

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – February 6, 2025**

Meeting Date: February 6, 2025

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Location: Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

Attendance:

Planning Commission

Jerry Barbieri, Chair

Betty Smith

Ken Church

Phyllis Wimbrow

Marlene Ott

Kathy Drew

Staff

Jennifer Keener, Director, DRP

Matt Laick, Deputy Director, DRP

Kristen Tremblay, Zoning Administrator, DRP

Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney

Robert Mitchell, Director, Environmental Programs

Ben Zito, DRP Specialist, DRP

I. Call to Order

II. Administrative Matters

A. Review and approval of work session minutes, December 19, 2024

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the work session minutes of the December 19, 2024, meeting.

Following the review, a motion was made by Ms. Wimbrow to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Ott seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Review and approval of minutes, January 2, 2025.

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the January 2, 2025, meeting.

The minutes could not be approved because of a lack of a quorum.

C. Board of Appeals Agenda, February 13, 2025.

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting scheduled for February 13, 2025. Ms. Tremblay was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission.

No comments were forwarded to the Board.

D. Technical Review Committee Agenda, February 13, 2025.

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As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Technical Review Committee meeting scheduled for February 13, 2025. Ms. Tremblay was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission.

No comments were forwarded to the Committee.

III. Site Plan Review: Crepe Myrtle Court Step I: Residential Planned Community

Mr. Keith Iott and Mr. Colin Pedwell approached the table. Mr. Iott presented the Crepe Myrtle Court Residential Planned Community (RPC) and accompanying site plan materials. Mr. Iott explained the overall proposal, which includes 24 two-family dwellings and one single-family dwelling, along with recreational amenities and open space areas.

Mr. Iott further explained that as part of the project proposal, the developer was requesting two waivers:

- 1) A waiver of the sidewalks requirement as outlined in the Worcester County *Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses*;
- 2) A waiver to §ZS1-319(c)(5) of the code, requiring vehicular travelways to the rear of all structures to provide access for firefighting equipment.

Discussion ensued regarding the two proposed waivers, as well as whether any of the units would be short-term rentals. Mr. Pedwell confirmed that the units will not be short-term rentals.

After further discussion, on a motion made by Ms. Wimbrow and seconded by Mr. Church, the Planning Commission made a favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners to approve the Crepe Myrtle Court RPC application based upon the findings of the Technical Review Committee. The recommendation was contingent upon the following six conditions:

1. Sidewalks shall be provided throughout the development including along Old Bridge Road;
2. The Planning Commission will defer to the Fire Marshal's office regarding vehicular travelway access to the rear of all structures to provide access for fire-fighting equipment, as further outlined in §ZS1-319(c)(5);
3. A third parking space for each unit shall not be required, as it was confirmed that no units will be short-term rentals and will be included in the covenants and bylaws of the community;
4. No traffic study shall be required;

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5. A landscaping plan shall be required for the entire site and not just the frontage along Old Bridge Road;
6. A minimum of two parking spaces, and an additional drop-off space, shall be required for the proposed pool amenity.

IV. Miscellaneous

A. Gravel Request – Diehl Roadside Stand

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a waiver to §ZS1-320(f)(1) of the Code, which requires all parking and vehicular travelways to be constructed of materials that provide a hard and durable surface that precludes or limits particulate pollution.

On a motion made by Ms. Drew, and seconded by Ms. Wimbrow, the motion carried unanimously.

B. Gravel Request – Broderick Commercial Kennel Parking Spaces

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a waiver to §ZS1-320(f)(1) of the Code, which requires all parking and vehicular travelways to be constructed of materials that provide a hard and durable surface that precludes or limits particulate pollution.

Ms. Kristina Watkowski explained the request. After a brief discussion, on a motion made by Ms. Wimbrow, and seconded by Ms. Ott, the motion carried unanimously.

C. Irrigation Waiver Request – Farmers Bank of Willards

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a waiver to §ZS1-322(b)(7) of the Code, which requires all landscaped areas to be readily accessible to a water supply and provided with an automatic irrigation system with rain sensors.

Mr. Ronnie Coleman explained the request. After a brief discussion, on a motion made by Ms. Ott, and seconded by Ms. Smith, the motion carried unanimously.

D. Amendment to the Worcester County Comprehensive Plan for Water and Sewerage Systems – Ocean Downs Water Tower Replacement

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed an application associated to amend information for the Ocean Downs Casino in the *Master Water and Sewerage Plan (The Plan)*. Robert Mitchell, Director of Environmental Programs presented the staff report to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Mitchell explained that the casino requests to revise certain water system informational items in *The Plan*. Those changes would include: revision to a water service map and a revised

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water system for the casino. He detailed that the Casino desires to replace their existing 100,000-gallon elevated steel water tank with a 150,000 gallon bolted steel ground-level storage tank

Mr. Mitchell further explained the subject property is an existing horse racetrack and state-licensed casino facility with unoccupied commercial-zoned land occupying a portion of the southern part of the property. They are currently served by sewer from Ocean Pines and private water. The property is currently zoned A-2, with the southernmost portion of the property zoned C-2.

