



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD

Planning and Zoning Commission

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES SUBCOMMITTEE ON BUSINESS ZONES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not verbatim transcription.

April 30, 2021

Present: Bob Knight (Left at 9:30AM)
Karen Martin, Chair
Bob Cascella
Geoffrey Morris
Charles Robbins
Stephen Rapaglia
Steve Zemo (Joined at 8:51AM)

Absent: Joe Fossi
Wing Biddle
Cameron Cole Carcelan
Susan Buzaid

Also Present: Aarti Paranjape, Office Administrator/ Recording Secretary

I. Call to order

At 8:33 AM, Ms. Martin called the meeting to order.

II: Discussion

1. Update on PZC discussion on proposed changes

Ms. Martin gave a brief overview of the introduction of the subcommittee's proposal to the Planning & Zoning Commission at their meeting held last Tuesday. She said that the feedback from the members was positive. The members acknowledged the affordability component. The members will review the proposed amendment language again on May 11th and voted to hold the Public Hearing on May 25th. The subcommittee members are encouraged to attend. Mr. Robbins agreed that the PZC members were favorable to the idea of residential on the first floor in the proposed overlay zone.

Ms. Martin informed the group that Mr. Rapaglia had inquired about the proposed parking requirements. Mr. Rapaglia questioned if the standard parking requirements were intended to apply to all the residential apartments in a building in the overlay zone or only to the first floor and basement residential units only.



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD Planning and Zoning Commission

Discussion ensued on this parking question. Ms. Martin asked the members if they would like new language added to state that the parking standards apply to the new residential or to whole building.

Members agreed that the parking requirements for the first floor residential should have standard parking and the second floor or above will utilize the CBD zone parking standards. Ms. Martin will draft a language to incorporate the parking issues.

Ms. Martin requested all the members on the Business Zone subcommittee attend the public hearing on May 25th to state their expertise, support and reasoning for drafting the new proposal.

2. Continued discussion on potential Route 7 zoning changes

Ms. Martin said that Mr. Fossi and Ms. Mucchetti had forwarded all the study materials from the Planning & Zoning Commission's previous work for the Route 7 Gateway. She informed that the project didn't materialize previously due to a technicality. She said that the Planning & Zoning Commission approved the proposal however it didn't get implemented due to a legal appeal. She suggested that the subcommittee members should review and understand what factors didn't work and what the technicalities were so they could be avoided this time. The group suggested approaching those who opposed (mostly CBD business owners worried about competition) and get a better understanding where the proposal lacked grounds.

Mr. Knight agreed that the market realty has changed, now there are more online businesses and less retail competition in town. He added that it will be a good to have a pedestrian friendly corridor where residents have a neighborhood with amenities which will not compete with the downtown.

Mr. Cascella added that it's a great opportunity for economic development for that part of town. He said that bringing mixed use will be beneficial.

Mr. Zemo suggested focusing on the Route 7 in three sections- a section of Branchville Transit Oriented development, the Gateway and the Great Pond area. He said that the Great pond area north of Haviland can be developed into residential, and mixed businesses. He added that the landowners in that area should be included in the study. Another important focus should be on traffic study which was never conducted during the Gateway proposal.

Mr. Morris also expressed concerns for the sewage capacity.

Members agreed that WPCA should be on board as far as the sewer capacity is concerned in that corridor and that it would be helpful to learn more about future sewer capacity resulting from the new treatment facility.



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD Planning and Zoning Commission

The group decided that Ms. Martin will contact the WPCA and open a dialogue with Amy Siebert to discuss the sewer allocation for the Route 7 corridor. Members of the subcommittee can then meet with WPCA or be on their upcoming agenda at a public meeting. Ms. Martin will also get a list of Route 7 landlords to reach out to for participation in an upcoming discussion.

Before the next meeting, Ms. Martin will the revise language for the overlay zone with the focus on parking issues before the Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing.

III: Approval of Minutes

- April 16, 2021

Mr. Cascalla motioned to approve the meeting minutes for the Subcommittee on Business zones. Mr. Morris seconded it. Motion carried 6-0.

IV. Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2021 at 8:30AM via zoom.

Hearing no further, Ms. Martin adjourned the meeting at 9:49AM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Aarti Paranjape