

**COVENTRY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

By: Pattee

Time: 7:01 p.m.

Place: Conf. Rm. B

**ROLL CALL:**

		<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
<b>REGULAR MEMBERS:</b>	Steven Hall, Secretary		X
	Bill Jobbagy, Chairperson		X
	Ed Marek	X	
	Christine Pattee, Vice Chairperson	X	
	Darby Pollansky	X	
<b>ALTERNATE MEMBERS:</b>	Bob Burrington		X
	Carol Polsky	X	
	Arianna Mouradijan	X	
<b>STAFF:</b>	Eric Trott, Town Planner	X	

Polsky and Mouradijan were seated.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:**

No one wished to speak.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. 8-24 referral – proposal of Richard Von Hirshberg to seek a driveway easement over the Pine Knoll Drive road stub**

Staff provided the history of the Pine Knoll Road area – a subdivision was approved in the late 1980s including Pine Knoll Road and a road stub at the end of the cul-de-sac. Von Hirschberg has a piece of property beyond the road stub that would be challenging to access from his frontage on Main Street. Part of the access area is laden with wetlands. The Town owns the road stub. Von Hirshberg wishes to use the road stub to allow a driveway for a single-family home on the property. Currently the owner has horses stored on the property. The most that could be done with the stub is a common driveway for two lots, although the owner is asking for one driveway for one house. The PZC must give its blessing for the Town Council to move forward with the easement. The neighbors on either side of the stub will be made aware this may happen.

Marek asked what may happen if the neighbors on either side of the stub oppose this action? Staff replied it cannot be necessarily disallowed if there is opposition. The stub was meant for possible access along their side yards. They could retain a buffer on their side yard. This isn't the norm for the road stub to be used as an easement to a property, but it is not unusual. This will be a really long driveway to get to the developable land. This remains vehicular access. There abutting houses are not built right up against the road stub.

Mouradijan asked what the benefit is of the Town keeping the road stub and giving an easement on it? Staff replied that the Town does not to fully relieve ourselves of it, but the Town will not maintain the stub.

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the Town Council approve the request of Richard Von Hirshberg to seek a driveway easement for residential purposes over the Pine Knoll Drive road stub.

Reason for the decision:

The easement will provide a more prudent access to the Von Hirshberg property and the parcel directly abuts the road stub, pursuant to CT General Statutes 8-24.

By: Pollansky

Seconded: Polsky

Voting:

For: Pattee, Marek, Polsky, Pollansky, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

**2. 8-24 referral – purchase of portion of Stewart property for open space and future DPW Transfer Station – Knollwood Drive**

Staff mentioned this subject is moving towards a happy ending. After a historic house was cut apart and hauled to the property, the intent was to reconstruct the house. This never happened. The building pieces began to fall apart and vehicles, boats, and debris littered the site. The Town took Lance Stewart to court to clean up the property. The Town ended up cleaning up the property with Coventry getting part of the property in lieu of the money owed for the clean-up of ~\$60,000. Lance Stewart passed away one to two years ago. Staff has been speaking with Scott Stewart about the land so that he does not lose the entire parcel of some 20 odd acres. The Town will buy some of the parcel so S. Stewart has capital to build a house. The Town will obtain some land to be used for open space and some for the DPW for the future site of the transfer station. For the open space an easement will be required to get a connection to the Nathan Hale State Forest.

Pattee feels this is a really good resolution for a difficult problem that the PZC struggled with for some time. Staff commented this solutions provides balance. Pattee asked if the condition of the property is now adequately cleaned to the Town's satisfaction? Staff replied there are still some boats on the property. The Town removed 30+ dumpsters of junk.

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the Town Council proceed with the purchase of a portion of the Stewart property on Knollwood Drive for open space and future DPW Transfer Station, pursuant to CT General Statutes 8-24. The Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the open space name reflects Stewart's name.

Reason for the decision:

The purchase will provide additional open space that connects with the Nathan Hale Forest, and the proposal will include pedestrian access allowances that will enable further connectivity. The land set aside for the prospective DPW Transfer Station is prudent planning for the future needs of the Town.

By: Marek

Seconded: Polsky

Voting:

For: Pattee, Marek, Polsky, Pollansky, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

### **3. 8-24 referral – Capital Improvement Program Budget**

Staff provided the list of items that was used last year for PZC's consideration. These are items that come under the Commission's purview. The members should look at the information provided and gather their thoughts to be discussed at the next meeting.

Pattee is glad this information was provided. Her recollection is that the general feeling of the Commission was they wanted to go slow with specific recommendations. Polsky recalls that what the PZC recommends does not really matter. PZC is going through the technicalities and procedure expected for the CIP.

### **4. Discussion regarding permitting of shipping cargo containers as allowable accessory structures**

Melissa and Ryan LeClaire were present.

