

**THE GLASTONBURY TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2021**

The Glastonbury Town Plan and Zoning Commission with Jonathan E. Mullen, AICP, Planner and Rebecca Augur, AICP, Director of Planning and Land Use Services, in attendance held a Regular Meeting at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom video conferencing. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present

Mr. Robert Zanlungo, Jr., Chairman
Mr. Michael Botelho, Secretary
Mr. Raymond Hassett
Mr. Keith Shaw
Mr. Christopher Griffin
Ms. Laura Cahill, Alternate {assigned as a voting member}
Ms. Alice Sexton, Alternate {arrived at 7:25 P.M.}

Commission Members Absent

Ms. Sharon Purtill, Vice Chairman
Vacancy

Chairman Zanlungo called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. He seated Commissioner Cahill in Commissioner Purtill's absence.

REGULAR MEETING

- 1. Informal session for the purpose of hearing from citizens on Regular Meeting agenda or non-agenda** *None*
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes of the August 10, 2021 Regular Meeting**

Motion by: Commissioner Shaw

Seconded by: Commissioner Griffin

Result: Minutes were accepted {5-1-0} with one abstention from Secretary Botelho since he was not present at the meeting.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a. Scheduling of Public Hearings for the Regular Meeting of October 5, 2021: **to be determined**
- b. Final Release of Maintenance Bond — Wendell's Woods Subdivision

- c. Recommendation to the Town Council that Wendell Lane from Station 0+00 to Station 11+40 to be accepted as Town Road, within the Wendell's Woods Subdivision

Motion by: Commissioner Shaw

Seconded by: Commissioner Cahill

Result: Consent calendar was approved unanimously {6-0-0}.

4. Referral from Zoning Board of Appeals — Request of Corrine Crocker-Luby for a use variance from Section 14.18.2 of the Glastonbury Building-Zone Regulations to allow special event venues at 83 & 97 Naubuc Avenue

Mr. Mullen explained that the applicant is looking to expand her business, the Tiffany Juliet House, which is an wedding event space. The Commission is asked to make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) tonight based on the appropriateness of the use for the area. Should the application be forwarded, and the variance be granted by the ZBA, the applicant will have to return to the Commission to seek a Special Permit with Design Review for both properties. Prior to 2015, both properties were in the Planned Industrial Zone. Ms. Augur added that the applicant sent in several letters of support, but since this is not a public hearing, they will be available to the ZBA for their deliberation. Commissioner Cahill asked if this is the first use variance that has been granted in this district. Mr. Mullen explained that the Town Center Mixed Use Zone is only about six years old, and he does not believe that there have been other use variances issued in the district, but he will double check and report back.

Secretary Botelho asked about the current use of the property. Ms. Luby stated that it is currently residential use. When she purchased 83 Naubuc Avenue, it was mixed use. The small ranch is completely residential. Secretary Botelho asked if there is a maximum number of people who can attend her events. Ms. Luby stated that weddings could go up to 150 people, but with COVID-19, it has gone down to 100 or fewer. Mr. Shaw clarified that the Commission is simply asked to make a recommendation to allow this as a permitted use in an otherwise mixed-use area with other businesses in the vicinity. He asked about the parking. Ms. Luby stated that she is required to have one parking space for every three people. She has a combined parking agreement with herself, since she is the owner of all three properties: 33 spaces at 83 Naubuc Avenue, 31 spaces at 97 Naubuc Avenue, and 17 spaces at the Tiffany Juliet House.

Mr. Hassett asked if there is a general definition of mixed use. Ms. Augur explained that there is no specific definition within the regulations. Ms. Cahill encouraged the applicant to do the following before returning from the ZBA meeting: to develop fully fledged-out parking plans and be cognizant of the parking issues.

Motion by: Secretary Botelho

Seconded by: Commissioner Hassett

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Plan and Zoning Commission provides a favorable referral to the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding the request of Corrine Crocker-Luby for a variance from Section 14.18.2 permitted uses in the Town Center Mixed Use Zone to allow a special events venue at 83 Naubuc Avenue.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {6-0-0}.

Motion by: Secretary Botelho

Seconded by: Commissioner Hassett

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Plan and Zoning Commission provides a favorable referral to the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding the request of Corrine Crocker-Luby for a variance from Section 14.18.2 permitted uses in the Town Center Mixed Use Zone to allow a special events venue at 97 Naubuc Avenue.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {6-0-0}.

5. Discussion of Village District Regulations referral

Commissioner Sexton joined the meeting.

Ms. Augur reviewed the draft of the Town Council's village district regulations. She anticipates placing this on the agenda for the Commission's October 5 meeting because their recommendation to the Council is due by October 19. She explained that village districts require either a consultant or a committee which must include professionals. The consultant would provide reports of applications to the TPZ, which become part of the public hearing and what the Commission bases their decisions on. This proposal by the Council calls for a committee.

Ms. Augur reviewed the draft map amendment from the Council for the Town Center Village District Overlay Zone (TCVD). The proposal will run from Naubuc Avenue, along Main Street, down to School Street; on Hebron Avenue, from Main Street to Route 2; and on New London Turnpike, from Salmon Brook to Rankin Road. It includes Welles Street and the Fox Run Mall, and it will overlap with the Historic District on three parcels.

Secretary Botelho finds the area incredibly large. He asked if other village districts are of this size. Ms. Augur explained that there are a few village districts throughout the state which are a little larger with subsections. She also noted that the TCVD would already be drawn on the map, so it would not be petitioned. Applicability and objectives are derived mainly from the state statutes but could potentially be modified under the guidelines that they will adopt. Similarly, in the absence of having specific guidelines, the general requirements in the draft are also drawn from state statutes. Everything is concentrated on how things appear from the public realm. The requirements discourage but cannot prevent demolition or removal of existing structures.

