

**COVENTRY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 12, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

By: Pattee

Time: 7:16 p.m.

Place: Virtual

ROLL CALL:

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

Pattee seated Polsky and Burrington for Jobbagy and Hall.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

No one wished to speak.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- #21-06 – Zoning Regulation Amendments of the Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission to revise the following sections 2.01, 4.06.06, 4.06.09, 4.13.04, 6.03.01.a, 6.03.01.b.5, 6.03.01.b.6, 6.03.01.1.3, 6.03.02, 6.04.02.b, 6.05.01.a.2, 6.06.01.a.1, 6.06.02, 6.07.01.a, 6.07.01.b, 6.07.01.1.9, 6.07.02, 6.07.02.jj.**

Staff said the PZC has talked about the regulation changes needed in relation to the anaerobic digester at Hytone Farm. In addition, there are some other regulations that need

fine tuning. A memo from Staff titled Proposed Zoning Regulation Amendments dated July 12, 2021 details the changes and the desired effect.

Rashi Akki, CEO of AgriEnergy, was present. She has been working on Hytone Farm's digester project with the goal of farm sustainability. The first digester in the state was at Fort Hill in Thompson. AgriEnergy helps in obtaining the necessary State and local permits for these projects. This has included an education on the impacts of such projects. DEEP is supportive of the project because it helps with producing electricity and reducing waste. There are no open waste sites in the state and the incinerator plant is due to be closed next year. Organics is an ineffective use of incinerators. Composting or anaerobic digesters take the carbon from the food waste. Methane is converted from the carbon and that is used to produce energy and remove odors. Many states are making the decision to move food waste away from landfills. Having manure helps to stabilize the process; it brings fresh bugs into the waste for the system of producing electricity while retaining the nutrients to apply to the croplands so crops can grow. This should reduce the amount of fertilizer that the farm has to buy. This is the first time that she has to go through a zoning process and Staff has been very helpful. The food waste trucks are already on the roads; they are simply being redirected to Hytone Farm. Roughly three trucks per day will come to the farm with food waste so this project should stay below the number of 10 that is proposed in the state regulations. There are only three to four farms in the state that can use a digester and take in food waste. This is due to the ratio of cows to farm land to have a digester that takes in food waste. Hytone Farm has the land to apply the digested nutrients to. Adding in the food waste is controlled by the nutrient management plan of the farm. The intent is to break ground in August. The air and storm water permits are under public review right now.

Polsky asked Staff that it is now being suggested that a traffic study will not be requested? Staff said based on the number of food waste vehicles being suggested a traffic study is not warranted.

Pattee closed the public hearing.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

DECISIONS:

Motion: The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission approves Zoning Regulation Amendment #21-06 of the Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission to revise the following Sections 2.01, 4.06.06, 4.06.09, 4.13.04, 6.03.01.a, 6.03.01.b.5, 6.03.01.b.6, 6.03.01.1.3, 6.03.02, 6.04.02.b, 6.05.01.a.2, 6.06.01.a.1, 6.06.02, 6.07.01.a, 6.07.01.b,

Staff said in regards to items 1 and 2, the statutes are challenging at best to regulate and enforce. The effective date was July 1, 2021. It has been a couple of weeks to understand and decipher the language. Chief Palmer submitted a memo on how it relates to his jurisdiction and how it relates to the sales and how we will be managing those. Rich Roberts, Town Attorney, is offering the strong suggestion of a moratorium being placed on allowing marijuana operations to allow for the crafting of well thought out regulations.

Marek asked how the legislature can pass a law that supersedes the federal laws? Staff said some language was put in the law to address but he is not sure to what degree that is legitimate.

Pollansky said she suggests considering a moratorium right now to gain a balanced view on this matter. The PZC should take our time in addressing this as best as possible.

Polsky asked if PZC should set a moratorium for a period of time. Staff said it would be good to get beginning and ending times. That can be extended as long as you have a reason to do that.

Pattee said she thinks a moratorium is the way to go. It is a complex issue for the police to detect if someone is high on marijuana. Pattee would like to have this on the next meeting agenda to give Members time to think through the recommendation of the Town Attorney about the moratorium.

Staff said he would prepare language to support a moratorium for the next meeting giving the PZC time to craft regulations that are respectful to the situation.

3. Zoning Referrals: Zoning Regulation Amendments – Towns of Tolland, Columbia, Mansfield

Staff had no comment.

STAFF REPORTS:

1. Family Subdivision Regulations

Staff said copies of the regulations were provided to the PZC per Pollansky's request. Pollansky felt it necessary to investigate how it was arrived at that there could be 'no monetary exchange'. Pollansky said it makes more sense to require a length of time that a person own and lives at the premises. She does not understand the reason to have the stipulation of 'no monetary exchange.'

Staff said it may be to not hinder someone's ability to exchange property. That would be unenforceable. Staff will ask the Town Attorney if there is any wiggle room or if there is any history on this and bring it to the PZC at the next meeting.

2. Walgreens – stone walls and trees

Staff took a drive through the site. The stone walls are not looking as clean as they could on the site. The wall face from Route 44 does not look too bad. The walls were existing

field stone walls. Such walls, enhanced over time, may also come apart at some point. If the PZC is not happy with the condition of the stone walls the conditions of approval must be researched and then possibly work with Walgreens on the maintenance of the walls.

Pollansky said she did notice several areas that have collapsed on Route 44. If stone walls are constructed properly it would not move. Members of the PZC in the past had special concerns about the walls and the trees. PZC went after CVS for the garbage that was collecting at the front of the building. The walls look terrible at Walgreens. If the condition included maintaining and enhancing the wall they should have been built to be indestructible. There should not be that bad of a disturbance if it was constructed correctly. Pollansky wants to uphold the review and maintain the integrity of the wall. Right now it looks terrible.

Marek said he agrees with what Pollansky stated. It doesn't look good. Something should be done to enhance Walgreens. Staff said the stone wall and the tree at Grant Hill and Route 44 where to be protected during construction. These were in okay shape and the field stone walls were amended and that did not stand the test of time. The Tree Warden was consulted on the health of the trees. Some are unhealthy or diseased or have limbs coming off. There are limbs that could be trimmed.

Pattee said this may be getting a little dicey. She is not seeing the walls looking as bad as other Members feel they are. Pattee is not quite comfortable with the PZC spending time and resources on this matter.

Staff said he will do a quick check on the file and discuss this again when the full Commission can come together.

Pollansky will get photos of the areas she is talking about.

3. East Point Energy follow up

Staff asked if the PZC has follow up questions for East Point Energy and if it would like the representative make a return visit to a meeting?

Pattee said all of her questions were answered. Pollansky, Polsky, and Burrington agreed.

Staff said the company may ask for some sort of endorsement of the project or at least suggest the PZC is not opposed to it. The PZC should wait for them to ask the question before submitting a statement.

ENFORCEMENT:

None

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Pattee adjourned the meeting at 8:19 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.