

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2014, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Earl Kurtz, Chairman; Sean Strollo, Vice Chairman; Edward Gaudio, Gil Linder, Vincent Lentini, John Kardaras, Louis Todisco.

Absent: S. Woody Dawson and Lelah Campo

Alternates: Diane Visconti; Absent: Jon Fischer and Leslie Marinaro

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kurtz called the public hearing to order at 7:31 p.m.

Mr. Kurtz read the fire safety announcement.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Milton (clerk) called the roll.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Following roll call a quorum was determined to be present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

V. BUSINESS

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| <p>1. Zone Text Change Amendment
<u>Town of Cheshire</u>
To amend Section 23, Definitions
Add: Recreation Active and Recreation,
Passive
To amend Section 30 Schedule A, Permitted
Uses, Item 29A
To amend and add to Section 32, Schedule B,
Item 7
NO ACTION TAKEN; POSTPONED TO 5/12/14</p> | <p>PH 2/24/14
MAD 3/10/13
PH 3/24/14
PH 4/14/14
PH 4/28/14</p> |
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Mr. Voelker stated that there is nothing further on the Town of Cheshire application. The PZC is waiting for the Public Building Commission to finalize its intentions and plans for the pool enclosure.

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| <p>2. Special Permit Application
<u>George Noewatne, Director of Public Works</u>
42 Jarvis Street
Proposed Parking Lot</p> | <p>PH 4/28/14</p> |
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Tom Sheil, Landscape Architect, Milone and MacBroom, displayed the plans and improvements for the Linear Trail, which are designed by Milone and MacBroom. He stated it took over one year to complete the Canal design for this piece of property, and community input was received for the plan.

The goal of this public hearing is to plan for 77 parking spaces associated with the trail on the east side of the Canal. This property is owned by the Dept. of Corrections (DOC), and there is a statute which allows the State to transfer 5 acres to Cheshire for the purpose of use for the Linear Trail, particularly parking for those who will use the Trail. The State came up with a plan which makes sense for the parking; the application received IWW approval; and is now before the PZC for consideration of the parking.

This section of the Trail is about 8,100 feet, 1 ¾ miles long; there is parking at Cornwall Avenue; from Cornwall to West Main there are no plans for parking; and businesses in the West Main Street area will not have defined parking for use of the Trail. Mr. Sheil said the proposal before the Commission is a real opportunity to establish a parking lot for the Trail north of Jarvis Street. The location presented is the logical site for the parking lot. The proposed lot will be rectangular in shape; will be in close proximity to the Trail; the site has been visited with neighbors and discussed with neighbors; and what is proposed is sensitive to neighbors. There will be buffering and screening for the neighbors to reduce visibility of the lot. A timber bridge will be constructed across the Canal; there will be a concrete plaza, 30'x40' with benches, trash receptacles, 10 foot wide island, lighting with 5 LED light posts, 14' high, shoebox lights. There is a drainage system which takes runoff from the parking lot that sheds to the east away from the Canal, and meets the 100 year storm requirements. The project has received IWW approval.

Mr. Sheil said the PZC can comment on the lighting and underground wiring, and noted the lights shown on the plans are overhead lights. There is the entrance to the parking lot off Jarvis Street with signs for parking and the trail ahead. The lot has a 22 foot wide gate off Jarvis Street because the Town might want to lock up the area after hours. The Fire Chief is not in favor of this gate, but this gate can be left open or closed for safety patrols. The Trail time limit opening is from dawn to dusk. The parking lot is set back from Jarvis Street, and during the summer will not be visible.

According to Mr. Voelker, the Police Department has no comments about the gate, but the Fire Chief is not in favor of having the gate. Regarding the mileage distance, he said it is about 1.8 miles Cornwall to Jarvis, and another 2.4 miles to the Town line. The parking lot site is in the middle. Mr. Voelker said the State owns the next section of the Trail north to Southington. The subject area is part of Cheshire's project.

Mr. Sheil commented on the three phases – Cornwall to West Main, 3,500 feet, will take longer to complete; West Main to Jarvis is scheduled for construction next Spring or this Fall; Jarvis to Southington Town Line will be one year after the Cheshire section is completed. The State will be holding public information meetings on the Trail project.

The issue of areas around the parking lot, such as homes and woods, was raised by Mr. Todisco.

