



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Planning Commission

302 Main Street
Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475

oldsaybrookct.gov

*Kenneth W. A. Soudan, Chairman
Kathleen A. Sugland, Vice Chairma
Trevor D. Ladd, Secretary*

*Robert D. Missel
Paula S. Kay
Douglas S. McCracken
Thomas R. Cox, Alternate
Vacancy, Alternate*

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at 7:00 P.M.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ken Soudan called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present: Ken Soudan, Robert Missel, Paula Kay, Doug McCracken seated for Kathleen Sugland, Trevor Ladd, Thomas Cox

Members Absent: Kathleen Sugland

Staff: Chris Costa, Zoning Enforcement Officer; Meryl Moskowitz, Recording Clerk

Two members of the public were present.

III. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Minutes

MOTION to approve the minutes of February 21, 2018 amended to show in the Roll Call Doug McCracken seated for Ken Soudan; **MADE** by D. McCracken; **SECONDED** by P. Kay; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** K. Soudan, T. Ladd, P. Kay, D. McCracken; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** R. Missel; **APPROVED:** 4-0-1.

B. Correspondence – none

C. Committee, Representative & Staff Reports

K. Soudan reported for the Regional Planning Commission. He also stated that a committee is forming to address Mariner's Way, and will be headed by Economic Development Director Susie Beckman. He asked if anyone had interest in joining the group that they contact S. Beckman.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. **Referral: Petition to Amend the Zoning Regulations**
To create Section 57 "Gateway Expanded Business Zone"
Gateway Business B-4 District, Coastal Area Management Zone
Applicant: 52 Spencer Plain Road, LLC Agent: David M. Royston, Esq.

K. Soudan asked that the Commission consider if the proposed overlay zone is the best use as a special exception to our existing gateway zoning regulations.

Attorney Sylvia Rutkowska, with the firm Dzialo Pickett & Allen, presented for the applicant. Also present were Joe Wren, P.E., and developer Eric Spungen.

S. Rutkowska read a memo dated February 6, 2018 from Attorney David Royston to the Planning Commission. The memo highlights in detail four sections of the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) that support the application's consistency with the POCD: vision, town image, economic development, and transportation.

A letter from Attorney Mark Branse, dated March 28, 2018, an update to his review letter of February 5, 2018, was distributed and reviewed. S. Rutkowska clarified some of the text changes. She also noted that the Architectural Review Board gave a favorable recommendation, and that CT River Cog provided a letter stating there were no municipal impacts.

Joe Wren, P.E. addressed the Commission on behalf of the applicant. He reiterated that the B-4 zone does not disappear, that it is still there, and that the Zoning Commission recommended that the overlay is the best way to handle these proposed uses and changes. He noted that setbacks still apply, and that anything done here requires a special exception, and will need to go through all the proper Boards and Commissions. He talked about I-95 as an economic engine. The proposed site is located at the only full interchange in Old Saybrook and it is underdeveloped. He reminded the Commission that the purpose of the Gateway B-4 is to allow for development of regional businesses that requires easy access to major highways. The proposed changes will not over burden the town infrastructure, the traffic on Rt 1 nor local roads. Quoting from the POCD, "we do not want to freeze the town in the past." J. Wren stated that the overlay would encourage appropriate growth and development, thereby generating tax revenue., and that continued development is good for the economic well-being of the town.

The applicant, Eric Spungen addressed the Commission. He believes the property at 52 Spencer Plain Road gives the town the opportunity to

generate tax income by attracting more people. He sees the location as being perfectly isolated in that it does not affect schools or Main Street, or anything else and will keep traffic away from town. He believes it is a win-win.

Commissioners discussed their positions. Doug McCracken asked if this is good for the town. Regarding town image, he sees the economic value but does not see it fitting with the town's historic image. Paula Kay stated there is nothing happening at that location and that having an attractive business may have its benefits. Thomas Cox asked for clarification of the language pertaining to signs, stating it is not clear how many signs are permitted. He would like more clarity written into the text changes such that the intent is clear.

Resident and Historian Tedd Levy addressed the Commission. His letter dated March 21, 2018 was distributed. He read key points from the letter, urging the Commission to reject the proposal, viewing it as fundamentally contrary to the vision articulated in the POCD and other documents. His letter states "the proposal would be a major set-back to the vision ... that Old Saybrook aspires to stay a small, diverse New England town." He called it a major setback and a bad proposal that opens the door to development in other parts of town.

R. Missel reminded members to look at the big picture, asking "do we want to approve the overlay zone, do we need it, and what will the impact of that be?" D. McCracken stated he does not find it consistent with the historic nature of the town. K. Soudan stated he is not in favor of creating new regulations when we have existing regulations that can be modified. He sees the highway exit as the cover of a book, the entry to town, and feels it's his mandate to preserve the town's image.

Trevor Ladd made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the Zoning Commission, finding consistency with Town Vision, Town, Image, Economic Development and Transportation.

MOTION to send a favorable recommendation to the Zoning Commission for **Referral: Petition to Amend the Zoning Regulations To create Section 57 "Gateway Expanded Business Zone"** *Gateway Business B-4 District, Coastal Area Management Zone* as it is consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation & Development regarding Vision, Image, Economic Development, and Transportation; Applicant: 52 Spencer Plain Road, LLC Agent: David M. Royston, Esq.; **MADE** by T. Ladd; **SECONDED** by P. Kay; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** R. Missel, T. Ladd, P. Kay; **OPPOSED:** K. Soudan, D. McCracken; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 3-2-0.

K. Soudan welcomed Tom Cox to the Commission.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 P.M. until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission which will be held on Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at 7:00 P.M., Town Hall, 302 Main Street, 1st Floor Conference Room; **MADE** by R. Missel; **SECONDED** by P. Kay; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** K. Soudan, R. Missel, T. Ladd, P. Kay, D. McCracken; **OPPOSED:** none; **ABSTAINED:** none; **APPROVED:** 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Meryl Moskowitz
Recording Clerk