

**COVENTRY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER:

By: Jobbagy **Time:** 7:03 p.m. **Place:** via Zoom and Town Hall Annex

ROLL CALL:

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Steven Hall, Secretary (Zoom)	X	
	Bill Jobbagy, Chairperson	X	
	Ed Marek (Zoom)	X	
	Christine Pattee, Vice Chairperson (Zoom)	X	
	Darby Pollansky		X
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Bob Burrington		X
	Carol Polsky (Zoom)	X	
	Vacancy		
STAFF:	Eric Trott, Town Planner	X	
	Heidi Leech, Permit Technician/Substitute Recording Clerk	X	

Jobbagy seated Polsky for Pollansky to have a full voting board.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

No guests were present to speak on non-agenda items.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Jobbagy opened the Public Hearing at 7:03

#22-1S – Special Permit application of Coventry Donuts, LLC to modify the drive-thru and parking area at Dunkin Donuts; property located at 3516 Main Street (Map 10, Block 16, Lot 2) – Commercial Zone

Jim Dutton of Dutton Associates and Peter D’Addeo were present as Agents and applicants Derek and Ethan Pacheco were also present.

Dunkin Donuts is located at 3516 Main Street. Dutton explained that they are hoping to redesign the drive-thru and parking area to improve the flow of traffic and prevent the back-up of traffic that is currently happening into the parking lot, entry road and onto Main Street. Dutton said that they received comments from Staff and that they just received changes to the plans from Dunkin Donuts over the weekend so they will need to make updates to the plans and come back to the PZC at a future meeting.

Dutton explained that this is a very busy store that was originally built around the year 2000. He said that Dunkin Donuts spent the weekend making changes to the plan to make it the most efficient design. The current existing drive-thru is too short. Cars wind up out into the street. The first proposal was very similar with two lanes that merged into one pick-up window. One issue that came up with that plan is conflicts between the piers and footings for the menu boards and the septic system. The new alignment that was designed over the weekend has two order boards. The old design had the order boards and the window too close together. It didn’t allow enough time for the food to be prepared. The new design changes the merging lane, isolates the refuse area, and allows better delivery truck access. Dutton says that the drainage concerns raised by the Town Engineer will be addressed with revisions as will the concerns of other Town Staff. The landscaping plan will also be modified. He said that while the modern Dunkin Donuts design would be to have two windows - one for paying and one for food pick-up - that design won’t work for this location. The most efficient use of space will be to have two order lanes with two menu boards, merging to one pick-up window. There will be covered overhangs over the ordering areas. He said all new lighting will be night sky compliant. The new plan also proposes an enlarged seating area. Dutton asked if there were any questions.

Marek said he believed there were about 20 cars in the first drive-thru cue plan but he only sees about 12 in this plan. Is that defeating the purpose? Dutton said there are actually 21 in the new plan but what is more important is the efficiency of the stacking, the ability to serve. There is only so much room. It’s more important to have it function properly than it is to jam a certain number of cars into it. This new plan adds a bit of pavement but Dutton is confident that the detention pond can handle it.

Pattee said that she found this plan to be one of the best, most clear, lucid plans and she thanked Mr. Dutton for his thorough work. She said if he isn’t already teaching he should be.

Trott told Dutton to be sure to refer to his memo regarding the landscape design and note to refer to the Town's [Commercial Design Guidelines](#) document and include the use of native plant species in their landscaping design. Dutton said that he will pass the information on to their landscape design firm E.A. Quinn.

Trott also told them to be sure that all lighting meets the Zoning Regulation requirements under section 5.02.07.g of the [Coventry Zoning Regulations](#).

Trott asked about the plans for the outdoor seating area. D'Addeo mentioned that he spoke to the landlord about possibly putting gravel on the areas of the road/parking lot where cars tend to go off the pavement and they have the cooperation of the landlord for the application of gravel in those areas. D'Addeo asked Derek and Ethan Pacheco to speak about their intentions for the seating area. Derek Pacheco said that they will be putting something really nice out there, possible concrete picnic tables with umbrellas and nice landscaping to give people a place to sit and enjoy their coffee. They will look to get some product photos for the next meeting. Dutton said there may also be some required directional signage for the new travel/parking area. Trott said that should be included in the plans.

