

**REGULAR MEETING Tuesday, APRIL 7th, 2009  
EAST LYME PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Francine Schwartz, Acting Chairman, Tom Perron, Paul Dagle,  
George McPherson, Alternate, Drew Kenny, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT: Gary Goeschel, Planning Director  
Jack Hogan, Ex-Officio, Board of Selectmen

ABSENT: Lisa Picarazzi, Chairman, Mike Bowers, Chris Sandford

Acting Chairman Schwartz called this Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:03 PM and seated George McPherson, Alternate at the table this evening.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge was observed.

**I. Emergent Additions to the Agenda**

Ms. Schwartz asked if there were any additions to the agenda.

Mr. Dagle asked about the Alternate position.

Mr. Goeschel said that they could add that under Old Business – Discussion of Alternate Position.

**\*\*MOTION (1)**

**Mr. McPherson moved to add under Old Business – Discussion of Alternate Position.**

**Mr. Dagle seconded the motion.**

Mr. Perron asked if they have some information on this.

Mr. Goeschel said that they did.

**Vote: 4 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

(Note: Drew Kenny, Alternate arrived and was seated at the table.)

**II. Public Delegations**

*Public Delegations is the time when members of the public are invited to speak to the Commission about certain matters. Issues or concerns related to approved subdivisions under construction (Item IV.) and in-house proposals or general topics of discussion (Item VII.) are open to comment. Items, referrals, or applications subject to a decision by the Commission, a public hearing, or in litigation may not be discussed. The members of the Commission will not directly answer questions or make comment during delegations.*

Ms. Schwartz called for Public Delegations.

Nancy Kalal, 80 Grassy Hill Road said that she noticed that Mr. Miniutti had spoken about there being 420 acres of agricultural land in East Lyme and that there is a lot more farmland than that. The Assessor's office says that there is 3,240.94 acres in PA 490 of protected agricultural land. She said that she further researched this on the internet and found that it is about a fifth of the Town. She said that various types of farms such as Scott's, white Gate and the former Hathaway farm are replacing the former larger farms. She said that they feel that by taking the tact of the extreme right that they hope to come to a happy medium as it is a significant chunk of land and it needs to be mentioned in the POCD in more than a line or two.  
(Note: 7:15 PM - Jack Hogan, Ex-Officio joined the meeting.)

Bob Foster, 22A Scott Road said that this Commission is going to put together a Plan of Development for the Town that is to be used for the next 10 years or so and it is an important decision making process that they are undertaking and he asked that they be innovative and fore-runners in their planning. He asked that

they think about how they can protect and even encourage more agricultural development – so that they do not incur more instances of farms such as the Hathaway Farm on Upper Pattagansett where they fell on some hard times and developers bought the property. It was pristine farmland that was developed into one-acre lots and filled with nice homes. But – every home is nearly identical to the one next to it and they are close together. He suggested that they take a ride out to see this as he personally does not think that it meets the POCD style. He suggested that they make them have 10-15 acre parcels so that the farmers could sell off say – one parcel if they are hurting and still keep the farm operation. Then, the one parcel of 10 to 15 acres could easily have just the one home on it – this would be farm estate planning. He said that Vermont does this all the time. He also noted that traffic on Scott Road has increased dramatically. He said that he thinks that they have to keep the farms from being sold to developers.

Tom Kalal, 80 Grassy Hill Road said that he wanted to speak regarding the workshop that was held the previous evening by the POCD Steering Committee. He thought that it was great and noted that they had said that they would be adding a section to the POCD on Green Energy and Affordable Housing and said that he would like a section added on Agriculture to protect the prime farmland. He suggested that they also protect the important soils and allow the developers to develop the worst soils. He said that he had picked up some information from some other Towns that had recently updated their POCD's and that he would provide them with it later. He asked that they also relax the taxes on Town farm buildings, sheds and coops and ease the 'insane' building codes for animal structures.

Pauline Lord, 83 Upper Pattagansett Road said that she is home to White Gate Farm and that her family owns 100 acres of land in this Town. They grow organic foods and harvest three tons of organic produce each year. She would like the farming profile elevated in the POCD. The benefits of farming are that they provide local food; they provide habitats for birds, and animals, etc.; their location provides physical beauty; they are a tourist attraction; they provide taxes for the Town and they support each others' businesses in the Town.

Steve Harney, 20 Islanda Court said that he attended the POCD workshop the previous evening and while he agrees that there is a need for agriculture, he also believes that development is a fact of life. He said that they could perhaps look at cluster subdivisions such as those discussed at a previous workshop held last fall on conservation subdivisions. He suggested giving people options within developing and also retaining some of the farming and agricultural aspects.

Pat Gaffney, 2 Pepperidge Lane said that he and his family moved here from Orange County, California. The area of the former Hathaway Farms is a reason why they moved here and is part of the basic character of the Town. He said that he supports farms and thinks that they need to be protected and that a balance and harmony along with a tax base can be had with everyone working together.

