

BOLTON PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
7:30 PM, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2024
BOLTON TOWN HALL, 222 BOLTON CENTER ROAD
In-Person and Via Zoom
MINUTES

PZC Members Present In-Person: Chairman Tom Manning, Steven Clark, Arlene Fiano, Marilee Manning, Thomas Robbins, Alternate Diane DeNunzio

PZC Members Present Via Zoom: Vice-Chair James Cropley, Jeremy Flick, Alternate Kawan Gordon

PZC Members Absent: Alternate Tom Crockett

Staff Present Via Zoom: Patrice Carson, AICP, Consulting Director of Community Development, Michael D’Amato, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Recording Secretary Linda H. McDonald

Others Present In-Person: First Selectman Rodney Fournier, Deputy First Selectman Robert Morra, Selectman Gwen Marrion, Selectman Tim Sadler, Selectman Amanda Gordon, Town Administrator James Rupert

Others Present Via Zoom: Andrew Ladyga (8:25 p.m.)

1. **Call to Order:** T. Manning called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes: July 10, 2024**
 - A. Fiano MOVED to APPROVE the regular meeting minutes of July 10, 2024 as presented. J. Cropley SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

3. **Residents’ Forum:** No member of the public wished to speak.

By consensus, agenda item 6.b was taken up at this time.

4. **Staff Reports:** No reports were presented.

5. Old Business

- a. **Other:** There was no other old business.

6. New Business

a. Release of Site Improvement and E&S Bonds for 7 Loomis Road

P. Carson reported staff received a request from Sheila Bugnacki for release of the bonds for 7 Loomis Road for landscaping and the site improvements for the drainage detention basin. The town received approval from the town engineer and staff went out to the site as well.

T. Manning MOVED to release the Sheila C. Bugnacki’s Site Improvement Bond in the amount of \$20,760.00, for completed site improvements at 7 Loomis Road (#PL-23-6) as requested by Sheila Bugnacki on July 16, 2024, and as reviewed and approved by Town Engineer Joseph Dillon on June 12, 2024. J. Flick SECONDED. By roll call vote, MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

b. Discussion with Board of Selectmen: Property Development and Housing

P. Carson explained the PZC recently codified the Zoning Regulations and identified items that need more attention. The area of question is with the several larger properties on Route 44 that might be developed. She said staff have had conversations with the property owners of the cider mill and the drive-in theatre. The

question is what sort of things the PZC and perhaps the BOS feel would be appropriate in those areas. The areas are zoned for business or multi-family type residential. Coming into play are things like water and sewer.

M. D'Amato added, in some places, there is a conflict between what the market and the demand might be and what the regulations allow. He commented it is great to have regulations that envision all kinds of things, and it is important to have some of that, but it is also important to make sure regulations are reflective of the environment and the reality that exists today. He said one of the focus points during discussion of regulation updates is to make it so the town can be responsive to the developments that are likely to come before the commission. He noted developers of multi-family housing are looking to use the ground floor of a building for amenities for residents rather than having a business there.

R. Morra spoke of the restrictions that may be there on sewers for housing. He said the restrictions are ones from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) the town has been required to put on it. He explained on a parcel of land to be developed for residential, you cannot put more units than you could effectively put in with a septic system. R. Morra noted the DEEP restriction regarding sewers does not apply to industrial or commercial properties, so the large properties under discussion could be developed industrially. He said another obstacle for the drive-in theatre property is the infrastructure costs of getting into the property.

R. Morra said right now there is a lot of capacity regarding the amount of flow the town is allowed to discharge based on the agreement Bolton negotiated with the Town of Manchester for Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDU's). He said it would be a process that would involve going into negotiations with Manchester if a developer wanted to put 100-200 residential units on the property.

A. Gordon asked if the town has approached any developers that focus on affordable housing who could tap into State bond dollars for these properties because they might be more willing to do smaller projects because the location is good for development like that.

P. Carson responded the town has not reached out to anybody. Staff have had discussions with developers who have come to them and none of them are interested in building affordable housing units.

A. Gordon said it is worth a shot to put together a package for each of the properties and sell it to developers, being proactive.

T. Sadler asked if there is any demand for business parks. M. D'Amato responded that, unless the property can support 250,000 square feet under one roof or more, people are not interested because the costs are so high.

P. Carson said she did petition the Connecticut Site Selector regarding the cider mill property to list it on their site to see if there was anyone who might have some interest.

R. Morra said he would like to have residences allowed in a commercial area, and not just above a commercial building. He said that restriction in the zoning regulations has hampered some movements (sales) in town and the PZC should look at and probably get rid of it.

T. Sadler stated zoning is the key to development and was something the BOS identified in their retreat.

J. Rupert said the commission would want to be careful when changing regulations, for example, if the sewer authority sits down with DEEP and they change the regulations to remove the restriction that if you cannot build it with septic, you cannot build it, the PZC would have to decide whether it is ready to have every lot of record around the lake become developable. Discussion followed on how this could possibly be approached.

R. Morra asked that the PZC allow rear lots in the zoning regulations and noted other towns that successfully have rear lots in their regulations and have no issues with it. P. Carson said rear lots are allowed in the subdivision regulations under certain circumstances. She noted Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) are allowed as secondary smaller dwellings on a lot connected to the same septic system as the primary residence and the lot does not have to be subdivided.

R. Morra said he is talking about parcels of land owners have that do not have 400 feet of frontage but have enough room to create a second lot for another house in the rear of the property, utilizing the land effectively.

Discussion continued about road infrastructure costs and the change away from developing large subdivisions.

J. Rupert said this conversation is happening because the town wants to promote a positive atmosphere to think about what the town wants to see developed on these parcels and work together with the sewer authority, PZC, and BOS so an atmosphere can be generated that is welcoming. He said he anticipates that this is one of several conversations that will take place between these town boards.

T. Manning thanked the Selectmen for coming and said it has been a very productive discussion.

c. Presentation of Connecticut's Countryside Website

P. Carson showed the Connecticut's Countryside website. She explained this started out as a four-town regional project between the towns of Bolton, Coventry, Tolland and Mansfield. She highlighted the location on the site where businesses could create an account and link their website publicizing their business and where businesses and the participating towns can also promote events on the event calendar.

d. Other: P. Carson reported the owner of **D&S Yardworks at 255 Hop River Road** wants to put in retail sales at the front of the building. She noted there used to be retail sales under a previous owner. She said the owner would like to sell woodworking tools and items related to the business. She and M. D'Amato suggested that staff could do this application as a type of modified approval. P. Carson said she reminded the owner that the wood stacked in the front of the property has to be moved and processed in the back in the industrial zone. The consensus of the commission was to have staff handle the retail application.

7. Ongoing Discussion: Bolton Subdivision and Zoning Regulations

a. Discussion of lot coverage/building coverage

P. Carson asked the commission members to think about zoning regulations for lot coverage and building coverage on the business zone lots for future discussion. T. Manning will put this on the agenda for the September meeting and asked staff to come forth with a specific recommendation that the commission could look at.

8. Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

9. Adjournment: J. Cropley MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. J. Flick SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald

Linda H. McDonald

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.