

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 9, 2020
FOR THE EASTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Note: These minutes, prepared to comply with Section 1-225 of the General Connecticut Statutes, is an approximate record of matters discussed and actions taken by the Commission at the meeting, but has not yet been reviewed by the commission for accuracy or completeness and is therefore subject to change or correction.

Chairman, Robert Maquat, called the Regular Meeting, Virtual Meeting via ZOOM, to order at approximately 7:05 pm.

Regular Members present: Robert Maquat, Wallace Williams, Ross Ogden and Thomas Maisano

Regular Members absent: Ray Martin

Alternate Members present: Aliston Sternberg and Jay Habansky

Alternate Members absent: Walter Kowalczyk

For the record: Jay Habansky was appointed to vote for Ray Martin

Zoning Enforcement Report: Zoning Enforcement Officer Phillip Doremus was present at the meeting. He stated that he had recently denied a Zoning Permit for the conversion of a dental office to an accessory apartment. He also gave comments on 740 Stepney Road and 45 Westport Road.

- Zoning Violation for 740 Stepney Rd/15 Hayes St - Section 3310, recreational vehicle storage – The ZEO stated he had observed two commercial vehicles on-site.
- Zoning Violation for 120 Maple Road – Section 3310, Parking, Commercial Vehicles – The Januarys were present. The Chair stated that he had attended two separate meetings with First Selectman, David Bindelglass, the first with Cindy Fales and Mr. Coward, and the second, with the Januarys.
- Zoning Violation for 45 Westport Road – Section 3500 and 5100, Home-based businesses – 2nd Zoning Violation issue 11/5/20.
- Potential violation for 57/59 Church Road – Section 6300, Exterior Lighting – No change
- Potential violation for 5 Knapp Street – Section 34301. Recreation Structures - Certified letter was received 10/1/20. No change.
- Potential violation for 116 Wilson Road – Section 3310, Parking, Commercial Vehicles Owner of 116 Wilson Road was contacted by Secretary. No change.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion was made by Wallace Williams, seconded by Ross Ogden, to approve the Minutes of Regular Meeting October 26, 2020 as presented. The vote was unanimous, 4-0, motion carried. Jay Habansky did not vote as he was not present at that meeting

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PUBLIC HEARING:

SP-20-02, Special Permit Application, submitted on behalf of Markus G and Karen B. Weinseiss, 81 Tranquility Drive, by SAVCAT, INC., to install a ground-mounted solar array, as depicted on a site map dated 10/09/2020, licensed electrician listed as Michael Joseph. The listed P.E. is James C. Douglas. Present at the meeting was Project Manager, James Ferrughelli and licensed electrician, Michael Joseph. James Ferrughelli presented the application and stated that they had already received the required approval from United Illuminating. Michael Joseph, electrician, described the specifics of the ground-mounted solar array system. James Ferrughelli discussed his memo regarding the specifics of the proposed solar system and the Special Permit Criteria.

The Chairman, Robert Maquat, noted the following comments for the record:

1. Comment from Phillip Doremus, Wetlands Enforcement Officer, July 31, 2020.
2. Comment from Easton Police Chief, Richard Doyle, dated October 8, 2020.
3. Comment from Eren Ceylan, Easton Sanitarian, dated October 9, 2020.
4. Comment from Anthony Ballaro, Easton Building Official, dated October 13, 2020.
5. The Special Permit Application, SP-20-02, for Submitted on behalf of Markus G and Karen B. Weinseiss, 81 Tranquility Drive, by SAVCAT, INC., to install a ground-mounted solar Array consisting of 8 pages.
6. One-page description letter from Steve Salansky, SAVCAT, INC., submitted with the application.
7. Package of Drawings from SAVKAT prepared by RVR Engineering.
 - a. SITE PLAN – 1, PV-1.0
 - b. SITE PLAN – 2, PV-1.1
 - c. MOUNTING DETAILS, PV-3.0
 - d. GENERAL NOTES, PV-2
 - e. STRUCTURAL DETAILS, PV-3.1
 - f. SINGLE LINE DIAGRAM, PV-4.0
 - g. WARNING PLACARDS, PV-5.0
 - h. MODULE SPECSHEET, PV – 6.0
 - i. INVERTER SPECSHEET, PV-6.1
 - j. OPTIMIZER SPECSHEET, PV-6.2
 - k. MONITORING SPECSHETT, PV-6.3
8. IMPROVEMENT LOCATION SURVEY prepared by Ochman Associates, July 3, 2012
9. Three-page submission from Solar Foundations USA, James C. Douglas Professional Engineering.