### **III. Approval of Minutes – Workshop Minutes of March 17, 2009**

Mr. Dagle said that he did not have a copy of these to read.

Ms. Schwartz said that as they did not have copies that they would table them to the next meeting of the Commission.

#### **Subdivisions (Approved and Under Construction)**

*(A list of approved subdivisions under construction will be posted on the Town web-site @ [www.eltownhall.com](http://www.eltownhall.com) under "Planning Commission". The Active Subdivision List will also be available upon request in the Land Use Office. This agenda item shall be reserved for items requiring administrative action by the Planning Commission for already approved subdivisions.)*

### **IV. Applications/Current Subdivision Approval/Construction Reports**

There were none.

### **V. Zoning Referrals (CGS 8-3A)**

#### **1. AHEPA 250 Inc., Application for a Proposed Text Amendment to Section 25.5 of the Zoning**

## **Regulations**

Ms. Schwartz said that the information on this was sent in the mail. She asked Mr. Goeschel if he would explain this to them.

Mr. Goeschel said that he had provided them with a memo stating that they are looking to decrease that total area for a multi-family dwelling. This generally appears to be consistent with the POCD regarding residential multi-family housing of this type and they could still control where this housing would be considered.

Ms. Schwartz said that their task is to see if they find it consistent or inconsistent with the POCD. She noted that this would appear before the Zoning Commission on May 7, 2009 so they still had time on it. She called for comments from the commissioners.

Mr. Dagle and Mr. McPherson said that the bottom line of this requested zone change is that it will allow greater density and bearing that in mind, they would argue that the current regulation is consistent as it stands.

Ms. Schwartz said that they would table this discussion at this time and would take up a decision at their next meeting. (Note: part of discussion is missing from tape.)

## **VI. 8-24 Referrals (Municipal Improvements)**

There were none.

## **VII. New Business**

There was none.

## **VIII. Old Business**

### **1. Discussion of Alternate Position**

The Commission heard from a person from the audience who was interested in filling the position. (Note: The tape ran out and this part is missing) They said that they would not make a decision this evening and would check about if an ad was supposed to run.

Mr. Dagle said that he wanted to know what they had said in their minutes.

Mr. Perron asked how it was normally done to fill a position.

Mr. Dagle said that while he was not looking to spend money on a newspaper ad that normally is was all done by word of mouth and that he heard about it as he knew the former Planner, Meg and she called him and asked him if he was interested in being on the Commission as they had a vacancy. He said that they could mention it to people and to their respective party chairs and have people who are interested come to present themselves to them.

Mr. Goeschel said that as the time to fill the position had passed and they had a copy of the letter that was sent to Ms. Mulholland; they could forward a suggested candidate's information with a letter from them to the Board of Selectmen and the position could be filled in that way.

### **2. POCD Update**

#### **• Goals and Objectives proposed draft language prepared by the POCD Steering Committee**

Mr. Goeschel said that he asked the Steering Committee for comments on the Goals & Objectives Draft language and that once this was done, they would start moving forward on the text. He noted that the POCD workshop the previous evening was successful and that they have collected a lot of data and are in the position to start making decisions on where and how they want things to be and look. He asked the commissioners if there were things that they wanted the UConn team to look at such as transportation, agriculture and that if so, to please let him know as he would pass it along to them.

Mr. Perron asked the due date for comments.

Mr. Goeschel said that he would like to have them by the end of the month so that there is time to review it.

Mr. Dagle asked about the deadline on the POCD and a timeline as at the end of the year they will also have elections and new people. He said that he thinks that they have to start cutting off on accepting new information and get to the business of writing as they have to present it to a number of departments and allow them to comment and also to the public for their comments.

Mr. Goeschel said that UConn is still on target for June to finish their part. He noted that there are two State departments that have to review and comment and a public hearing, plus the Board of Selectmen – so he would give that process a good two months to complete. He said that he has already spoken with the department heads and asked them to bring forth their ideas, etc.

Ms. Schwartz suggested that at their workshop meeting that they try to put some people and subcommittees together with dates on when things should be done.

## **IX. Reports**

### **1. Chairman**

Ms. Schwartz said that she did not have any further comments.

### **2. Zoning Representative**

There was no report.

### **3. Regional Planning Commission Representative – Christopher Sandford, Luane Lange, Alternate**

There was no report.

### **4. Subcommittees**

There was no discussion.

### **5. Ex-Officio – Jack Hogan**

Mr. Hogan said that they are doing a good job and that they have to continue moving forward on this.

Mr. McPherson asked Mr. Hogan if he has heard of any pay freezes on the Education side.

Mr. Hogan said that he has not heard of any. He noted that the hardest part of the budget is that they still do not have a good feel from the State on the revenue side and probably won't for some time.

### **6. Staff/Communications**

Mr. Goeschel said that he did not have anything further to report.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **\*\*MOTION (2)**

**Mr. McPherson moved to adjourn this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Planning Commission at 8:30 PM.**

**Mr. Dagle seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary