



Town of
North Stonington, CT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021 - 7:00pm

VIA ZOOM

MINUTES APPROVED ~ APRIL 8, 2021

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** Chairman Louis Steinbrecher called the Regular Meeting of the North Stonington Planning & Zoning Commission to order on Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 7:07 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Louis Steinbrecher, Chairman, Wayne Wilkinson, Pat Lewis, Mark Leonard, Ed Learned and Robert Kappes (Alternate) arrived at 7:10 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Jennifer Pensa (Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: Planning, Development & Zoning Official Juliet Hodge, and Administrative Assistant Cheryl Konsavitch

2. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

MOTION by M. Leonard, SECOND by W. Wilkinson to amend the agenda to add 90-day filing extension for MOD SPL #20-107 under New Business

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

4. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

TX AM #21-015 (*Text Amendment*) Application of North Stonington Business Park, LLC, c/o Salvatore E. Cherenzia, IV, 99 Mechanic Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379 requesting a text amendment to allow by Site Plan approval in the Highway Commercial Zoning District, the uses of Recreational Campground, Recreation Facility Indoor & Outdoor & Recreational Vehicle Park, Luxury on parcels containing a minimum lot size of 50 acres. (*PH scheduled to open on 04/01/21; Commission received on 03/04/21 & PH must close on or by 05/05/21*)

Chairman Steinbrecher read the application into the record.

Seated: L. Steinbrecher, W. Wilkinson, P. Lewis, E. Learned, M. Leonard

The applicant, Mr. Sal Cherenzia was present to go over the proposal. Mr. Cherenzia is the owner of the 65.74ac property in North Stonington along with 4.41 acres in RI. The parcel can only be accessed via RI along Clarks Falls Road/High Street, and has a border along I-95 and its entrance is less than ½ mile from both the north and south exit and entrance ramps of I-95. Mr. Cherenzia stated he believes the uses he is requesting to be added to the HC Zone are appropriate, and with the 50-acre minimum acreage requirement, and the location of the parcel envisioned for these uses, there is the ability to easily provide buffers to neighboring properties. Mr. Cherenzia stated he is not against amending his proposal to reduce the minimum acreage to 15 acres so that the abutting parcel could also take advantage of the new permitted uses, if the Commission feels so inclined.

J. Hodge went over her review of the application and stated the HC Zone is comprised of 26 parcels and is located along the border of RI off Exit 93. J. Hodge stated the Commission is acting in their legislative capacity for this application, and their primary task is to determine whether the uses proposed to be added are appropriate for the HC zone. J. Hodge went over the uses that are currently allowed in the zone and the intent of the HC

Zone as stated in the regulations. J. Hodge stated that all the uses proposed to be added exist in the regulations and all are currently allowed in the RC Zone, and one permitted in the Industrial Zone (Recreational Campground). She gave the following reasons why she felt the uses proposed were appropriate for the HC Zone and other reasons to support the application.

- **Excellent location (like KOA) for a Recreational use, right off the exit with virtually no traffic impact to streets in North Stonington (with respect to large RV's coming and going). On-site amenities will also help keep visitors on the property. Could see some additional traffic to the Casinos from the RV Park along Rte. 184 and/or Route 2, which will hopefully bring additional customers to businesses along the way.**
- **Location is on the far eastern edge of Town, with largest vacant parcels well buffered from any surrounding parcels. There are only 2 residential properties between the highway and the RI border along Clarks Falls Road.**
- **There are no parcels within the HC Zone that are within the Water Supply Protection Area.**
- **Will bring needed tax revenue. KOA is one of the top 10 tax payers per the Assessor, campgrounds with water and electric hook up per site generate high tax revenues. Hotels and multi-family developments are the other excellent sources of tax revenue.**
- **The proposed uses will not adversely impact the schools, or overburden Emergency Services.**
- **A development utilizing the proposed uses would create jobs.**
- **Several options for vehicle service in the immediate vicinity. Gas Stations can accommodate large vehicles.**
- **The HC Zone was identified on the Future Land Use Plan (2013 POCD) as a Planning Opportunity Area with several underutilized or vacant parcels identified. The vacant parcels suitable for this proposed use are south of I95 and were envisioned for "restaurants, hotels and commercial development geared toward passing travelers, tourists as well as residents in the Clarks Falls area in the POCD. The proposed recreational uses to be considered for this Zone could provide the density needed for additional retail or hospitality uses to develop. Additional traffic off the exit will help the 3 gas stations and the small restaurants within the Truck Stop and Mobil Station. The Dollar General and package store would also benefit from more people in the area.**
- **COVID has had an impact on how people travel and vacation. This is expected to last for a while. These types of recreational uses are not intensive and could be converted to another use some time in the future if need be.**
- **Uses currently allowed in other zones in Town, therefore approval criteria specific to the uses already exist.**

J. Hodge felt the HC Zone was an ideal location for the proposed uses.

The Commission asked questions pertaining to the proposal which included seasonal usage, density of RV's on the parcel and possible off-season storage.

The Commission discussed possibly changing the minimum acreage requirement to 15 acres, but after discussing the current restriction of 25-acre minimum for the campground uses, and the fact that the acreage minimum could be addressed at a later time in a separate application, they thought it best to keep the 50-acre minimum as presented.

