

THE ZONING COMMISSION
Town of New Fairfield
New Fairfield, CT 06812
SPECIAL MEETING WORKSHOP MINUTES
DATE: November 1, 2022
TIME: 7:30 pm
Location for: New Fairfield Company A FireHouse
Location: 302 Ball Pond Road, New Fairfield

Call to Order

John Moran called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Present

John Moran, Kevin VanVlack, Stephen Hanrahan, Mark Lamanna (absent), Jane Landers (absent), Tomas Kavaliauskas (alternate), Gary Mummert (alternate), and Town Official present: Zoning Enforcement Office Evan White.

Business Items

- 1) Follow-up Meeting - Pre-Bid Consultant #1: David Woods-Principal of GreenWoods Associates:
 - a. Presentation
 - b. Question & Answer

Kevin VanVlack stated the intent of the meeting which is for David Woods to take the commission through his proposal and how it can shape the zoning regulations for the Town of New Fairfield.

David Woods stated that the three areas of focus for tonight will be: affordable housing, short term rentals, and stormwater management. This will entail looking at the current zoning regulations and identifying inconsistencies.

Jane Landers questioned affordable housing and if it was being addressed because of a state mandate. David Woods referred to West COG and the plan that was adopted by the Board of Selectmen on May 25, 2022. Stephen Hanrahan explained that the town had to come up with a plan prior to June 1, 2022 and if the town did not the state could come in and take over with their own plan. David Woods stated that the town needs to focus on a downtown housing and zoning plan. A discussion was held regarding the sewer lines that were being put in and what the options could be once the sewers are in. John Moran stated that the Zoning Commission's job is to establish zoning regulations that will control what type of buildings or housing can go in a specified area. David Woods stated for the commission to remember where New Fairfield is located and to address height limits, open space around apartments, parking requirements, landscaping, and density when adopting zoning regulations. Jane Landers suggested helping with down payments to help bring in young professionals that want to work in the Town of New Fairfield. Kevin VanVlack stated that the Town of New Fairfield needs to address affordable housing and the right way to do it. Gary Mummert referred to the zoning document that states that the town has the obligation to offer not only affordable housing but also low-income housing. Jane Landers

disagreed with his statement, stating that after looking at the current real-estate that she believes the Town of New Fairfield already has what she would call “affordable housing”.

David Woods went over short-term rentals and gave some ideas of if and when short-term rentals should or should not be allowed. John Moran stated that town water is a concern and is not sure how much further it can go. He stated that most properties are well-driven. David Woods gave an example of prohibiting non-lodging events such as, but not limited to: parties, weddings, receptions, filming, photo shoots, corporate retreats and fundraisers not being allowed. A discussion was held regarding airbnb’s and what the current limitations are and how other towns are limiting airbnb’s.

David Woods went over stormwater management. He has been working with Eric Moss from Fuss and O’Neill and gone over what some other towns have done for stormwater management. David Woods stated that a checklist that includes excavation that an applicant could refer to would be helpful. A discussion was held regarding impervious surfaces. Gary Mummert questioned previous stormwater management changes that had been voted down. John Moran went over past stormwater management changes, what brought them to the forefront, and why the changes were being addressed at that time.

David Woods shared the project timeline which is a 10-month timeline that consists of four phases. The different phases overlap with each other and are fluid and move back and forth. Public input will be involved in an on-going process. David Woods stated means testing will be a part of all phases. He also stated that it will be necessary to look at the options that look good on paper and decide if these options would be beneficial once implemented. Kevin VanVlack stated that the timeline looks pretty aggressive and specifically asked David Woods if he thought the 10-month timeline is achievable. David Woods stated that the 10-month timeline is best case scenario and with his experience with other towns that the timeline will most likely carry over into additional months. David Woods stated that fee for the services would remain the same regardless of the timeframe. John Moran clarified that the only time the fee would change is if the scope of the project had a change. David Woods agreed to this statement.

Stephen Hanrahan questioned the frequency of project meetings. David Woods stated there will be two types of meetings: phone/text and bi-monthly Zoom meetings. He will also be interviewing all board members, the housing committee, as well as other individuals that are identified in the board member and housing committee meetings. Kevin VanVlack suggested talking to all town committees.

A discussion was held regarding the sewer lines that may be put in in the future. David Woods stated that regulations will need to be addressed and put in place now such as height restrictions, density restrictions, and a downtown POCD. If additional changes are needed to the zoning regulations, then those changes can be addressed at a later date.

Jane Landers questioned whether a downtown housing plan is mandated. David Woods stated that the West COG plan looked at the 2013 POCD plan that came up with some strategies that may want to be used to establish a downtown zone that could potentially include housing. If there is housing in that area then regulations will need to be in place such as density and unit size. David Woods stated housing in a downtown zone is not mandated.

Gary Mummert stated that he feels that signage needs to be addressed. He specifically stated that the signage requirements need to be simplified, shortened, and made more understandable.

Stephen Hanrahan stated that there are reasons that people move to New Fairfield. David Woods stated that the future regulations should continue to preserve and protect these reasons.

Adjournment

Kevin VanVlack made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:30 pm. Jane Landers seconded the motion. **All in favor**

Received by email on 11/07/2022 @ 8:41 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield