

**BRISTOL PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER:

By: Acting Chairman Soares

Time: 7:01 P.M.

Place: City Hall

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS	NAME:	PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Chairman William Veits (Chairman)		X
	John Soares (Acting Chairman and Vice Chairman)	X	
	Andrew Howe (Secretary)	X	
	Jon Pose	X	
	Terry Parker		X
ALTERNATE MEMBERS	Jeff Hayden (Alternate)	X	
	Joseph Kelaita (Alternate)	X	
	Tracey Bacchus (Alternate)	X	
STAFF	Nancy Levesque, P.E., City Engineer	X	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

Acting Chairman Soares designated regular Commissioners Pose, Howe and Soares as voting Commissioners this evening. He also designated alternate Commissioners Hayden and Kelaita as voting Commissioners this evening and also to sit in place of regular Commissioners Parker and Veits with their absences this evening.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of Minutes – January 29, 2020.

Acting Chairman Soares designated regular Commissioners Howe, Pose and Soares to vote on the regular minutes of January 29, 2020. He also designated alternate Commissioner Hayden to vote on the regular minutes of January 29, 2020 in place of regular Commissioner Parker with his absence this evening.

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2020, regular meeting.

By: Howe

Seconded: Pose.

For: Pose, Howe, Hayden and Soares.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

NEW APPLICATIONS

There were no new applications.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

ZONING COMMISSION REFERRALS

Acting Chairman Soares designated regular Commissioners Pose, Howe, and Soares to vote on Application #2355. He also designated alternate Commissioners Hayden and Kelaita to vote in place of regular Commissioners Parker and Veits with their absences this evening. He also designated these Commissioners as voting Commissioners this evening.

2. Application #2355 – Proposed amendments to the Zoning Regulations to modify the definition of shopping centers by decreasing the minimum square footage of gross building floor area to: (Option #1): 20,000 sq. ft. of gross building floor area; (Option #2): 15,000 sq. ft. of gross building floor area; (Option #3): 10,000 sq. ft. of gross building floor area; (Section II.B.); Attorney Mark Ziogas, applicant.

The Commission acknowledged receipt of the following items in their electronic packets: a letter dated January 21, 2020, from Attorney Mark Ziogas, regarding the proposed Zoning Regulation amendment; a referral letter dated February 4, 2020, from the Zoning Commission to the Planning Commission, regarding the request; a referral letter dated February 4, 2020, from the Zoning Commission to Therese Pac, Town and City Clerk, regarding the request; a copy of a portion of the CT General Statutes, Section Sec. 8-3b. Notice to regional council of governments of proposed zone or zone use change; a Zoning referral form, dated February 4, 2020, from the Zoning Commission to the Capitol Region Council of Governments; a referral memorandum, dated February 4, 2020, from the Zoning Commission to the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG); a referral memorandum, dated February 4, 2020, from the Zoning Commission to the Northwest Hills Council of Governments; a referral memorandum, dated February 4, 2020, from the Zoning Commission to the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments; a staff referral report dated February 6, 2020, from NVCOG to the Planning Commission, CEO, and City Planner of Bristol, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG), and Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) Regional Planning Commission (RPC) representatives; an e-mail dated February 4, 2020, from Lauren Rizzo of NVCOG to Robert Flanagan, City Planner, regarding the Zoning Text Amendment.

Attorney Mark Ziogas, 106 North Street, explained the request was for an amendment for the Zoning Regulations to amend the definition of shopping centers. He explained the existing Regulations required a minimum of 25,000 sq. ft. of gross building floor area, but his request was to reduce the requirement. The initial request was discussed with Robert Flanagan, City Planner, to reduce it to 20,000 sq. ft.

During discussions with Mr. Flanagan, it was suggested that the applicant give the Commission some options. The plazas that are less than 25,000 sq. ft., the parking requirements are determined by each individual tenant. If a retail tenant moves out and a restaurant wants to relocate to the space, the parking spaces would be insufficient and also non-compliant. This causes concerns for the smaller plaza landlords because they have to turn away tenants because of the parking requirements.

The applicant thinks it is time to revise the requirements and reduce the sq. ft. requirements. If they are below 25,000 sq. ft. the parking is based on the individual use of each tenant. His request is to reduce the requirements of 25,000 sq. ft. to something less. There are several plazas with vacant spaces. His opinion was there were no parking problems for the plazas and fewer people go to stores with the available delivery services. There were a lot of stores going out of business, which needed to be replaced and the parking limitations had to be change.

He spoke with the Assessor's Office and then reviewed the Farmington Avenue properties, which the amendment. The change would affect 20,000 sq. ft. (2 properties); 15,000 sq. ft. (a little more) and 10,000 sq. ft. (11 properties.) His opinion was this would be better for the landlords to not have to focus on the type of tenants, seating and parking problems.

The Commission reviewed there were 48 businesses (less than 10,000 sq. ft.); six businesses (10,000 to 15,000 sq. ft.); three businesses (15,000 to 20,000 sq. ft.); two business (20,000 to 25,000 sq. ft.); 15 businesses (25,000 sq. ft. and more than 25,000 sq. ft.) On the forward it promotes the City; Page 75, 70% of residents support small retail stores; and Page 78, IX.3.1. to expand the economic base and this amendment was positive on all six recommendations. The Commission agreed this should be done by square footage. They commented they should go on individual applications with sq. ft. because the Staples building was based on square footage and the building was cleaned up with the Regulation amendments.

In response to the Commission, Attorney Ziogas explained that this amendment was based on square footage. The plaza businesses had varying businesses hours/customers and parking requirements. This would not affect curb cuts, but it would affect traffic flow at certain times.

