

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – December 5, 2024**

Meeting Date: December 5, 2024

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Location: Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

Attendance:

Planning Commission

Jerry Barbierri, Chair

Ken Church

Kathy Drew

Mary Knight

Marlene Ott

Staff

Jennifer Keener, Director, DRP

Matt Laick, Deputy Director, DRP

Kristen Tremblay, Zoning Administrator

Bob Mitchell, Director, Environmental Programs

Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney

Gary Pusey, DRP Specialist III

Paul Renshaw, Zoning Inspector

I. Call to Order

II. Administrative Matters

A. Review and approval of minutes, November 14, 2024

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the November 14, 2024, meeting.

As two members of the Commission abstained from voting, Mr. Barbierri and Mr. Church due to their absence, and because their abstention caused a lack of quorum, the motion failed. The minutes will need to be reviewed at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

B. Board of Zoning Appeals Agendas, December 12, 2024

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

No comments were forwarded to the Board.

C. Technical Review Committee Agenda, December 11, 2024

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

No comments were forwarded to the Committee.

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III. ZS1-324(c)(9) - Internal Community Signs

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a proposed text amendment application to establish additional standards in § ZS 1-324(c)(9) for internal community signs. Elaine Brady, member of the Board of Directors for Ocean Pines Association (OPA), and Eddie Wells, OPA Public Works Director, were present for the discussion.

Ms. Brady explained that the Ocean Pines board is seeking to eliminate the clutter of changeable messaging signage that are in the right-of-way of Ocean Parkway. The board is desirous of keeping their community informed, so they are seeking to replace all changeable messaging signs with electronic messaging signs at the entrances and exits to the development. She noted that the signs would be informational only, and would not provide commercial advertising messages.

Ms. Brady and Mr. Wells identified the locations of the proposed signs that they wish to place on Cathell Road and Manklin Creek Road. The Zoning Code currently limits developments to one electronic messaging sign per lot or parcel, so they are seeking to provide an exception for internal community signs. They noted that the particular signs would be well over one thousand feet from each other.

Mrs. Keener explained that the bill proposes two amendments; first is to allow internal community signs within the commercial zoning districts; the second is to allow for two electronic messaging signs per lot or parcel for internal community signs only. In addition, the Planning Commission must remember that this amendment applies to all residential developments, not just Ocean Pines. Signs will still be required to comply with the 450-foot separation distance from the perimeter property lines of the development, and a minimum of 100-foot separation distance between any signs on the same parcel. In response to a question from the Planning Commission, Mrs. Keener clarified that internal community signs do not have to have an electronic messaging component; they could be a standard sign.

The Planning Commission discussed possible provisions that would ensure that there were enough safeguards in place to prevent excessive signage. The Planning Commission concluded that the provision for two electronic messaging signs should be established as a special exception request.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Ott, seconded by Mrs. Knight and carried unanimously to provide a favorable recommendation on the amendment as amended to require a special exception provision for a second electronic messaging sign.

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IV. §ZS1-201(c)(34) - Private, noncommercial buildings for the storage of personal property in the A-1 Agricultural District.

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a proposed text amendment application to allow personal storage buildings over 500 square feet in gross floor area without a primary dwelling in the A-1 Agricultural District, subject to certain lot requirements. Jonathan Anders and Jeff Mahan were present for the review.

Mr. Barbierri outlined the history of the amendment, which was reviewed at the April 4, 2024, Planning Commission meeting. Mrs. Keener reiterated that there has been no change to the proposed language. The applicants had no further comments to provide from their April testimony, and the Planning Commission had no further questions.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Mrs. Knight to provide a favorable recommendation on the text amendment. Ms. Ott seconded the motion, and the motion carried with three in favor, with Mr. Barbierri opposed.

V. Sunset Marine Park – Major Site Plan Review

Tim Kamas, Alex Cederbaum, Jesyl Silva and Mark Cropper presented their request to the Planning Commission for a 23,775 square foot watercraft service building located between Sunset Avenue and MD Route 611. The applicants indicated that this was part of a larger development plan, however due to EDU availability are only requesting this structure at this time. Previous versions included contractors' shops, retail and residential comprised of apartments, townhomes and duplexes.

