the 2016 Cheshire Plan of Conservation and Development. No fee is required for preliminary reviews.

Comment: We may have to change “shall” to “may”, we will check with the Town Attorney. We are bound by the statutes.

Basically this allows feedback from the commission if it has concerns, on conceptual designs, etc.

- C. Design Districts may then be established by approval of the Master Plan and Special Regulation as a zone map change application in accordance with Article VII, Section 70 of the Cheshire Zoning Regulations.

Comment: Public hearing basically like we did in the North End, it is a zone change.

- D. Changes to the Master Plan would be subject to the discretion of the Commission as to whether they would be significant and require a public hearing.

Comment: Basically this means that if later we want to make changes, the Commission decides how to handle that.

- E. All applicants are encouraged to meet with neighbors before coming to the Commission for the preliminary review to inform and to listen to their concerns as part of the design process. The preliminary materials should include a written “neighborhood outreach” narrative describing these meeting and how the design was influenced as a result of these meetings.

Comment: The Commission cannot require neighborhood meetings but it would be foolish not to.

Section 36.3 Permitted Used Within The Design District:

Design District projects shall consist of a mixed use development and/or mixed use building as defined within Section 23 regulations.

Comment: *We came up with a definition for that which is on the last page:*

“Mixed Use Development: A single building containing more than one type of land use, or a single development of more than one building and land use, where the different types of land uses are in close proximity, planned as a unified complementary whole, and functionally integrated and structurally coordinated with regard to the use of shared vehicular and pedestrian access and parking areas”

36.3 (continued) Uses may include retail, service, banks, medical and/or professional offices, active or passive recreational, health and exercises facilities, hair and beauty salons, restaurants and multi-family residential. Drive-thru facilities are not permitted.

Comment: *We are trying to encourage a pedestrian oriented functioning dynamic in these development areas. The drive-thru is one that uses a lot of land and it is too dominant a type of use to put into these areas. It destroys the intimacy that we are trying to get.*

- A. Residential density may be up to 10 units per acre of gross land area. (This is consistent with the proposed density of Infill Development permitted within certain portions of the Residential 20A (R20A) areas).
- B. Not less than 10% of the total number of dwelling units shall qualify as affordable and shall be conveyed subject to an Affordable Housing Restrictive Covenant as set forth in Section 44.5 of these regulation which shall require that for at least 30 years from the initial sale or rental of the subject dwelling shall be “assisted housing” as defined in Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Comment: *Because this is important to the Plan of Conservation and Development, we said we would consider it here.*

New Items put in are:

Section 5. **Minimum Design Standards:** All projects proposed under these regulations shall meet the following minimum standards:

- A. Minimum lot size shall be ten acres.
- B. Smaller contiguous parcels which share a common boundary may be added to the original ten acre parcel subject to review by the Commission as an amendment to the Master Plan in accordance with Section 36.2 of these regulations.
- C. Housing types shall vary.

Comment: *We may expand on that some more.*

- D. All lighting shall be shielded in accordance with Section 33.6 of the regulations.
- E. Applicants are encouraged to develop a unified sign plan to promote harmonious signage for present and future tenants by specifying consistent placement, size, color, lettering style, and/or materials for the entire project.

Comment: *We can only regulate signs in height, size and location; according to the State Statutes. We are encouraging them to do pre-application meetings. Best example of unified sign planning is the Watch Factory. The older signage when it was originally before it was converted. They had a unified sign plan. This would tell the tenants what to expect.*

- F. The commercial and/or other non-residential portions of mixed use building shall be located primarily at street level.

Comment: *In a truly mixed use we should have residential over the top and commercial on the front. This would have a better street rhythm.*

S. Strollo asked if there is a height restriction. Mr. Voelker replied that would be up to the Commission.

- G. The main entrance of building must face the public or private street upon which they front and be clearly articulated through the use of architectural detailing.

Comment: *Front door is an important signature element, visual element, and designer element.*

- H. Doorways, window and other openings in the façade should be proportioned to reflect pedestrian scale and movement and to encourage interest at street level.

Comment: *This is typical in an urban design.*

- I. Loading areas and refuse receptacles shall be located to the rear of buildings.
- J. Parking areas shall not be the dominant feature along existing and proposed streets and should be located to the rear of principal buildings.

Comment: We are trying to avoid having all parking in the front and the building is set back off the street.

Mr. Karderas mentioned the setup in downtown Old Saybrook. Mr. Voelker said that the Commission will be looking at town and examples.

There may be places where it is more appropriate.

K. Blank walls or roof planes should be avoided.

Draft Amendment to Section 23 (Definitions):

Context Sensitive Design: Design which emphasizes the physical characteristics of a development that shows consideration and compatibility within the neighborhoods within which the project is to be set including consideration of the following:

1. Physical elements shall include the relationships between the buildings and proposed and existing streets, pedestrians and vehicles, and public and private spaces.
2. Transitional areas between existing neighborhoods and the proposed project area including yard, existing or proposed buffer areas, topographic changes, and pedestrian and street linkages.

Comment: The point is that when it is done, you have some residential area around it and behind it, some wetlands; you want to encourage linkage, inviting people to come in.

3. Site design and building forms which create a place that established a continuous neighborhood.
4. Includes architectural characteristics that fit and enhance the character of the local neighborhood within which they are set.

Comment: Context sensitive design - trying to give the design professionals specific guidance when they are trying to put something together

Discussion continued among the group regarding ways to link to other properties. Mr. Voelker advised that would be part of the Master Plan Review; those concerns would be expressed then and during the pre-application process.

Mixed Use Development: A single building containing more than one type of land use, or a single development of more than one building and land use, where the different types of land uses are in close proximity, planned as a unified complementary whole, and

functionally integrated and structurally coordinated with regard to the use of shared vehicular and pedestrian access and parking areas.

Mr. Voelker asked the group to review the Draft Amendment and advise him of any changes they would like to make. He encouraged the Commission's feedback.

Discussion ended at 8:15 p.m.

Attest:

Angela Izzo