

Thomaston Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2021

Members Present: Ralph Celone, Chairman, Tom Mueller, Brian Davis, Sally Brouillet, Jessica Lorusso, Elizabeth Jamieson

Others Present: Stacey Sefcik - ZEO, Darryl Maslak, Allison Ibbotson

The meeting convened at 7:02 pm.

Members Seated: R. Celone, T. Mueller, B. Davis, S. Brouillet, J. Lorusso

PUBLIC HEARING:

Agenda Item #1 – Consideration for a 6 month moratorium on cannabis establishments

Applicant: Thomaston Planning and Zoning Commission

S. Sefcik explained that the CT General Assembly is proposing a bill that would permit cannabis establishments to sell recreational marijuana and that the way the bill is currently written, unless Zoning Commissions act otherwise, they will be allowed any place where retail sales are permitted, which would be in our Downtown Development District, near the schools, parks, etc.

S. Sefcik also explained that the moratorium would allow the Commission time to evaluate where in Town would be appropriate locations for the establishments.

S. Sefcik presented a proposed regulation drafted by the Town Attorney for review and discussion.

S. Brouillet asked if the State is saying we have to allow cannabis establishments.

S. Sefcik replied yes, if the bill passes.

Public comment: None

A motion was made by T. Mueller and seconded by B. Davis to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 4-0-1 abstention by S. Brouillet.

A motion was made by T. Mueller and seconded by J. Lorusso to adopt the temporary moratorium as presented for 6 months finding that it is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development and effective the day after publication. Motion unanimously passed.

REGULAR MEETING:

Minutes:

A motion was made by J. Lorusso and seconded by T. Mueller to approve the minutes. Motion passed 3-0-2 abstention by B. Davis and S. Brouillet.

Old Business:

Agenda Item #1 – Draft amendments to Erosion & Sedimentation Controls and addition of Low Impact Development and Stormwater Management regulations required per the MS-4 General Permit, and commercial vehicles, signs, solar, detached accessory apartments, etc.)

R. Celone explained to the public in attendance that the Commission didn't want to schedule a public hearing on the text amendments until it could be held in person, but since there are people in the audience tonight, he will open it up for public comment.

Public Comment:

John Curry commented that he would like to know the concerns are for having commercial vehicles parked on properties and that it is a security issue when he keeps his truck at work.

R. Celone explained that as the current regulations are written, it isn't allowed in residential zones.

S. Sefcik explained that with the current regulation, she could do enforcement on commercial vehicles in residential zones, but it is not the Commission's desire to do so, and that the new regulations would make it explicitly permissible.

Dan Hill commented that we tried this 10/15 years ago and there was a big uproar about it, that he has been parking his truck at his house for 30 years and was told he would be grandfathered in the last time, and asked what was going to happen to all the people like him.

R. Celone replied that he would still be grandfathered in, that we are not disallowing it, but limiting it, and suggested everyone get a copy of the proposed regulations before the public hearing.

Mario Chioveti commented that everyone should get a copy of the draft regulations because it should explain everything and as long as is in explained in the regulations, they are fine with it.

Josh Williams commented that he is concerned that if you have a disgruntle neighbor, they could say it isn't allowed and push it, that this is a working town with a lot of businesses, and if you drive around, you will see something on every block.

A motion was made by T. Mueller and seconded by J. Lorusso to schedule the public hearing for the July 7, 2021 meeting for the text amendments for erosion & sedimentation controls and addition of Low Impact Development and Stormwater Management regulations per the MS-4 General Permit, and commercial vehicles, signs, solar, detached accessory apartments. Motion unanimously passed.

New Business:

Agenda Item #2 – Sign permit application #2021-05-18-01 for a 32 square foot sign at 27 River St. in a general commercial zone

Applicant: D. Maslak

D. Maslak presented a site plan showing where the sign will be located, noting that the lot is lower than the road, and explained that it will not be illuminated.

S. Sefcik explained that as the current regulation is written, signs can't exceed 16' from grade, but this sign will be 29' high in order to be above grade level from the road. Discussion ensued.

D. Maslak assured the Commission that the sign will not be more than 16' above the sidewalk.

A motion was made by T. Mueller and seconded by J. Lorusso to grant the sign permit application #2021-05-18-01 for a 32 square foot sign at 27 River St. in a general commercial zone, not to be more than 16' above the sidewalk. Motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #1 – Sign permit application #2021-05-05-01 for a 32 square foot sign at 437 South Main St. in an M1 manufacturing zone for Pinbro Assoc.

Agent: A. Ibbotson

A. Ibbotson explained that the sign will be a 12’ high double sided sign for multiple tenants, will be internally illuminated, and will be 25’ set back from the road.

R. Celone asked S. Sefcik if the sign meets all of the regulations and she replied yes.

A motion was made by B. Davis and seconded J. Lorusso to approve application #2021-05-05-01 for a 32 square feet sign at 437 South Main St. Motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #3 – Discussion of Airbnb use of residential properties

S. Sefcik explained that from her enforcement report last month, the Commission asked that Airbnb’s be put on this month’s agenda for discussion

Discussion ensued regarding how to regulate them, if it would be considered a home based business, that there would be multiple family units on properties, and possible issues that could happen if they are allowed.

S. Sefcik will find out how other towns are regulating them and get some advice from Atty. Byrnes for next month’s meeting.

Communications:

S. Sefcik reported that she received information regarding possible changes to notifications of properties in the Aquifer Protection Area and legislative updates regarding possible changes to affordable housing with the regards to zoning.

Reports of Officers, Staff, and Committee:

S. Sefcik presented and discussed her enforcement report.

Executive Session:

A motion was made by T. Mueller and seconded by J. Lorusso to move into Executive Session at 8:37 pm and to invite S. Sefcik in. Motion unanimously passed.

A motion was made by T. Mueller and seconded by B. Davis to move of our Executive Session at 8:54 pm. Motion unanimously passed.

The Commission moved out of Executive Session with no action taken.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by T. Mueller and seconded by B. Davis to adjourn at 8:55 pm. Motion unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Santa Maria,
Recording Secretary