

Planning and Zoning Commission

December 7th, 2021 – 7:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Note: This meeting was held online

A. Call to Order

W. Parsell called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm

B. Members Present

Walter Parsell

Doug Roberts

John Tehan

Rebecka Sinosky

Laurie Semperebon for Joe Hall

Andy Marco

Joe Hall (Joined 7:41 pm)

C. Applications to be Received

None

D. Public Hearing

None

E. New Business

a. Bond Policy Discussion

L. Semperebon stated that she has been the treasurer for the town for the past year and a half and that she deals with the bonds. She explained that traditionally cash bonds are requested, and generally are \$1000 to \$2000

M. D'Amato confirmed that cash bonds are generally small amounts and that they try to base them of the size of the property/ cost of the work.

L. Semperebon went on to explain the town has excepted larger "bond insurance" for larger properties and projects such as Loves Travel Stop. She further explained that a smaller residential property residential property recently used an insurance bond, but she does not think this should be allowed for smaller properties and we should create a policy to put in place to require cash bonds for smaller properties.

W. Parsell asked M. D'Amato what other towns are doing.

M. D'Amato said that the statutes were clear in saying that it was up to the commission, but agreed that putting a policy in place would be appropriate.

W. Parsell asked what the bond amount is set at now for the town.

M. D'Amato said that currently there is no policy in place, so the office bases the cost of the bond on the cost of the project, for example implementing a lawn on a property. He said this is because there is no policy in place.

L. Semprebon stated that over the past ten years cash bonds have typically been asked for, for smaller properties until recently when someone submitted an insurance policy.

W. Parsell asked who let it through.

M. D'Amato stated that the office just makes sure that the amount is correct but he doesn't have a policy in place to deny certain types of bonds, therefore a policy would be a good idea.

W. Parsell asked if M. D'Amato knows of a town with a good bond policy.

M. D'Amato stated that he could look into it and pull together a clear concise policy.

W. Parsell said he just doesn't want to make it too difficult for homeowners and wants to keep the process reasonable and fair.

L. Semprebon said that the finance office feels strongly that cash bonds should be required for smaller properties.

J. Tehan asked if there was data for average bond cost.

M. D'Amato said there's not data but typically what we see is bonds for planting grass lawns. Typically, nothing more than 1000-2000 dollars.

L. Semprebon agreed that she's never seen a bond over that price.

J. Tehan said that we should keep the policy simple, and make it so smaller properties have to use cash bonds and larger properties have flexibility for different kinds of bonds.

M. D'Amato said that he would put together a policy with these thoughts in mind.

b. Affordable Housing Plan Survey

M. D'Amato introduced the survey and shared it with the commission and went through it.

B. Shabot asked if M. D'Amato planned on sharing this on the town's Facebook page. M. D'Amato said that he would ask the first selectwoman, but he would like to put it anywhere they can get it out to residents and increase interaction. He went on to explain that this survey is meant to gauge residents' ideas on affordable housing, the process, and their willingness to incorporate the plan.

A. Marco asked if the questions can be changed. M. D'Amato replied that yes, they can be changed. A. Marco went on to question the wording of question five on the survey, and pointed out that

it might be confusing. M. D'Amato agreed. The commission discussed the question and how it should be worded.

D. Roberts asked M. D'Amato what he expected to gain from the answer. M. D'Amato said that he wants to gauge the town to see what residents consider affordable.

R. Sinosky asked what means of getting this out to the public will be utilized. M. D'Amato mentioned that it would be an online survey distributed through the schools, library, Facebook. He said that paper copies would be provided for the senior center.

B. Shabot suggested putting it in the newspaper.

M. D'Amato asked if there were any more changes, and if after the changes made in the meeting if the commission was comfortable putting it out.

The commission agreed that they were happy advertising it but wanted to focus on getting engagement.

J. Tehan asked if it was limited to residents. M. D'Amato said no because there might be nonresidents like UCONN students or FedEx employees, etc.

c. Appointment of Chris Roberts as Assistant Land Use Agent

M. D'Amato said that state statutes require the commission to appoint employees to carry out functions of the land use office including enforcement of the regulations.

W. Parsell Motioned to appoint Chris Roberts as the assistant land use agent. J. Tehan seconded.
All in Favor. Motion Carried.

d. Approval of 2022 Meeting Schedule

J. Tehan asked if the meetings would continue on zoom. M. D'Amato said that according to statute virtual meetings are not allowed after April.

B. Shabot moved to approve the 2022 meeting schedule. J. Tehan seconded.

All in Favor. Motion Carries.

F. Unfinished Business

None

G. Approval of Minutes

a. November 16, 2021

W. Parsell motioned to approve the minutes. J. Tehan seconded. **All in favor except L. Semprebon, and J. Hall. Motion Carries**

H. Correspondence

a. Coventry Regulation Amendment Notification

M. D'Amato explained that the town of Coventry is changing regulations regarding their dimensional requirements, and it doesn't have to be acted on unless there are concerns.

I. Public Comment:

The Commission will hear brief comments at this time from anyone wishing to speak. No business can be conducted here nor can any comments be made about any items on the agenda

None

J. Staff Report/Discussion

M. D'Amato gave the commission a brief update on Loves. He explained that the fuel canopy is up, and they are working on the drainage system. He reported that there have been no issues so far.

A. Marco asked who the clerk of the works is. M. D'Amato replied that Loves has Fuss and O'Neil on site, and the town has CHA onsite. M. D'Amato went on to explain the clerk of the works and his experience with them so far. He gave examples of how they work and the quality of work they uphold.

W. Parsell asked for an update on the complaint for the property on River Road. M D'Amato gave an update and said he could give the commission the complaint to read.

K. Adjournment

W. Parsell Adjourned the meeting at 8:23 pm.