



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
Town of Winchester**

**Held Remotely (Via Zoom) and livestreamed on YouTube.  
January 11, 2021 – 7:00PM  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman George Closson called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Mr. Closson noted that the following individuals were present: Peter Marchand, Jerry Martinez, Art Melycher, and Alternates John Cooney and Will Platt.

Craig Sanden was absent excused. Mr. Cooney was seated in his stead.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No comment was received.

**3. AGENDA REVIEW.**

The agenda was modified to add *PZC#20-31 – Special Permit Location: 100 New Hartford Road Applicant/Owner: James Kloczko Proposal: Landscape and Construction Yard – Mini-mix Concrete under New Business.* Additionally, the *Election of Officers* should not have been included on the agenda as that business was dispensed with at the December 14, 2020 regular meeting.

**4. PUBLIC HEARINGS.**

None.

**5. OLD BUSINESS.**

**A. PZC#20-29 – Zoning Regulation Change (PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED 01/25/2021)**

**Location: 149 Newfield Road Applicant/Owner: East Coast Assistance Dogs (ECAD) Proposal: Zoning Text Amendment to Provide Bonus 5% Impervious Surface Coverage when LID techniques are employed in RR.**

No business was discussed.

**B. PZC#20-30 – Special Permit (PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED 01/25/2021)**

**Location: 149 Newfield Road Applicant/Owner: East Coast Assistance Dogs (ECAD) Proposal: Special Permit for Phase III of Training Kennel and Modify Approved Site Plan.**

No business was discussed.

**6. NEW BUSINESS.**

**A. PZC#20-31 – Special Permit Location: 100 New Hartford Road Applicant/Owner: James Kloczko Proposal: Landscape and Construction Yard – Mini-mix Concrete.**

It was noted that despite this being a business that is already underway, the application was still not complete. Staff indicated that the proposal will need approval from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. It was agreed that the applicant should provide an updated site plan with the location of all outside structures included.

The consensus of the commission was to delay acceptance of the application until after the submittal of the updated site plan.

**7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 14, 2020 Regular Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Marchand, Mr. Melycher second, to approve the December 14, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes;

**8. COMMUNICATIONS.**

Staff reported no communications as having been received.

**9. STAFF REPORT:**

Staff updated the Commission with respect to enforcement, reporting that Town Manager Bob Geiger intends to hire a full-time Zoning Enforcement Officer/Wetlands Agent/Blight Officer prior to leaving the employ of the Town. Staff noted that Hartford Healthcare had been issued their Certificate of Occupancy on January 8, 2021. Mr. Closson questioned when the parking lot on Main Street might be completed, in the area of 508 Main Street. Mr. Marchand noted that the delay may be in obtaining a curb cut permit from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation.

**10. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. POCD Discussion.**

The Commission discussed their work with sections of the current Plan of Conservation and Development as they each had been assigned review. Mr. Marchand led, noting Section 2 included updates to population and demographics. He suggested that the last paragraph in Section 2.3, addressing two former subdivisions (Wallens Hill and Aurora Estates) be deleted as they never came to fruition. Mr. Marchand also suggested that the housing data in Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 be updated. He noted that the new zoning information should be added to Section 2.10 and replacing old Zoning Maps with the new maps in Sections 2.11 and 2.12. Mr. Marchand opined that in the more rural areas without water systems, new subdivisions proposed should include cisterns or some type of water supply for fire protection. He indicated that the Subdivision Regulations do not include that and future revisions of those should include that. Mr. Closson noted that the 2019 CERC profile includes much of the demographic information that should be used.

Addressing the planning areas contained in Section 4.1, Mr. Closson noted that most of these had been adequately addressed with the Zoning Regulations update in 2016 and did not think that these concepts required any change. The Green initiative described in Section 5.1 does not require any change either, according to Mr. Closson.