The Planning Commission reviewed the items requiring waivers and approved them as follows:

Section 5 – Architectural Traditions

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Ott, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 6(b)(1) – General Site and Building Compatibility

On a motion made by Ms. Ott and seconded by Ms. Knight, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 7(b)(1)(B) – Mass and Scale

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On a motion made by Ms. Drew and seconded by Ms. Ott, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 8(b)(2) & (4) – Roofs

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Mr. Church, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 9(b)(2) & (3) – Materials

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Ott, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 10(b)(1)(A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K) & (2)(A) – Facades

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Mr. Church, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 11(b)(1) – Entries

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Ott, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 13(b)(2) – Details

On a motion made by Ms. Ott and seconded by Ms. Knight, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 15(b)(3)(C), (b)(6 & 7) – Parking

On a motion made by Ms. Drew and seconded by Ms. Knight, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 16 (b)(1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10) – Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

On a motion made by Mr. Church and seconded by Ms. Drew, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 17(b)(4, 6, 7, 8) – Landscaping

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Ott, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

Section 18(b)(5) – Lighting

The applicants stated that the lighting would be full cut-off and that this waiver request was no longer required.

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Section 19(b)(1) – Community Features and Spaces

On a motion made by Ms. Ott and seconded by Ms. Knight, the Planning Commission approved this waiver.

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Ott, the Planning Commission approved the site plan with the waivers as requested and was granted unanimously.

VI. Eastern Shore Natural Gas – Major Site Plan Review

Charles Barnett and Charles Howell presented their request to the Planning Commission for a proposed five (5) 100,000 gallon liquefied natural gas storage tanks, with ancillary equipment necessary to re-gasify the natural gas for transport to the Eastern Shores existing pipeline system which currently runs along US Route 113. The facility includes a 3,276 square foot control room, liquified natural gas truck offloading area and turnaround. It also includes impoundment areas, vapor barrier wall, and chain link security fencing around the operating area of the facility. This project is proposed to be located on a land-locked parcel located approximately 1,300 feet west of Route 113, approximately 1,800 feet north of the intersection of Route 113 and Jarvis Road.

Due to the nature of the proposed use and its location, a significant number of waivers from the Design Guidelines were requested including automatic irrigation (as no plantings are proposed due to fire safety concerns), gravel travelways in several locations and the height of security fencing.

The proposed land use is located on a land-locked parcel surrounded by existing forested areas that are proposed to remain. There will be no access for the public and will not be seen from either the road or adjacent properties. As this project will not be visible and is not intended to be visible, the Planning Commission approved the waivers as follows:

Section 5 – Architectural Traditions

Section 6(b)(1) – General Site and Building Compatibility

Section 7(b)(1)(B) & (2)(A) – Mass and Scale

Section 8(b)(1)(2) & (4-10) – Roofs

Section 9(b)(2-5) – Materials

Section 10(a)(2-3) & (b)(1-2) – Facades

Section 11(b)(1-5) - Entries

Section 12(b)(1-4) - Color

Section 13(b)(1-3) – Details

Section 14(b)(1-7) – Signs

Section 15(b)(2-4 & 6-9 & 13) – Parking

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Section 16(b)(1-10) – Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation
Section 17(b)(4-11) – Landscaping
Section 18(b)(1, 5-10) – Lighting
Section 19(b)(1-3) – Community Features and Spaces
Section 20(b)(3-6 & 8-9) – Outdoor Service and Utility Areas
Section 21(b)(1-2) – Outparcels and Pad Sites

The Planning Commission discussed fire suppression and the height of the proposed fence. As they determined that the fence height as proposed may not be high enough for security purposes, they decided to allow for fencing to any height provided such is reasonably necessary and will not adversely affect the use, enjoyment or value of surrounding property.

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Mr. Church, the Planning Commission approved the waivers as presented.

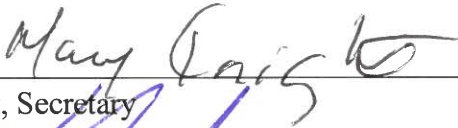
On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Drew, the Planning Commission approved the site plan with the waivers as requested including automatic irrigation, gravel, and fencing to any height provided such is reasonably necessary and will not adversely affect the use, enjoyment, or value of surrounding property and was approved unanimously.

VII. Other Matters

The Planning Commission was informed that their next worksession to discuss the Comprehensive Plan update would be held on December 19, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

VIII. Adjourn

On a motion made by Ms. Ott and seconded by Ms. Drew, the Planning Commission adjourned.



Mary Knight, Secretary



Kristen M. Tremblay, AICP, Zoning Administrator