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) shall develop Village District Design Guidelines for review by the Commission and adoption by the Council. The committee would consist of 7 members, appointed by the Council, which shall consist of at least two architects, one landscape architect, and one professional planner/urban designer. She noted that the Council discussed whether the Community Beautification Committee could disband and fold some members into an expanded ADRC. Procedurally, the ADRC would review applications and have 35 days to issue a report to the TPZ. They may also meet informally with the applicant prior to filing. Should the TPZ deny an application, they must state their reasons for doing so in the record. The Commission may also seek recommendations from others. Commissioner Shaw is

concerned that this attempts to create a utopian Disney-like downtown, which is not close to reality, and fears that it will create a burden to existing businesses.

Ms. Augur described the flow of the current typical review process. She encouraged the Commission to provide a nuanced recommendation to the Council, rather than just a positive or negative one. She suggested they consider commenting on the following: the map of the potential TCVD overlay area, whether the design guidelines should be regulatory or advisory, the procedural implications of where this fits into the review process, and community and property owner input, which there has been very little of thus far.

Chairman Zanolungo asked if there would be a public hearing on this before adopting anything. Ms. Augur stated that the Council would hold a public hearing beforehand, but this commission does not have enough time to hold one themselves. Commissioner Cahill feels uncomfortable with the limited timeframe. Ms. Augur noted that the Commission's opportunity to make a statement is through a referral, but commissioners may also make comments at the Council's public hearing. Commissioner Sexton asked to address the difference between regulatory and advisory. Ms. Augur stated that it comes down to design guidelines. The distinction between regulatory or advisory gets caught up in how they are procedurally handling this. Secretary Botelho believes that the ADRC would make the Plans Review Subcommittee redundant.

Commissioner Cahill has concerns about the committee being all-volunteer, unpaid members. Commissioner Griffin asked why there is a rush on this. Ms. Augur stated that she does not know because this is primarily coming from the Council. Commissioner Griffin does not believe that they can make the finding of this large area being unique or distinct. Ms. Augur will send the photo survey to the Commission to help them make a comment or recommendation. Commissioner Sexton agreed that there is no cogent design in this district, which troubles her. Commissioner Cahill is also concerned about the size of the district. Rather than rushing through with a village district, she suggested they conduct business through an ADRC. She does not feel comfortable making a recommendation at this time.

Secretary Botelho stated that the major item he sees here is supplanting the Plans Review and Beautification process(es) with the ADRC. He also finds that it would be difficult to maintain a uniform character or nature in this large area, but he is open to learning more information. All they are asked to do is to make a recommendation for or against this approach, which he believes they can do by October 19. Commissioner Hassett cautioned that there are unknown regulations coming down the pipeline, which they need to be mindful of. He is even more concerned that the people in the area have not been engaged. He would like adequate notice to go out to the community so that they can get feedback. Ms. Augur responded that the Town would go through the proper process of notifying the public, but the Council would like to do that at the public hearing stage.

Commissioner Shaw would like to see pictures of each building and street so that they could discuss it. The public has the right to that information, as well. He would also like to know how the zone was designed because it seems very arbitrary to him. He would also like input from every property owner who may be affected by this before the public hearing is held. He is not comfortable pushing through this process without sufficient information or time. Commissioner

Sexton strongly believes that they should give notice to residents in the district before making a recommendation. All but one of the commissioners are lawyers, and she is uncomfortable with lawyers conducting the business of architects. Therefore, she is comfortable with the idea of the ADRC.

Commissioner Hassett asked if they could encourage the public to attend their next meeting to give feedback during the informal session. Ms. Augur stated that the new Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce has reached out about that. Chairman Zanolungo asked to draft a notice to send out to their members. Ms. Augur agreed to do so. Commissioner Sexton stated that engaging the Chamber would involve only businesses. She asked if there is a way to reach out to property owners, as well. Ms. Augur stated that they could identify property owners and alert them that they are welcoming public comment, but they do not have sufficient time to set up a public hearing. Commissioner Cahill voiced her support for slowing down this process and sending out a letter to every business and resident in the district. She would like to see an hour reserved for public comment at their next meeting.

Commissioner Shaw stated that the Council is giving them the minimum amount of time by law to consider this, which is something for the Commission to think about. Commissioner Hassett believe that if they ask, the Council may give the Commission more time. Secretary Botelho asked who prepared this draft. Ms. Augur explained that it was the Town Manager, and the Town Attorney reviewed it. Commissioner Cahill would like to request more time from the Council, based on the concerns they have enumerated tonight. Ms. Augur replied, once the Council has referred it, the Commission has 35 days to respond. If they do not receive a comment or recommendation within that time frame, the Council may proceed as they wish. Secretary Botelho would like one more meeting to get input from the public and further review. Commissioner Hassett agreed that it might be premature at this stage, but he suggested that Ms. Augur notify the Council that the Commission may request more time after their next meeting. Commissioner Shaw concurred. Commissioner Cahill welcomes working with the Council, but she cautioned that this may require several public hearings.

6. Chairman's Report *None*

7. Report from Community Development Staff

Ms. Augur stated that the Town has received a few proposals on developing design guidelines, and they seek a member to serve on the selection committee. The commitment would be on the morning of October 13 to conduct three interviews. Commissioner Cahill volunteered.

Commissioner Hassett commended Mr. Scott Miller, who recently resigned from the commission, for his service. Chairman Zanolungo appreciated working with Mr. Miller, and he hopes that he can return in the future once his schedule frees up.

Motion by: Commissioner Hassett

Seconded by: Commissioner Shaw

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Town Plan and Zoning Commission adjourns their regular meeting of September 21, 2021 at 8:46 P.M.

Result: Motion was passed unanimously {6-0-0}.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk