

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 7, 2020, 7:15 P.M.
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA INTERNET AND PHONE**

PAGE 20-36

Present: Ken Edgar, Chairman; Don Saltzman, Vice Chairman; Jane Connolly, Sally Korsh, Harry Falber, Richard Wolf

Not Present: Britta Lerner

Also Present: Christopher Spaulding, First Selectman; Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator; members of the public

Digitally Recorded [held virtually due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency]

7:23 p.m. Chairman Edgar called the meeting to order.

DISCUSSION/DECISION: REFERRAL FOR CGS SECTION 8-24 REPORT: SIDEWALK DEVELOPMENT PLAN FUNDED BY THE CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY GRANT PROGRAM (CCCGP); NORFIELD ROAD, WESTON AND SCHOOL RD [TOWN OF WESTON] [20-11]

Chris Spaulding, representing the Town of Weston Board of Selectmen [BOS], came before the Commission to present its request for a CGS Section 8-24 Report on the proposed Sidewalk Development Plan. Dr. Spaulding stated that this proposal is phase one of a multi-phase sidewalk plan and discussed the government grant associated with the project. Dr. Spaulding commented that the purpose of the proposal is to provide a safe path for people to traverse the central district of Weston along Norfield, Weston and School Roads. The Town created a Sidewalk Committee to help implement this plan and the First Selectman stated that phase one is part of the grant-funded sidewalk improvements found in the 2020 Town Plan. Gary Guimond, Landscape Architect with Richter & Cegan, Inc., joined the presentation and provided a detailed project description. The Commission reviewed preliminary sidewalk development plans, prepared by Richter & Cegan, Inc., dated October 7, 2020.

Richard Wolf recused himself from discussion/decision as he is a member of the Town's Sidewalk Committee.

The Commission asked questions and a discussion ensued. Sidewalk maintenance and safety measures were discussed. Chairman Edgar stated that a 2019 Traffic Study, by Milone & MacBroom, Inc., suggested improvements associated with the intersection of Weston Road and Norfield Road that the Town may want to review during sidewalk development.

The members continued to ask questions and Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator, joined the discussion. Chairman Edgar stated that the preliminary plans indicate that a portion of the proposed sidewalks may abut private property. Holt McChord, Professional Engineer with McChord Engineering Associates, Inc., joined the discussion and spoke about the north side of the intersection of Weston Road and Norfield Road. Mr. McChord stated that this proposed sidewalk plan will be sent to the CT DOT to determine what steps might need to be taken should any portion of the plan involve private property. Discussion continued.

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PAGE 20-37

CONT'D

Jane Connolly made a motion that the Commission provide a positive CGS Section 8-24 Report to the Board of Selectmen, with respect to the Sidewalk Development Plan funded by the CT Community Connectivity Grant Program, as discussed and presented to the Commission. Seconded by Harry Falber. Jane Connolly stated the importance of the Town exploring the portion of the sidewalk plan that may involve private property. Hearing no further discussion and a roll call vote, the motion carried (5-0). Richard Wolf recused. Britta Lerner absent.

DISCUSSION/DECISION: PETITION TO AMEND THE ACCESSORY APARTMENT REGULATIONS, SPECIFICALLY SECTIONS 345.4 AND 610 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM SIZE OF ACCESSORY APARTMENTS TO 900 SQUARE FEET IN HABITABLE FLOOR AREA AND TO INCLUDE A DEFINITION OF HABITABLE SPACE [PETITION BY JOSEPH AND LOIS RYAN, 13 BERNHARD DRIVE] [20-03]

Chairman Edgar addressed the members and a deliberation process began.

Vice Chairman Saltzman believes that this petition to expand the size of Accessory Apartments needs a very fine study to help rule out potential conflicts with other sections of the zoning regulations as a result of such expansion.

Harry Falber commented that the petition does not address ADA compliance with accessory apartments that are not located at ground level. Mr. Falber spoke about two bills in the CT General Assembly that could provide substantive changes in CT zoning law to facilitate the development of more affordable housing.

Jane Connolly is concerned about the adoption of the definition of habitable space as the definition does not address the total size of those spaces. Ms. Connolly indicated that she cannot agree to sanction this proposed amendment and that this topic needs to be further studied.

Chairman Edgar stated that he would like to see the Commission look at housing comprehensively and that there may be potential issues with the definition of habitable space as the configuration of a space can be altered. Chairman Edgar spoke about possible enforcement challenges should the habitable space be increased and the possible burden in measuring the size of an apartment in terms of square footage and in measuring the amount of space in terms of habitable space. Chairman Edgar commented that he would not feel comfortable adopting habitable space as a measure and would like more time to study housing options.

Richard Wolf believes that any potential changes to the Accessory Apartment Regulations should be looked at in a holistic matter and that the Town should have a comprehensive plan that studies and analyzes what makes sense in terms of Accessory Apartments. Mr. Wolf expressed concerns about the amount of Town oversight over Accessory Apartments.

Sally Korsh agreed with the comments made by the other Commissioners and that the issues raised need to be addressed in greater detail.

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
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PAGE 20-38

CONT'D

Joseph and Lois Ryan expressed their disagreement with the Commission's analysis.

Chairman Edgar made a motion that the Commission deny the Petition to Amend the Accessory Apartment Regulations, specifically Sections 345.4 and 610 of the Weston Zoning Regulations to increase the maximum size of Accessory Apartments to 900 square feet in habitable floor area and to include a definition of habitable space, as discussed with reasons set forth on the record. [Petition by Joseph and Lois Ryan, 13 Bernhard Drive] [20-03]. Seconded by Jane Connolly. Hearing no further discussion and a roll call vote, all in favor, the motion carried (6-0). Britta Lerner absent.

DISCUSSION/DECISION: PROPOSAL FROM MILONE & MACBROOM, INC. TO PREPARE AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

The Commission reviewed a proposal from Milone & MacBroom, Inc. [MMI] to prepare an Affordable Housing Plan. The members discussed the proposal's scope of work, timeline and deliverables. Discussion continued.

Chairman Edgar suggested that the Commission schedule a special meeting and invite MMI to discuss its proposal and for the Commission to discuss its goals and objectives for an Affordable Housing Plan.

DISCUSSION CONT'D: CREATION OF A VILLAGE DISTRICT IN WESTON TOWN CENTER - PROCESS FOR CREATION OF VILLAGE DISTRICT REGULATIONS

The Commission discussed potential alternative approaches to the process of creating Village District Regulations.

DISCUSSION/DECISION: 2021 PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

The Commission accepted the 2021 Meeting Schedule.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NOVEMBER 2, 2020

Hearing no comments, the Commission accepted the Minutes of November 2, 2020.

Other Business: none

Richard Wolf made a motion that the Commission adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jane Connolly. All in favor, the motion carried (6-0). Britta Lerner absent.

9:15 p.m. Meeting adjourned

Submitted by: AnnMarie Fontana, Admin. Assistant