Discussion was held regarding the necessity for screening. The project manager, James Ferrughelli, stated that the proposed ground-mounted solar system would likely not be visible to the neighbors due to topography and system orientation. The system takes advantage of natural screening. The Secretary stated that all neighbors had received their certified letter except 93 Tranquility Drive.

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PUBLIC HEARING: (continued)

The Electrician, Michael Joseph, stated that no trees would be coming down and that the design was based on the usage of the home.

The Chairman read through Section 8440, Special Permit Criteria, as it related to the letter submitted by Steven Salansky, SAVCAT INC. In conclusion the Chair stated that it appeared the applicants had addressed all eleven items of criteria.

Discussion was held regarding the Nuisance Avoidance Criteria and need for screening. It was discussed that there could be a condition that the system not be visible from the neighbors. James Ferrughelli stated that if there was a nuisance screening could be done.

Two people from the public spoke.

Grant Monsarrat, 370 North Park Avenue – Mr. Monsarrat asked if there was a Power Purchase Agreement. James Ferrughelli, Project Manager stated no, the owners would own the equipment and get a rebate.

Jeff Becker, 5 Cedar Hill Road – Mr. Becker stated that 93 Tranquility Drive was lower and that they possibly might be able to see the system. It was noted that there was a ridge above them and that the system probably would not be visible.

The public hearing was closed.

On motion by Robert Maquat, seconded by Ross Ogden, the Commission approved SP-20-02, Special Permit Application, Submitted on behalf of Markus G and Karen B. Weinseiss, 81 Tranquility Drive, by SAVCAT, INC., specifically noting the following findings under Section 8440, Special Permit Criteria, Easton Zoning Regulations:

1. Zoning Purposes – The proposed use is consistent with the Zoning Regulations.
2. Environmental Protection and Conservation – The use or activity will not impair the natural environment of the nearby area or the community.
3. Overall Compatibility – The proposed use will serve a convenience and will not have a detrimental effect on neighboring properties of the development of the district.
4. Suitable Location for Use – The proposed location is suitable for the use and is in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development in the district in which it is located.
5. Appropriate Improvements – The design of the proposed structure will be consistent with the existing and future character of the neighborhood in which the use is located.
6. Suitable Transportation Conditions – It appears that the existing suitable transportation conditions in the vicinity will not be impacted after installation of the proposed structure.
7. Adequate Public Utilities and Services – It appears there is no impact to public utilities.
8. Long Term Viability – The proposed development will be consistent with the neighborhood and appears to be viable for at least 20 years.
9. Nuisance Avoidance – It appears that the proposed use will not unreasonably disturb the peace and tranquility of nearby properties but if there is a concern brought up by neighbors after installation, it can be addressed.

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PUBLIC HEARING: (continued)

Motion (continued):

10. Plan of Conservation and Development – The proposed use is consistent with the Easton Town Plan, Section 4.3, Promote Sustainability and Resiliency, A. Sustainability, to promote energy conservation by the Town and Residents and allow for “green building” and solar and wind generation as accessory uses on private property as appropriate for Easton.

11. Mitigation – The proposed use will be a low-intensity use of the property consistent with the neighborhood.

The vote was unanimous, 5-0, motion carried.

New Business:

- Amendment to original permit to build the Easton Public Library, SP-93-3, 691 Morehouse Road, for a sign to be placed on the front of the Library Building, site plan dated October 31, 2018 by Silver/Petrucelli + Associates, Practice of Architecture and Engineering.

The Chairman noted that the Special Permit Application submitted for sign at the Easton Public Library had been signed by the First Selectman and acknowledged that the Board of Selectmen had already approved the application for a sign at the Easton Public Library.

The Commission discussed the application submitted for minor amendment to the existing Special Permit Application, SP-93-03, for the installation of a sign to the right of the door on the front of the Easton Public Library Building, 691 Morehouse Road, as evidenced by pictures submitted by Lynn Zaffino, Director of the Easton Public Library on November 9, 2020. The Chairman noted that this request was made to avoid confusion with the location of the Easton Public Library as evidenced in the memo from the Director of the Easton Public Library, Lynn Zaffino. Dated 11/03/20 which was read into the record.

On motion by Robert Maquat, seconded by Wallace Williams, the Commission moved that this body takes administrative notice of the willingness of the Easton Public Library to install a sign and that this request for installation of sign on the Easton Public Library Building is consistent with the original Special Permit Application submitted in 1993 which indicated multiple signs to be installed. It was noted that the sign had already been granted by the Board of Selectmen. Furthermore, from an administrative standpoint, the building was completed, now that funding is available, the Easton Public Library is asking to finish improvements.