This matter is continued to the March 14, 2022 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

#1 - Housing Affordability Plan Status - Elizabeth (Liz) Esposito and Robert Collins from SLR were present to give an update on the status of the Affordable Housing Plan as a precursor to the Public Workshop.

Trott explained that they have been working with SLR on the sub-committee level — Trott, Alexa Gorlick from Zoning, Annemarie Sundgren from Human Services, and Christine Pattee and Carol Polsky from PZC, for several months.

Esposito reviewed a PowerPoint presentation touching on some of the bigger points of the Plan and their approach in developing the Plan.

- The State of Connecticut mandated that all towns create an Affordable Housing Plan and update it every five years
- The Plan needed to reflect Coventry's Values
- The State released guidance in December 2020
- "Low Income" is a Family of Four making less than \$80,000/year
- Coventry had already done a ton of work through other planning documents that could be incorporated into the Affordable Housing Plan – we could continue the momentum that was already started:
 - Plan of Conservation & Development

- Senior Housing Study
- Zoning Regulation Amendments for In-Laws/Farm Labor Quarters
- Currently looking at Regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units
- We need to look at demographics. 20% of the population is over 65, seeing growth of Gen-X coming into Town.
- Most households are only 1-2 people
- \$23.65/hour is the “Housing Wage” required in Coventry. Many make below that.
- “Affordable” means that the cost of housing is no more than 30% of income
- Seniors are disproportionately impacted, as are households under the age of 35
- Only 6% of non-low-income are cost burdened
- 61% of low-income are cost burdened
- The only low-income deed restricted housing in Coventry is Orchard Hills which has a waiting list that is so long that it is closed. There is just no movement.
- With the size of Orchard Hills that means Coventry only has 4.7%. The State wants all Towns at 10%.
- Housing Gap exists at all levels of renters and at low-income homeowners
- 22% of households are spending more than 30% of income
- The Affordable Housing Survey is currently available on the website and linked here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JQR8CMS>
- The Affordable Housing website with a summary of the schedule can be found here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2f49f1cb5a144800b0c23c749a0782c5>
- Public Workshop – Zoom and In-Person Planned for March 30th
- Draft Plan – April
- Final Plan – May
- Final Plan – due to State June 1, 2022

Pattee commented that she really appreciates how clearly the information was presented and how effectively it was put forward.

Trott said the survey will be used to educate and advocate. They have been using Facebook to monitor the temperature and trying to look on the bright side.

Polsky said, on the slide showing \$23.65 as the housing wage, it would be clearer if it stated that that it specifically for renters.

Trott said that slide really hits home. These are your friends and neighbors. Trott thanked Robert Collins and Liz Esposito.

#2 – Sale of State Owned Property to Town – Main Street/Ridgewood Trail – Trott explained that the Town was approached by the State with an offer to purchase a piece of land on Main Street at the corner of Ridgewood Trail. The State is giving the Town the option to buy before putting it up for sale. It is of little value to the Town. It might be of value to the abutters.

Pattee said she walks her dogs past there. She asked for clarification if it is the State who is offering it to the Town. Trott said yes. He and the Town Manager initially reviewed the proposal and saw no value to the Town, but they wanted to give it to PZC for review to be sure there isn't something Staff might be missing. Pattee said she thinks it could be of value for a grinder pump or sewer or to someone. It directly overlooks the lake.

Motion: The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the Town of Coventry does not pursue the conveyance of the State of CT DOT property located on Main Street and Ridgewood Trail. The property does not possess attributes that would advantage the Town if it was to take ownership and would appear to be of more value to abutting property owners.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Marek

Motion carried with the following vote:

For: Jobbagy, Marek, Pattee, Hall, Polsky

Against: None

Abstain: None

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Motion: The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission approves the minutes of the February 14, 2022 meeting:

By: Pattee

Seconded: Polsky

Carried with the following vote:

For: Jobbagy, Marek, Pattee, Hall, Polsky

Against: None

Abstain: None

COMMUNICATIONS:

1 - Zoning Referral Town of Columbia – A Zoning Referral was received from the Town of Columbia to repeal Zoning Approval of Wedding Venue Facilities use in the Residential Agricultural Zone. Trott said he had no comment.

