

**Town of Willington
Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2023, 7:30pm**

This Meeting was held at Willington Town Hall (40 Old Farms Rd.) and Via Zoom.

A. Call to Order

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

B. Roll Call/Seating of Alternates

Members Present:

Walter Parsell
Bob Shabot
Andy Marco (Attended via zoom.)
Joseph Hall (Arrived at 7:32 pm.)
John Tehan (Joined at 7:32 pm via zoom.)
Rebecca Sinosky
Doug Roberts
Mike Johanssen (Alternate)

Also Present:

Mike D'Amato – Zoning Agent
Chris Roberts – Assistant Land Use Agent.
Erika Wiecewski – First Selectwoman
Mike Makuch – Chairman-School Building Committee

C. Applications for Receipt

None

D. Public Hearing

None

E. New Business

1. 8-24 Referral from Board of Selectmen: School Project

W. Parsell asked M. D'Amato to explain to the new members what an 8-24 review is.

M. D'Amato explained that a 8-24 referral according to State statute was a required review by the Planning & Zoning Commission prior to any major Town project including the purchase or sale of land, the construction of a new Town building or the extension of roads or other infrastructure. He said Erika Wiecewski and Mike Makuch were here to speak to the project.

Mike Makuch Chairman of the School Building Committee summarized his written remarks which had been provided to the Commission. He gave a general overview of the process that the Committee followed to come to the project recommendation and also explained the review process for ultimately selecting a potential location for the facility. He further noted highlights from the POCD that he felt were supportive of the project.

D. Roberts asked about how much land is required for maximum state contribution based on the number of students. M. Makuch stated the formula would come out to 19 acres or a third of the property.

W. Parsell asked about traffic considerations. M. Makuch explained the traffic configuration on site. W. Parsell said he was more concerned with the intersection with Glass Factory and the State Road. M. Makuch said that assuming the project goes forward a traffic study would be required.

D. Roberts asked if there was any effort made to reach out to other landowners to find competitive bids. M. Makuch explained the process the SBC used to evaluate potential sites.

M. Johansen asked about soil conditions. M. Makuch spoke to this issue noting that after eliminating unusable land there was still plenty of usable land left.

W. Parsell asked if there were contingencies include in the project budget if it is found that the soils are not compatible with the project. M. Makuch spoke to the contingencies built into the project.

J. Tehan asked if there would be lights on the ballfields and noted they were close to some residential houses. M. Makuch stated there would be buffers between residential areas. He said that lightning had not been discussed but it was possible it could come up.

M. Johansen asked if he had an idea of an average consumption rate for water. M. Makuch said no and spoke to the water consumption at the current two schools, and said it was something they could research.

W. Parsell asked what the maximum capacity of students for the school. M. Makuch explained that they were trying to keep the square footage as close to the formula as possible as to not acquire any penalties in terms of state funding. He spoke to how they designed the school's capacity. W. Parsell asked how long ago there were 700 students. R. Sinosky stated that was when she attended school in town.

D. Roberts asked if the contingency reserve was enough money to allow water to be brought into the school. M. Makuch said research would have to be done on that, but the plan was to drill wells on site.

B. Shabot said that it would be interesting to know what flow rates of surrounding properties were to try and estimate water needs on site. M. Makuch said this would take the expertise of professionals to determine. B. Shabot raised the question of how much water is on site and how fast the recharge rate will be.

First Selectwoman Erika Wisniewski explained the memo from the Board of Selectman to the PZC.

R. Sinosky asked how much capacity the auditorium would have. E. Wiecewski said a little over 400 seats and explained the funding from the state.

M. D'Amato stated that there have been questions about the process. He explained that the site sits in an R-80 zone which allows educational uses by special permit, therefore a zone change would not be required.

W. Parsell motioned pursuant to 8-24 the Planning and Zoning commission of the town of Willington approves the construction of a new approximately 76,680SF to 84,640SF pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 school and related site improvements and work to be centrally located within the Town on land or an interest in land to be acquired for such purpose.

B. Shabot seconded. A. Marco questioned what he was voting on. W. Parsell said that he should be voting on whether this fits in with the POCD. A. Marco noted that the motion includes things related to the design of the school and wondered if this would bind them if they voted favorably. HE suggested the commission rethink the motion. E Wiecenski stated that the resolution the commission had before them assumed that a project was to move forward and that the process requires specific motions and documents. She said the motion does not hold the commission to the square footage. A. Marco asked where this requirement comes from.

M. D'Amato explained that the point of the motion was to make clear to the commission what the project would look like so that they knew generally what they were voting on.

R. Sinosky abstained. D. Roberts opposed. All others in favor. Motion Passed

2. Section 11.01: Home Occupation Discussion

C. Roberts summarized a memo he prepared pertaining to home occupations. He noted that one thing to consider when thinking about home occupations was whether there are adequate protections to surrounding residential properties. He also explained that one thing the commission had to address going forward was that currently the regulations require yearly renewals for home occupations, and this was no longer allowed. M. D'Amato spoke to the renewal process in town historically and explained that the regs don't currently define a ceiling for home occupations.

The commission discussed home occupations.

W. Parsell stated the commission should be careful as to not to be unfriendly to business.

M. D'Amato spoke to the amount of home occupations in town.

W. Parsell asked how the commission wanted to go about this. He asked if we should clean the current regulations up. M. D'Amato said that in his experience, he had worked with Tolland's regulations, and they seem to work well. He spoke to Tolland regulations and said if the commission wanted staff could draft up the current regulations in the form of a similar tier system for comparison.

The commission discussed.

W. Parsell asked what the commission wanted to do with this. He said at the very least the yearly renewal issue needed to be addressed. M. D'Amato said that staff would draft something up.

B. Shabot asked how the commission would address a home occupation with a semi-truck in the driveway. M. D'Amato said these are questions the commission needed to answer. B. Shabot said he would like to see staff draft something up.

The commission discussed commercial vehicles in relation to home occupations. B. Shabot asked when it turns from a major home occupation to needing a bigger space. M. D'Amato said that is a question that the commission needs to answer.

F. Unfinished Business

G. Approval of Minutes

01/03/2023

J. Hall motioned to approve minutes. B. Shabot seconded. **All in Favor Motion Passed.**

H. Correspondence

1. CT Land Use Law for Land Use Agencies Training

M. D'Amato explained that this was an opportunity for commissioner training, he explained the state requirements for training. The commission discussed.

I. Public Participation (items not listed on the agenda)

Zafir Hussein spoke about PA-21-29 and the towns decision to opt out. He asked if it could be put on the agenda to revisit the regulations for accessory dwelling units.

J. Staff Report/Discussion

1. FY 23-24 Budget

M. D'Amato noted he discussed the budget with Walter and had submitted to the Board of Finance for consideration. He explained the budget. He explained that everything remained flat. He explained that he added a new item for document retention/scanning.

2. Commission Bylaws

M. D'Amato stated that he had prepared a draft set of bylaws for the Commission to review because there was currently in place to outline the procedures of the Commission for various things, including when to elect officers. He explained that bylaws would also operate as a guiding document to how the commission does business.

3. Regulation Codification/Review

M. D'Amato reminded the commission that he requested funds from the AARPA commission to secure funds for codifications of the regulations. He stated that the funds got approved and explained the process going forward.

4. SDZ Review with EDC: Set Joint Meeting Date

M. D'Amato said that the EDC was interested in meeting with the PZC and could get a quorum for the next PZC meeting. The commission agreed.

K. Adjournment

W. Parsell adjourned at 9:02pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher Roberts,
Assistant Land Use Agent