As Mr. Martinez was charged with the review of Section 6 relating to conservation, he questioned whether the Commission was interested in considering how Winchester and its surrounding towns were becoming attractive destination for people leaving New York City and other urban areas. He suggested the Commission consider whether the Rural Residential Zone should be reviewed in terms of attracting development in those areas and if so, how the rural nature is maintained. He also questioned what percentage of Winchester meets the state's goal relative to protected Open Space. Mr. Martinez noted that Norfolk has gone beyond what the state has for a goal in this respect. Mr. Closson recalled the review during the last POCD update around potential development in the Route 8 North area, a location that could have gravity flow to the sewer plant. He noted that it had been determined then that people from a development there would feed the downtown area and serve the restaurants and retail on Main Street. Developments such as Aurora Estates which would have had their access down through Torrington and would have likely served the restaurants and retail of Torrington, according to Mr. Closson. He questioned whether the outlying areas ought to be considered differently. Mr. Closson questioned whether Mr. Martinez was suggesting the zoning in those areas ought to again be reviewed. Mr. Martinez agreed, noting that there were a number of large buildings already being constructed in some of the rural areas so that people can operate their businesses and questioned the point that those types of development activities change the rural character.

Mr. Marchand noted that there are very large tracts of land in the Rural Residential Zone that could be developed.

Mr. Martinez opined that there also ought to be something included in the POCD about improving communication in the Rural Residential Zone, describing how difficult it is to get any type of cell service at his own home. Mr. Closson concurred.

Mr. Cooney reviewed his suggestions regarding Section 8 on infrastructure. He noted that the language regarding the IORM, or Redmen building, ought to be updated as it has transferred its owners. Mr. Cooney also questioned the language on paper, or undocumented, roads. Mr. Closson reported that there are quite a few paper roads in town, including up by Highland Lake. He suggested that information could be presented by Department of Public Works Director Jim Rollins in this regard. Mr. Closson also noted that an opinion from the town's legal counsel, Attorney Kevin Nelligan, could also be sought regarding the town's obligation and responsibility is as far as what the Commission would like to see improved. Mr. Marchand thought it might also be wise to obtain information from Mr. Rollins on the roads that were abandoned but still held by the Town rather than being transferred to abutting property owners.

Referring to Section 8.7 addressing Utilities, Mr. Cooney noted redundancy with the language regarding there being no plans to extend sewer or water service to the rural areas. Mr. Cooney opined the maps included in these sections are too small to be particularly useful.

As Mr. Sanden had completed the review of Sections 10 and 11, Mr. Closson relayed the opinion of Mr. Sanden, which he himself shared, that the Implementation chapter may be unnecessary. Mr. Melycher, Mr. Martinez, and Mr. Marchand agreed. Mr. Platt opined that the Implementation portion may be useful in terms of pushing the activity that is included in the POCD. He pointed to the little Town-owned parcels up in the Highland Lake area that could be designated as Open Space. Mr. Closson suggested that the Commission may want to further review for consideration as conservation the parcels that are in the watershed.

Mr. Closson referred to the communications that had been received from the Economic Development Commission, Fire Marshal Steve Williams, and Police Chief William Fitzgerald. He noted that Chief Fitzgerald was aware of the renovation occurring at Hinsdale School and how students will be shifted from Batcheller School. Mr. Closson indicated he had explained to Chief Fitzgerald that it was not within the purview of this commission to make recommendations for a new police department to be part of a renovation of Batcheller School. Mr. Closson reported that he had met with Chief Fitzgerald who had discussed a potential for regionalization of police departments and had suggested how Winchester might be able to provide services to other communities such as Colebrook, Barkhamsted, New Hartford, and Norfolk. Mr. Marchand noted that having served on building committees in town in the past, Batcheller School contains asbestos and has structural issues, too. Mr. Closson indicated that the former Eversource building might be a better location.

Mr. Closson the letter that was provided by the EDC and appreciated their high level of activity within the community.

Mr. Closson noted that the maps will be updated as part of the 2021 POCD.

The timeline was also reviewed. Mr. Closson indicated that a draft ought to be ready by the end of February with a public hearing to be scheduled for March 8, 2021.

#### **D. Short Term Rentals Regulation Workshop – POSTPONED.**

No business discussed.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** Mr. Melycher, Mr. Marchand second, to adjourn; unanimously approved. The Commission adjourned at 8:38PM.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela A. Colombie  
Recording Clerk**