In response, Mr. Sheil noted that the site all around the parking lot is undeveloped; it is DOC/prison land under their control; and the property off Peck Lane backs up into DEEP property. The homes have some access off Jarvis and Peck; the Trail property is owned by DEEP; and east of the DEEP property is the 5 acre piece which is undeveloped. There have been meetings with property owners to the west, and the closest property line to the edge of the parking area is 175 feet. Property to the north is undeveloped; property to the east is undeveloped until you get to the prison; and the property to the south is undeveloped and owned by DEEP.

Regarding the 14 foot high lights, Mr. Todisco asked if they are an issue with abutting neighbors, and if they will be an issue.

These are full cutoff lights without glare off the parking lot, and Mr. Sheil said the Town will control these lights. He does not believe the lights will be an issue.

Ms. Visconti asked how the number of parking spaces was determined, and if there are sidewalks from the neighborhood which are within walking distance to trail, and if there can be fewer spaces.

The Commission was told by Mr. Sheil that the goal was to make as many spaces as possible, and the lot was reconfigured due to environmental impacts and concerns. There are now 77 spaces; there are wetlands to the west and to Jarvis Street; and to the east are archeological areas. These limit the parking area and the lot cannot be expanded in the future.

With the parking lot closing at dusk, Mr. Lentini asked why lights are needed, and if the Cornwall parking lot is lit.

Mr. Sheil explained the reasoning for the parking lights, which will give late walkers lighting to get safely to their cars. There is some lighting going up to the parking lot, and there are street lights on Jarvis Street. The Cornwall Avenue lot is not lit.

The necessity for the gate and closing the gate on a late walker was raised by Mr. Gaudio, who said he sees no reason for a gate.

With regard to the sidewalks, Mr. Sheil noted this is a Town issue and cannot be tied to this project. He said sidewalks are a good idea, but this is a planning project for the Town.

Mr. Lentini considers sidewalks a necessity for people using the Trail.

In that regard, Mr. Sheil noted there is a walk way and there is one parking lot and plaza area which connects to the Trail itself.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Michael Healy, Sloper Lane, pointed out his house and those of his neighbors on the plans. He said Sloper Lane is between Peck Lane and the proposed parking lot. His primary concern is noise and lights, and he asked about buffering so the lot is not seen by neighbors.

According to Mr. Sheil the issue of buffering has been discussed with the neighbors who abut the area, and a buffering/planting plan was put together. A pallet of plantings will screen neighbors adjacent to this section of the Trail, but there is no sound barrier. The barriers are a visual effort. Lights associated with the parking lot will be full cutoff lights with no bother to the neighbors. Mr. Sheil suggested that neighbors attend the public information meetings for the State piece which ties into the subject parking area. He pointed out the landscape buffers on the plans.

Jeanne Priest, Peck Lane, expressed concerns about traffic with another 75 cars coming into this area, the impact on the 4-way stop sign, and cars speeding in this area. She noted there are some shrubs which block the stop sign from visibility of drivers.

The distance from the parking lot to Peck lane is 300 feet, and Mr. Sheil said this is a short distance for acceleration and speeding. The parking lot will not create problem for the intersection, but there will be some additional traffic due to use of the Trail. Mr. Sheil pointed out the importance of having the parking lot for the Trail users. Other areas were looked at, but they did happen because of the fire school in this section of Town. The real opportunity was the DOC property which will be the only parking for users of the Trail, Cornwall to the Town line.

John Eble, Jarvis Street, noted that the DOC rifle range is in this area, 300 prison guards go in and out each day, and Jarvis and Peck are like highways. He asked if this was all taken into consideration, and if not, it should be kept in mind.

Mr. Voelker stated the IWW approved this application; there are no Town department comments; and he spoke with Fire Chief Casner about the gate. If the Commission approves the application, the gate will be eliminated from the plans, and lighting/wiring will be underground.

It was clarified by Mr. Sheil that there will be three (3) lights in the parking lot, and two (2) going out; all are 14 foot high LED lights which is the standard for the Town.

Mr. Strollo commented on the lights going out being lower than 14 feet to address the concerns of abutting neighbors.

Mr. Sheil stated that lower sized lights could be looked at for the entry area.

Mr. Todisco asked if Sloper Lane is the closest street to the project.

Mr. Sheil replied that Jarvis Street is closest to the property. The Sloper property line will be 300 feet from the parking lot. He reiterated that the Town has the right to control the lights, and they will be set on a timer, and this is standard technology.

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Lentini; seconded by Mr. Kardaras.

MOVED to adjourn the public hearing at 8:13 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk