

APPROVED FINAL MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2013 PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Chairman, Robert Maquat, opened the meeting at approximately 7:10pm
Regular Members present: Robert Maquat, Steve Carlson and Wallace Williams
Regular Members absent: Paul Dominianni and Milan Spisek
Alternate Members present: Ross Ogden, Ray Martin and Robert DeVellis
Town Officials present: John Hayes, Land Use Director and Town Engineer, Edward Nagy
For the record: Ray Martin was appointed to vote for Paul Dominianni and Robert DeVellis was appointed to vote for Milan Spisek.

Planning Meeting Carryover Items:

2.) Old Staples School

The Land Use Director is in the process of developing a long-term plan for future allocation and development of parking space on site to be presented for discussion and recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Rick Smith of the Easton Country Day was present to address current enrollment, staffing and parking to aid the Commission in its development a final parking plan for the site. Mr. Smith also addressed future development of the school.

Planning and Zoning reminded Mr. Smith of Easton Country Day School's obligation and responsibility to comply with the conditions of the special permit and the lease.

The Town Engineer, Edward Nagy, brought to the Commission's attention the need for a permanent central sign which designates the occupants of the site, to avoid confusion and the numerous signs which currently proliferate the site.

1.) Agriculture in Easton

Conservation and preservation of local farmland is one of the major recommendations of the Town Plan of Conservation and Development, adopted in 2007. The chairman, Robert Maquat noted that there are several websites one can go to for information regarding agriculture and noted that as a follow-up to the last meeting he had researched various wineries and methods used to protect large tracts of land such as the purchasing of development rights. Mr. Maquat also noted a publication called "A Call to Farms!, A Mid-Decade Look at Connecticut's Agricultural Lands 2005" prepared by Working Lands Alliance and printed by the State of Connecticut Food Policy Council, noting that it laid out the goals of the state regarding farms and its concern for losing farmland which resulted in a Farmland Preservation Program which includes such things as the Purchasing of Development Rights.

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Planning Meeting Carryover Items (continued):

1.) Agriculture in Easton (continued)

Mr. Maquat noted that with regard to wineries, he had researched other Towns and found that the challenge for regulations was not so much with the larger tracts of lands with 25 acres or more, but with the small tracts of 3 to 10 acres where one has to be concerned with traffic and pedestrian flow. He also noted that there was a difference between just fruit growth and banquets, which in some towns, banquets require 50 acres or more and the necessity of being on a State Road.

In conjunction with this item, Mr. Maquat also discussed the forming of ad hoc subcommittees for fact gathering and stated that he, himself would be continuing to gather facts on agriculture stating that it involved two issues: 1. Right to farm; as opposed to 2. farming on large tracts of land.

3.) Master Plan for Town-owned Tract on Morehouse Road (site of Staples School, recreation fields, animal control shelter, etc.).

The chairman gave a brief progress report regarding the Master Plan for Morehouse Road. It was noted that Mr. Broadbin recently went to the Conservation Commission for their input and the Planning and Zoning Commission is waiting to hear back.

4.) Wireless Telecommunication Facilities Study

The Chairman noted that a report on cell tower coverage has been received from the Connecticut Siting Council dated January 14, 2013 from Linda Roberts, Executive Director, State of Connecticut Siting Council which he read for the record (two pages plus two maps).

The Land Use Director, John Hayes, presented the two maps that were attached to the above letter: one for Cellular Coverage and the other for PCS Coverage (Data). Mr. Hayes noted that there was a significant omission in the maps in that they did not show Redding's, coverage and only one tower coverage in Weston and an apparent gap in coverage in a portion of Fairfield.

Mr. Hayes stated with regard to the review of town-owned properties suitable for a proposed cell tower he had looked recently at two properties: 1. South end of the Morehouse Road tract near the animal shelter and 2. Back of the Toth Park property on the west side of the river.

Discussion was held regarding the identification of appropriate locations within which a cell tower could be located, whether on land owned by the Town or by private individuals.

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Planning Meeting Carryover Items (continued)

4.) Wireless Telecommunication Facilities Study (continued)

Mr. Hayes stated there were three items which needed to be completed before rendering a report to the Board of Selectmen:

1. Complete information from Redding, Weston and Fairfield on cell tower coverage.
2. Review of past applications for proposed cell towers for Burr Street and Snow's Farm.
3. Determine policy for siting proposed cell towers to improve coverage.

Discussion was held that the Planning and Zoning Commission must consider the public safety of the Samuel Staples Elementary School as the Commission has an obligation to protect the health and safety of the community and there presently is a large concern on behalf of the school staff that there is a particular vulnerability regarding cell phone coverage.

Discussion was held that the Commission had an obligation to educate the townspeople and facilitate the town's location of cell towers:

1. Lack of coverage in certain parts of Town of Easton
2. Density Map
3. Present reality of lack of coverage.

The chairman noted an e-mail from Christopher Gellinas, National Sales Manager, Site Acquisition/Leasing, MCM, Inc. dated 1/28/13 requesting a list of municipal land that was being assembled for review for potential tower sites to be cross-matched with the needed coverage areas.

Discussion was held regarding the advisement of the Board of Selectmen regarding the progress that has been made and discussion of this item will be continued at the next regularly scheduled meeting, February 11, 2013.

Added to the Agenda:

Motion was made by Robert Maquat, seconded by Wallace Williams, to add to the agenda the discussion of Maple Row Growers, LLC. The vote was unanimous, 5-0, motion carried.

The chairman noted a letter dated November 27, 2012 from Attorney James E. Coyne, Coyne, Von Kuhn, Brady & Fires, LLC regarding Zoning Violations – Maple Row Growers, LLC. The chairman also noted a three way conference that had taken place between Attorney Peter Gelderman, John Hayes and himself regarding the alleged violations at Maple Row and Attorney Gelderman indicated that Maple Row would be submitting an application for special permit. The chairman also noted that an e-mail had been sent to Margret with a Proposed Amendment To Section 7.12.2 of the Easton Zoning Regulations attached.

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Added to the Agenda (continued)

Discussion of Maple Row Growers, LLC (continued)

Discussion was held as to conduct and management as it applies to employees. The Commission will discuss this item further at the next regularly scheduled meeting,

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

1. Minutes of Meetings: 10/15/12 and 10/22/12

Motion was made by Steve Carlson, seconded by Wallace Williams, to approve the minutes for 10/15/12 as amended. The vote was unanimous, 5-0, motion carried.

Motion was made by Steve Carlson, seconded by Ray Martin, to approve the minutes for 10/22/12 as amended. The vote was unanimous, 4-0, motion carried. Robert DeVellis did not vote as he was not present at that meeting.

At approximately 9:30pm motion was made by Steve Carlson, seconded by Ray Martin, to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous, motion carried.


Margaret Anahia, Recording Secretary

original calendar
3/27
RECEIVED
2013 MAR 27 A 8:07
EASTON TOWN CLERK