Staff suggested the LeClaire's attend this meeting to discuss this subject with the PZC. The LeClaire's have a Konex box and are looking for ways to validate an allowable use in the zoning regulations. Staff has this issue surface in the past as an enforcement issue. The LeClaire's are suggesting there are ways to modify the structure to make it look like a residence. Basically it would be a shipping container with the exterior looking like a shed. The Building Official has indicated this could be acceptable. This use would be of adding features to the exterior of the container to make it appear something other/more than a shipping container. Such containers have been shown as single-family homes in some cases. A zoning amendment would be required.

The LeClaire's do have a container on their property now that is being repurposed as a storage unit. These are an affordable and repurposed option. These containers are very durable, fire-proof, keeps pests and rodents out, and are a secure storage option. code sought to be changed. The LeClaire'e provided pictures of the creative ideas of how shipping containers have been modified for a variety of reuses.

Staff commented this would be a two-step process if the PZC is open to consider an amendment to the regulations. This would likely be allowed as special permit after regulation amendment. The goal of the PZC is to look at this globally rather than for the purpose of one family. An amendment change should give the PZC flexibility, provide objective criteria for meeting certain purposes.

Polsky asked why such a regulation change would not be considered? Staff replied in the past shipping containers have not been allowed. These units have been of commercial type use; not for homes. Looking at this from a different angle the PZC could allow the containers under certain circumstances where the shipping box does not look like one. It would have to be maintained. Marlborough allows these boxes in back yards as long as they cannot be seen. This can easily be changed if trees are taken down.

Pattee stated she has been looking for affordable housing for decades and is strongly in favor of PZC looking at this. The downside, as mentioned by Burrington and Hall as living in the lake district, is that neighbors will have a say in this. It is attractive in some ways and is a great idea, in her opinion.

Staff commented the LeClaire's would sponsor the proposed changed. An enforceable and interpretive regulation would be written with the Town Attorney reviewing it and providing feedback. Should the PZC approve the amendment change, the LeClaire's would then apply for having a shipping box permitted on their property.

Marek feels under certain circumstances it would be probably be a great idea when the container is made to look nice. Mr. LeClaire wants something that looks nice and meets code. Mrs. LeClaire stated we do need storage space. Pattee stated a foundation is the most expensive cost for a building. Mr. LeClaire was told it could sit on stone or concrete blocks.

Mouradijan loves this idea from an affordability standpoint. At \$15,000 this is no longer an efficient option for a shed. If it is painted and looks nice she is okay with it as an accessory building. She feels she has a minimum standard of niceness on this matter.

Staff added that someone would have to jump through hoops with the State Building Code for these to be allowed as housing.

Mr. LeClaire stated he is aware of other properties that have these storage boxes and the desire is to make use of them legal across town. A complaint was made about the one on the LeClaire's property prompting this discussion.

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission adds New Business, item 5 to the agenda – Mylar filing extension request of the Sweeney subdivision on North School Road.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Pollansky

Voting:

For: Pollansky, Pattee, Marek, Mouradijan, Polsky

Against: None

Abstain: None

#### **5. Mylar filing extension request for the Sweeney subdivision on North School Road**

Staff commented the request for the 90-day extension came into the office today.

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission approves the 90-day extension request of the Mylar filing for the Sweeney subdivision on North School Road.

By: Pollansky

Seconded: Polsky

Voting:

For: Pollansky, Pattee, Marek, Mouradijan, Polsky

Against: None

Abstain: None

#### **DECISIONS:**

None

#### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**

##### **1. February 10, 2020**

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission approves the minutes of the February 10, 2020 meeting.

By: Pollansky

Seconded: Mouradijan

With the following corrections:

- Page 2, first paragraph, first sentence – change “owner” to “owners”.
- Page 2, third paragraph, last sentence – change “people” to “peoples”.
- Page 2, fifth paragraph, first sentence – end the sentence after “range”; remove “that”; change “he” to “He”.

Voting:

For: Pattee, Marek, Polsky, Pollansky, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

Staff reported he is preparing a memo addressing the comments of citizen Chipkin made at the last meeting. Staff is gathering the facts under a broader perspective than Ms. Chipkin’s tenure on the ZBA. This memo should be available at the next meeting.

### **ENFORCEMENT:**

None

### **PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT RELATED DISCUSSION:**

#### **1. State of POCD review by Boards/Commissions/Staff – April public hearing**

Staff commented the public hearing is more likely to be scheduled for the second meeting in May. A 65-day review is required for CRCOG and the abutting towns. The final touches are expected to be made tomorrow and sent to the abutting towns and CRCOG. Pattee commented she praised Staff’s work on the POCD, Jobbagy’s writing of the POCD, and the subcommittee to the Town Council at a recent meeting. Her comments also included that it is unique for a town to have a citizen writing the POCD; this situation saved the town \$100,000.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

- #20-20 – Special Permit for Commercial Recreation- Archery Club, application of William Hall, for owners of Coventry Catholic Men’s Club, 138 Snake Hill Road (Assessor’s Map 25, Block 54, Lot 1A-1) GR40 Zone.**

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Pattee adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, PZC Recording Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission at the next Commission meeting. Please see the next Commission meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.