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New Business:

Amendment to original permit to build the Easton Public Library, SP-93-3: (continued)

- After discussion the motion was amended to state that the Commission further states that this approval is consistent with the Easton Zoning Regulations, Section 8470, Subsection 6.
“6. An approved Special Permit may be amended or modified, provided that application shall be made in the same manner as the original application.” And, “6 a. Amendments to the Special Permit which the Commission finds to be minor in nature, do not substantially alter the Special Permit, and will not adversely affect adjacent properties or the neighborhood, may be approved by the Commission without another public hearing.” The vote was unanimous, 5-0, motion carried.
- 2021 Calendar of Scheduled Meetings for the Easton Planning and Zoning Commission – The Commission did not review; they will review at next meeting November 30, 2020.
- 2019-2020 Annual Report for the Easton Planning and Zoning Commission – The Commission did not review; they will review at next meeting November 30, 2020.
- Road Safety Audit with CTDOT – Justin Giorlando stated that the safety audit would be conducted essentially free of charge probably in January of 2021 and that the audit would likely begin on Route 59 (Sport Hill Road) at the town line and continue onto Center Road and end at the intersection with Route 136 (Westport Road). Present will be the Town Engineer, First Selectman, Easton Traffic Authority, METROCOG, CT DOT, and others to be determined; the result will be a report for pedestrian and biking safety in this corridor. Expanding on that idea it was determined that Commissioners Robert Maquat and Ross Ogden should also participate in this Safety Audit.
- Traffic Counting – Justin Giorlando stated that METROCOG has a Traffic Counting Program that deploys road-side devices to collect data. There may be a few sites that would benefit; P&Z Commission will defer to the engineers for which stretch of road they recommend data be collected to aid the RSA or other locations. The devices will provide traffic count and speed and will help with planning and future grants.

During the discussion of this item Lynn Zaffino, Director of the Easton Public Library, entered the Zoom Meeting and was advised of the approval of the sign for the Easton Public Library.

- Bike Racks via DPH Active Transportation Grant – Justin Giorlando stated that there was an Active Transportation Grant which could provide additional funds for bike racks, up to ten bike racks per municipality, in a regional application to by METROCOG. The Commission was asked to provide spots beneficial to have a bike rack

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- *Grant Application - TAP* – No discussion; no update.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Public hearings are necessary but have been put off for some time on the following items.
 - Plan of Conservation & Development Amendment Section 6 – Add “6.6. Recommended Plans and Programs to Support Easton’s Conservation, Development, and Infrastructure Strategies” – Document was circulated to the Commission. No discussion.
 - Zoning Amendment Sections 3250.7 & 5340 – Add “Managed Residential Home” as a permitted principal structure and use – No discussion.
 - Zoning Amendment Section 3310 Parking, 3. Commercial Vehicle Storage – No changes made; no discussion.
 - Other Zoning Regulations Needing a Possible Amendment – Several other items were noted at the previous meetings needing changing. No changes made; no discussion.
- *GIS Project* – Still under review. No update.
- Review Subdivision Regulations – The Chairman stated that Glenn Chalder has contacted Town Officials to offer their comments regarding the Subdivision Regulations.

Announcements/Correspondence:

- Letter from Michael Linnane, 101 Burr Street, Re: SP-17-01, Affordable Accessory Apartment – Discussion was held that the attorney for Mr. Linnane should draft an affidavit which affirms the intent to no longer have an affordable apartment and confirm that the apartment space created under affordable housing conforms with the current regulations. The affidavit should be submitted with a zoning permit for an accessory apartment to use the space as such. Commissioner Wallace Williams will review the approval for this affordable apartment.
- Transportation Technical Advisory Committee – Justin Giorlando stated that there were several summits and conversations available for commissioners to attend and that interested parties should let him know.
 - Resilient CT, 11/20 9-11:45
 - Connecticut Strategic Highway Safety Plan Virtual Summit 12/8 and 12/9 (9 am-4:30 pm) - "Road to Saving Lives"
 - Multimodal and Transit Summit, 11/23 11-7:30
 - Federal Transportation Outlook: Join AAA Northeast for conversations about the outlook for transportation during the 117th Congress about a variety of transportation issues, including funding, local projects, and green transportation:
 - Jim Himes – Tuesday, Nov. 17, 12:00-12:30pm
 - Jahana Hayes – Tuesday, Nov. 24, 11:00-11:30am

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At approximately 9:00 pm, there being no other business to be conducted, motion was made by, Ross Ogden, seconded by Wallace Williams, to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous, 5-0, motion carried.


Margaret Anania, Recording Secretary