The Planning Commission members did have a few comments. Mr. Church and Ms. Ott asked about the distinctive style of the elevated tank. Mr. Mitchell responded that perhaps the casino felt that the older tank was better placed as a ground level tank. Mr. Barbierri asked about fire flow now that the tower would not be elevated and Mr. Mitchell said pumps were provided as part of this planned construction.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Wimbrow, seconded by Ms. Ott, to find this application consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and recommended that they forward a favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners. The vote was unanimous.

E. Amendment to the Worcester County Comprehensive Plan for Water and Sewerage Systems – Mystic Harbour

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed an application associated to amend water and sewer information for the Mystic Harbour Planning Area in the *Master Water and Sewerage Plan (The Plan)*. Robert Mitchell, Director of Environmental Programs presented the staff report to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Mitchell explained that the County requests to revise certain water and wastewater system informational items for proposed capital projects in *The Plan* for your review of an amendment for the Addition of Capital Projects and Planned Interconnection Projects to *The Plan* without a change of the previously approved water and sewer boundaries, for your review and comment to the County Commissioners.

The Department of Public Works proposes to revise certain water system informational items in *The Plan*. Those changes would include the addition of the following capital projects 1) Interconnection of the Mystic Harbour and Riddle Farm water systems with the Herring Creek Water Main Interconnection; 2) Mystic Harbour Treated Effluent to Riddle Lagoon; 3) Sunset Avenue Relief Sewer; and 4) Mystic Harbour Water Plant and Building Rehab.

Mr. Mitchell detailed the needs for the rehab of the Mystic Harbour water plant and building is being conducted due to needed upgrades to allow the plant to automatically adjust during the daily variation seen during the peak summer months. Replacement of aged and deteriorating metal filter units and associated work is also needed under this project.

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The second proposed project Mr. Mitchell discussed is to install 2685 feet of 6” forcemain underneath Sunset Ave and Golf Course Rd in order to prevent backups and potential overflow of the sewer system in West Ocean City (WOC). The existing sewer collection system is pressed to handle the flow, especially during peak flow periods, and the upgrade is to handle the expected volume of flow and allow operational flexibility for the WWTP.

The third project Mr. Mitchell discussed is a planned interconnection of the Mystic Harbour and Riddle Farm Water Systems. He explained the operational difficulties at the Riddle Plant with iron treatment and the accompanying backwash disposal. associated WWTP membranes struggle to treat the iron sludge. As a result, in 2011 He also explained that during peak seasonal high use periods, pressures and water shortages have been a concern when relying on the Ocean Pines infrastructure only for the sole water source. It was also detailed that the proposed project will consolidate the Mystic Harbour and Riddle water service areas providing a redundant water source supply for the Riddle Farm community.

The final project Mr. Mitchell detailed is a planned connection between the Mystic Harbour Treated Effluent and the Riddle Lagoon that holds treated effluent for irrigation of the Riddle Farm golf courses and rough areas. This proposed line would be a denied access line designated only to transport treated effluent between the Mystic and the Riddle service areas. Mr. Mitchell noted that the limited discharge capacity at a WWTP can pose a public health concern and safety hazard with overloading existing land disposal capacities. Mr. Mitchell discussed increased storm events and possible sea level rise contributing to the need to spread around and expand the land disposal options. He described that this connection will provide an additional irrigation water source for the Riddle golf courses in lieu of pumping groundwater from wells, which is still done to provide supplemental water to the golf courses.

Mr. Mitchell explained that the Water Resources Element (WRE) amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2011, calls for interconnection projects such as these within their recommendations. He also qualified that both Mystic and Riddle Farm water systems will have language detailing that the interconnection will be made to connect the Mystic Harbour and Riddle Farm water systems and is not to add new users or increase the service areas of either sanitary area. The purpose will be to add redundancy for maintenance purposes and special circumstances. He mentioned that the prior Riddle Farm- Ocean Pines interconnection, this will further provide redundancy to all the surrounding areas.

A similar conversation followed with respect to the sewer forcemain interconnection. The following amendment language is recommended to be added to *The Plan* as part both Mystic and Riddle Farm wastewater systems will have language detailing that the interconnection will be made to connect the Mystic Harbour and Riddle Farm water systems and is not to add new users or increase the service areas of either sanitary area. It will be for treated effluent transmission and will be a denied access line that will have no connections along the planned route and the project is planned to accommodate a realization for additional land disposal capacity for the Mystic WWTP.

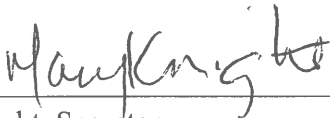
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The Planning Commission members did have a few comments. Mr. Church and Ms. Wimbrow asked if this would be the solution to the wastewater plant's issues to realize their planned potential. Mr. Mitchell indicated that there are additional repairs ongoing to both plants that will assist their treatment capabilities and this interconnection project would help on the back end with increased land disposal capacity options. He also explained saltwater intrusion issues with private wells that staff is observing, and the need that the WRE referenced in their recommendation that would share the water load to keep more water in our water table to protect our surficial aquifers.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Wimbrow, seconded by Ms. Ott, to find this application consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and recommended that they forward a favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners. The vote was unanimous and included the approval of the additional language referenced in the staff report comments.

V. Adjourn

On a motion made by Ms. Wimbrow and seconded by Ms. Knight, the Planning Commission adjourned.



Mary Knight, Secretary



Ben Zito, DRP Specialist