2 – Memo to Steering Committee, Response to Citizen Comments Re: Cassidy Hill Vineyard Enforcement Activities – Hall said that he thinks that Council is getting a lot of pressure and hopes that the Chipkins are working with haste to get moving. Trott said he met briefly with Mr. Chipkin this morning and he said he’s been working with his engineer and will be ready to submit in the near future.

Hall said he doesn’t feel it’s appropriate for the complainants to go around the Planning and Zoning Commission and go to Council when it’s a matter for PZC and it paints enforcement in a bad light. He said he defends Eric and his department and their efforts and strategies to work with businesses.

Trott said the Chipkins are now getting pressure from the State Liquor Control Commission and will have to deal with enforcement from them as well.

STAFF REPORTS:

1 – Cannabis Regulations – Trott said that he will be putting aside some time with Jobbagy to pull some stuff together to share with the Commission at the next meeting.

2 – Accessory Dwelling Regulations – Trott pulled some things together for Rich Roberts to look at potential areas of the current regulations that might accommodate accessory dwelling units. He will continue to work on this.

-

3 – 8-24 Capital Improvement Program Budget – Trott said that everyone should have received their hardcopy before the meeting for review and asked is anyone had any questions, comments or favorites they wanted to discuss.

Hall said that he knows that it’s a large item, but he would like to prioritize a new community center a Patriot’s Park. The current, old structure is inadequate for a town our size. He knows it would be a heavy lift but feels a new Community Center could be a real asset and draw for people looking to move to Coventry. Hall also said he’d like to see a big push for sidewalks and improvements for pedestrian access.

Jobbygy said he noticed there was no real infrastructure but he agrees about the sidewalks. Trott said that the Town has been successful in LOTCIP funding and grants for sidewalks and the long-term goal is to get them all the way around the lake.

Polsky said she was hoping to see a water tower in the budget plan.

Pattee said she also supports water towers to facilitate housing including potentially senior housing. Pattee also asked about trails in the Nathan Hale Forest area. Trott said we have received grants for rec trails in the Bear Swamp Rd/Nathan Hale area.

MOTION: The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the Town Council pursue the Capital Improvement Program Budget for fiscal years 2022/2023 through 2027/2028. The Commission suggests that the Town Council prioritize the following projects:

- New Community Center
- Sidewalks/Pedestrian Access
- Water Tower
- Park Improvements

By: Pattee

Seconded: Marek

Carried with the following vote:

For: Jobbygy, Marek, Pattee, Hall, Polsky

Against: None

Abstain: None

ENFORCEMENT:

Brian Murray – 29 Cassidy Hill Rd – He’s concerned because now the Liquor Commission is taking action. The level of non-compliance is very concerning as a citizen.

Trott said we continue to work with the Chipkins to try to find solutions where we can.

Murray said that if we know about all of these violations what about what we don’t know.

Trott said that the public meeting process brings out information into the open but it’s impossible to say what we don’t know.

Murray said he was the one who made the statement to the Council. He said he just wants this to be taken seriously. He says his intent wasn't to be disrespectful to this Commission or to Eric Trott or Staff. It was aimed at John Elsesser who he felt wasn't taking it seriously.

Trott replied that the communication that was sent to the Town Council Steering Committee went far beyond what Mr. Murray just indicated. The suggestions in the communication were directed at the PZC and Town Staff in a negative light. Trott referenced the concerns that were raised by Hall earlier as an indication that this was of concern to the Commission and Staff. Trott indicated that it his and his office's job to support and guide the PZC, as well as support and assist the Vineyard and the neighbors in this process. Trott welcomed Mr. Murray to contact him directly if there are questions or concerns about the situation in order to resolve them.

Howard Haberern – 80 Cassidy Hill Rd - Haberern said that the good folks on this Commission are volunteers working for free which he applauds but he thinks it's a ridiculous shame that so much of your time has been wasted by the Chipkins on this matter while other businesses are begging for your help and time and being denied. Plus the cost and time for Town Staff and the Town Attorney fees that's been wasted, it's disgraceful.

ADJOURNMENT:

Jobbagy adjourned the meeting at 8:35 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi A. Leech

Heidi A. Leech

Land Use Permit Technician/Substitute Recording Clerk