Chairman Steinbrecher asked if there were any questions or comments from the public pertaining to the application. The following people spoke:

- Jill Marquardt, 326 Clarks Falls Rd., was in favor of reducing the acreage to a minimum of 15.
- Brett Mastroanni, EDC Chairman, stated the EDC Commission supports this Text Amendment.

Chairman Steinbrecher asked if there was anyone from the public speaking in favor of this application. The following people spoke:

- Shawn Murphy
- Jody Whipple
- Brett Mastroanni, EDC Chairman
- Kerri Perez
- Bruce Richards

Chairman Steinbrecher asked if there was anyone from the public speaking against this application. There were none.

S. Cherenzia thanked the Commission for hearing the application and hopes to move forward with a plan.

MOTION by W. Wilkinson, SECOND by M. Leonard to close the Public Hearing on TX AM #21-015. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. PENDING APPLICATIONS:

TX AM #21-015 (*Text Amendment*) Application of North Stonington Business Park, LLC, c/o Salvatore E. Cherenzia, IV, 99 Mechanic Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379 requesting a text amendment to allow by Site Plan approval in the Highway Commercial Zoning District, the uses of Recreational Campground, Recreation Facility Indoor & Outdoor & Recreational Vehicle Park, Luxury on parcels containing a minimum lot size of 50 acres.

Seated: L. Steinbrecher, W. Wilkinson, P. Lewis, E. Learned, M. Leonard

MOTION by W. Wilkinson, SECOND by M. Leonard to approve TX AM #21-015 (*Text Amendment*) Application of North Stonington Business Park, LLC, c/o Salvatore E. Cherenzia, IV, 99 Mechanic Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379 requesting a text amendment to allow by Site Plan approval in the Highway Commercial Zoning District, the uses of Recreational Campground, Recreation Facility Indoor & Outdoor & Recreational Vehicle Park, Luxury on parcels containing a minimum lot size of 50 acres. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, EFFECTIVE THE DAY AFTER PUBLICATION, APRIL 9, 2021.

6. SENIOR PLANNER & ZONING OFFICIAL'S REPORT/ISSUES:

a. ZEO Activity Report/March

J. Hodge went over her activity report with the Commission and went over enforcement issues and briefly updated the Commission on her meeting pertaining to the water utility extension.

b. Note Pending: [PETITION NO. 1443](#) - SR North Stonington, LLC petition for a declaratory ruling for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 9.9-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility on five parcels located north and south of Providence New London Turnpike (State Route 184).

J. Hodge stated that there was a site-walk on the property on March 23rd and the public comment period has been extended to April 26th.

7. PLANNING ISSUES & DISCUSSION:

Seasonal versus Year Round – J. Hodge updated the Commission and showed them a spreadsheet of the seasonal and year-round parcels in the Billings Lake SUOA showing the acreage of the lots. J. Hodge stated she would have spreadsheets of the other lakes for the Commission and they can start discussing the possibility of changing some of the existing seasonal homes to year round use based on a new set of criteria to be developed by the Commission.

8. NEW APPLICATIONS:

Chairman Steinbrecher read the application into the record.

Seated: L. Steinbrecher, W. Wilkinson, P. Lewis, E. Learned, M. Leonard

SPL #21-028 (*Site-Plan*) Application of Ms Beer Haven LLC, c/o Philipp Baumann, 622 Pendleton Hill Rd., N. Stonington, CT 06359 for site-plan approval for a proposed Farm Nano-Brewery Use to be located & operated within an existing Barn/Out-Bldg. on existing farm for Commercial Beer Sales only. No on-site consumption of beer proposed, on property located at 622 Pendleton HI Rd in an R80 Zone. Tax Map #72, Lot #6436

Mr. Philipp Baumann was present and went over his proposal. P. Baumann stated he would be using a 1 ½ barrel system, and would produce only 50 Barrels a year. He is proposing to sell the beer commercially and from a farm stand on his property, but there would be no tasting room or onsite consumption. P. Baumann stated he has an apiary on his property, and grows hops and fruit trees. He would like to expand with the planting of several types of nut trees.

The Commission asked questions pertaining to the application and J. Hodge stated the Commission needs to determine if the plan he submitted is acceptable instead of an A-2 survey, although the plan submitted is more detailed than a plot plan and signed and stamped by his engineer. The Commission consensus was to accept the plot plan instead of an A-2 Site Plan. P. Lewis abstained. J. Hodge stated she will write up a formal review for the Commission's April 8th meeting.

9. OLD BUSINESS: None

10. NEW BUSINESS:

Applicant requesting a 90-day filing extension from 05/07/21 for approved MOD SPL #20-107 (*Site Plan Modification*) Application of Quinlan Enterprises, LLC, 152 Wheeler Rd., Stonington, CT 06378 for the construction of a Phase 2 warehouse building on property located at 75 Frontage Rd., in an EDD/WSPO Zone. Tax Map #122, Lot #7634.

Seated: L. Steinbrecher, W. Wilkinson, P. Lewis, E. Learned, M. Leonard

The applicant requested the 90-day filing extension to file the mylars just in case they were not able to file before the May 7th deadline.

MOTION by M. Leonard, SECOND by W. Wilkinson to approve the 90-day filing extension request from 05/07/21. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. REVIEW MINUTES:

Review minutes of Regular Meeting of 03/11/21. The minutes of 03/11/21 were accepted as submitted.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by M. Leonard, SECOND by E. Learned to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Konsavitch

Cheryl Konsavitch, Administrative Assistant
Land Use Office