

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION

Approved Minutes

Monday, November 9, 2020

Planning Commission: Ken Belliveau, Chair; Mary Koen; Eric Gross; Martha Staskus

Staff: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner

Public: Alyssa Johnson, Economic Development Director, Billy Vigdor

The Chair opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. The Planning Commission (PC) members and Steve Lotspeich participated in person and the members of the public participated via ZOOM.

AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

The agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

MOTION:

Eric Gross moved and Martha Staskus seconded the motion to approve the minutes of October 26, 2020, as amended.

VOTE: The motion was approved 4 - 0.

DISCUSS THE PROPOSED UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT BYLAW

The Planning Commission (PC) discussed Section 3.1.6.G, Height. The exemptions in Sub-section 3.1.6.G(1) were discussed including cupolas. It was agreed to keep cupolas exempt even though they may be occupied by people. This sub-section does not have a limit on the footprint for the exempt structures that are on building roofs. The current Zoning Regulations have a limit of 10% of the roof area for exempt structures. It was agreed that the 10% limit should be added to the draft Bylaw. "Parapet walls and cornices" were deleted from Sub-section 3.1.6.G (1)(b) since they are typically part of the wall system of buildings and should be included in the height limit.

Ken Belliveau said that he would like to have rooftop mechanical equipment screened from view in certain areas. It was agreed that this screening aspect should be re-visited in the consideration of the draft site plan review and design review sections. Rooftop solar panels were discussed. If they are net-metered and require a state Certificate of Public Good they are generally exempt from the requirement to get a zoning permit and any related review under criteria such as height limits. Chimneys were also discussed and it was generally agreed that height limits should not apply to chimneys since their height is often dictated by functional issues such as fire safety and the necessity to draw properly.

The minimum height standards in Sub-section 3.1.6.G (3) were discussed. These standards are set up to make sure that new buildings in areas such as the downtown are at least two stories tall for the facades that face streets. The reference to the definition of "façade" will be added to this section.

Section 3.1.7, Density Standards was discussed. The reference to Section 4.2.1 was corrected to be 4.2.2. The issue of more than one principal dwelling or use on a lot was discussed again in the

context of allowed density. Ken said that a subdivision is required when more than one principal dwelling or principal use/commercial building is permitted on a single lot, in some other municipalities.

Sub-section 3.1.7.B was discussed. This bylaw could limit changes of use from existing dwelling units to a commercial use such as offices or retail since the minimum square footage for the new non-residential use would apply. This issue should be re-visited when the dimensional criteria are reviewed for the various zoning districts that allow mixed residential and commercial uses.

The maximum density in square footage allowed for non-residential uses was discussed. It was agreed that we may not want to have any maximum density limits for these uses but regulate the scale of buildings through the site plan review criteria and process. The maximum density limits for non-residential uses are typically used to limit the size and scale of big box stores on larger lots and may be too restrictive in the village areas with smaller lots and various mixes of uses. It was agreed to strike out subsection 3.1.7.B with a comment that it is too restrictive and more flexibility in the zoning districts that allow mixed uses is needed.

The parking requirements for residential uses were discussed. It was agreed that the use of on-street parking spaces to meet these requirements is not appropriate due to the municipality's winter parking ban at night time.

The discussion of the draft Unified Development Bylaw at the next PC meeting will continue with Section 3.2, Base Zoning Districts.

PLANNER'S REPORT

Steve said that the town Energy Plan Committee, that includes Martha and him, is working on addressing the 52 action items in the Town Energy Plan. Martha and Steve will be addressing the action items related to zoning so those considerations can be discussed in the context of the draft Unified Development Bylaw.

Steve announced that the four-year check-in for Waterbury's Downtown Designation was held this afternoon prior to the PC meeting, with Gary Holloway with the state Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The meeting included Bill Shepeluk, and Karen Nevin and Alyssa Johnson with Revitalizing Waterbury, Inc. and went very well.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The PC reviewed the Zoning Administrator's Reports for May and June. Steve is still catching up from the time when Dina Bookmyer-Baker was on furlough. The PC members commented that in the case of zoning permit applications that are incomplete and are not going to be completed or resolved, the applicant should be given a deadline and if the application is not completed or resolved by the deadline, it should be denied by the Zoning Administrator. Steve concurred that this is a reasonable and advisable procedure. He will communicate this comment to Dina Bookmyer-Baker.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 23rd at 6:00 p.m. in person and via ZOOM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Lotspeich, Acting Secretary