After inquiry by the Commission, Acting Chairman Soares explained the request was for the applicant to discuss and then the Commission recommend one of the options. He also noted the Zoning Commission has a public hearing in March on this application.

The Commission also commented 48 of the 74 business are less than 10,000 sq. ft. Pier 1 was 25,000 sq. ft. and more difficult to lease versus a smaller 3,000 sq. ft. space. The Commission preferred a 15,000 sq. ft. maximum (60% of businesses). After inquiry by the Commission, Attorney Ziogas disagreed and preferred 15,000 sq. ft. and greater with parking requirements based on the square footage opposed to individual uses. Under 15,000 sq. ft. would be under the existing Regulations. This was the option he preferred. The 15,000 sq. ft. would have more of an impact on the City.

MOTION: Move to make a positive referral to the Zoning Commission for Application #2355 – Proposed amendments to the Zoning Regulations to modify the definition of shopping centers by decreasing the minimum square footage of gross building floor area to: (Option #2): 15,000 sq. ft. of gross building floor area; (Section II.B.); Attorney Mark Ziogas, applicant.

The Planning Commission finds that the zoning text amendment, as presented, would be consistent with the goals and policies of the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development, amended to April 1, 2018, and specifically that it does alleviate parking issues with the square footage and building area of these shopping centers.

By: Pose

Seconded: Howe.

For: Pose, Howe, Hayden, Kelaita and Soares.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

The CT General Statute 8-24 Referral is recommended for approval.

3. Application #2357 – Special Permit for hotel and conference center at 42, 90, 112 & 150 Century Dr.; Assessor's Map 4, Lots 1, 5, 6 & 7; IP-1 (Industrial Park) zone; Bristol Hotel, LLC & Bristol Hotel 2, LLC, applicants.

The Commission acknowledged receipt of the following items in their electronic packets: an Exhibit A with the applicants representatives, undated; a referral memorandum, dated February 5, 2020, from the Zoning Commission to the Planning Commission and a copy of a portion of the Zoning Regulations, Sections VII.B.3.e.; e. Hotels. 1, 21, 2 and Section X.

The following item was submitted into the record: a traffic study for the, Zoning Commission to review (submitted by Attorney Timothy Furey.)

Attorney Timothy Furey, 43 Bellevue Avenue, on behalf of the applicant, explained this was a different referral because it was a Special Permit for a hotel in the Industrial zone and not a Zoning Commission amendment, which he reviewed the Regulations. He explained the property was near the existing hotel (Lots 1 through 4) and there is an existing helipad between Lots 5 and 6.

The request is for a proposed hotel and conference center on a 12.7-acre property. (The existing hotel is 135,000 sq. ft. of existing hotel area with 6 floors.) The proposed plan is to construct on the existing parking lot and a suites style hotel with 81 rooms (66,000 sq. ft./16,721 sq. ft. each) with four floors. The conference center would have an upper level 9,000 sq. ft. mezzanine for events and a business office; the lower level would have a 32,000 sq. ft. conference center for about 400 people. Also, a 5,400 sq. ft. connector for inclement weather.

Regarding the event space, Attorney Furey explained the lobby area for about 250 to 275 people. There were a lot of large events that Bristol was missing out on because the area facilities have outgrown these events for this many people.

If this conference center is constructed, it would bring in corporate level business meetings. The construction estimate was \$20 Million. The plan is in the industrial Park zone and the applicant met with the Bristol Development Authority (BDA) because the use was not allowed without a change to the Regulations for a definitional use, but the BDA recommended it and thought it would be a good extenuation in the use and measure in the industrial zone.

Attorney Furey explained a Special Permit and Site Plan approval were required from the Zoning Commission; an Amendment application from OSTA and a Storm Water Discharge application from the State. The hotel is four floors and the conference center is two floors.

After inquiries by the Commission, Attorney Furey explained there would be no concerts, but live music inside the facility. The goals were for events, corporate events and weddings. There was an existing heavily treed buffer for the third floor of the apartment building with a fence on top of the retaining wall.

Acting Chairman Soares explained this would be a non-binding recommendation to the Zoning Commission in connection with a Site Plan.

MOTION: Move to send a non-binding referral to the Zoning Commission for Application #2357 – Special Permit for hotel and conference center at 42, 90, 112 & 150 Century Dr.; Assessor’s Map 4, Lots 1, 5, 6 & 7; IP-1 (Industrial Park) zone; Bristol Hotel, LLC & Bristol Hotel 2, LLC, applicant.

The Planning Commission finds that the Special Permit, as presented, would be consistent with the goals and policies of the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development, amended to April 1, 2018, and specifically:

- 1) The overall goals of 8.2.3. – increase activities and events, cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities in downtown Bristol.”

By: Howe

Seconded: Kelaita.

For: Pose, Howe, Hayden, Kelaita and Soares.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

The Special Permit CT General Statute 8-24 Referral is recommended for approval.

CITY COUNCIL AND OTHER REFERRALS

There were no City Council and other referrals.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no old business.

Acting Chairman Soares reminded the Commission the next regular meeting was March 25, 2020.

STAFF REPORTS

4. Monthly Subdivision Status Report

The Commission acknowledged receipt of the following item in their electronic packets: the updated monthly Subdivision status report dated February 19, 2020. Ms. Levesque explained there were no changes to the report, but Bristol Crossings will be placed on their agenda to continue their approval because their subdivision was about to expire. The Staff has a meeting scheduled with the applicant.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Kelaita to adjourn.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Howe.

Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 P.M.

These minutes represent the proceedings of the meeting.

This meeting was taped.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy King

Andrew Howe
Secretary
City Planning Commission

DRAFT