

EXCERPT OF TOWN COUNCIL JULY 27, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

b. Discussion and possible action concerning proposed new Village District Zones.

Mr. Johnson explained that this is a change to the building zone regulations, which the Council can amend for a village district. He believes that the first step would be to refer a proposed amendment to the TPZ, who would have 35 days to get back to the Council with a report and recommendation. After that, a proposed amendment/regulation would be subject to Council public hearing and action.

Mr. Cavanaugh expressed that he believed that the Council could do this with a simple referral to the TPZ, which he thinks has been satisfied. Mr. Johnson stated that a regulation has not been drafted. Statute 8-2J describes what a village district is. He asked, what is the Council's specific amendment to the building zone regulations? Chairman Gullotta agreed with Mr. Cavanaugh. The TPZ considered it, but they decided to send it back to them. He asked the Town Manager to develop a regulation with the Town Attorney.

Mr. Osgood clarified that the Council asked the TPZ for a comment on the concept, and they agreed to form a joint group with the Council to discuss this matter and take it to public hearing. Changing building zone ordinances is a time-consuming process, which needs to be done deliberately. He assumes that it would take at least 9-10 months. Ms. Tanski agreed, stating that they need to take a careful approach to all questions around planning and development. A joint TPZ/Council commission should be the first step. They should also proceed with caution here. Attorney Branse looked upon the establishment of a village district, as opposed to a historic district, as a positive because it would not require a public hearing and public commission. Ms. Tanski views that as a negative. She is also not convinced that a village district applies to the area that they are talking about. Design guidelines would be more appropriate there.

Dr. Beckett noted that the state statute is quite general, so they need to do their due diligence. At this point, they do not know the specifics for Glastonbury. Mr. Niland also does not want to ram through anything without public comments and hearings. He is interested in having an ordinance in front of him before going to a public hearing. Mr. McChesney is also uncomfortable because they do not have an ordinance. He understands the desire to move forward, but from his perspective as an attorney, what they choose to do needs to hold up.

Mr. Niland is in favor of village districts because they are important to protect the charm and character of a New England downtown. People constantly talk about how this town is changing, and their residents want them to do something about it soon. Mr. Osgood asked for an update on hiring someone to do the design standards. Mr. Johnson stated that it is in process. They will hold interviews in early-to-mid-September. The Council could appoint a designee to the selection committee.

Ms. Carroll wholeheartedly supports the village districts concept. She also thinks that it is important to follow the protocols. Village district and design guidelines are two separate processes. She asked if the ordinance will be drafted by the TPZ or to the Town Attorney. Mr. Johnson explained that they can draft a proposed amendment to the building zone regulations to establish a village district. Until that time, there isn't anything for the TPZ to consider or for the Council to hold a public hearing on. A regulation should be drafted and forwarded to the TPZ; then, the Council would schedule a public hearing, with notice to the affected property owners.

Motion by: Ms. Carroll

Seconded by: Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby requests that the Town Manager, in conjunction with the Town Attorney, develops a proposed amendment to the building zone regulations to establish a village district along Main Street between the intersection with Naubuc Avenue and New London Turnpike and Rankin Road; from Salmon Brook south to Rankin Road; from Main Street east to Route 2; and from Rankin Road to School Street.

Disc: Ms. Tanski will vote against this motion. She believes that the best way to go about this is to take a more extensive review of their regulations. At best, she sees this action as a stopgap measure which does not take a totality review of their existing regulations. At worst, she sees it as an impediment to having a unified sense of development of the Town Center going forward. Mr. Cavanaugh stated that that is why he is proposing this: to freeze everything in time. He listed a few examples of buildings which could be preserved with the creation of a village district. He does not want to redesign what they have but to preserve what they have. Now is the time to act.

Ms. LaChance echoed Mr. Cavanaugh, stating that this allows them to take a pause to have a review. They may potentially lose some historic buildings in town while going through the

review process. Mr. McChesney stated that if they have issues with the scope of the regulations, they can always change it when they see the regulations before them. He disputes the statement that a village district is not applicable here, arguing that the area has distinctive character, landscape, and historic value.

Call to Question by: Dr. Beckett

Seconded by: Ms. Carroll

Result: Passed {6-3-0}, with Mr. Osgood, Mr. Cavanaugh, and Ms. Tanski voting against.

Ms. Carroll read the motion again.

Result: Motion passed {7-2-0} with Mr. Osgood and Ms. Tanski voting against.