

TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH

TOWN COUNCIL

JOINT MEETING WITH PLANNING BOARD

JANUARY 29, 2018

A joint meeting of the West Greenwich Town Council with the Planning Board was held on January 29, 2018. Present were Mark Tourgee, Linda Rekas Sloan, Robert Andrews, Mark Boyer, Thomas Mulcahey, Brad Ward, David Berry, William Bryan, Thomas O'Loughlin, Michael Zavalia. Also present Town Administrator Kevin Breene, Town Planner David Provonsil and Town Solicitor Michael Ursillo.

A. CALL TO ORDER - 7:00 P.M.

Council President Tourgee called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. DISCUSSION AND VOTE REGARDING POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE IN CONNECTION WITH A PROPOSED SOLAR PROJECT AT EXIT 5

Councilman Mulcahey moved to dispense of the reading of the previous meeting minutes.

Councilman Boyer seconded.

VOTED: Tourgee- aye, Rekas Sloan - aye, Andrews - aye, Boyer- aye, Mulcahey - aye

Chairman Ward called the meeting of the Planning Board to order and determined there was a quorum.

Council President Tourgee reviewed the proposed project and stated this is the last large parcel of industrial land that remains undeveloped. He explained this parcel is behind Dan's and Centreville Bank and this has been preserved for industrial use. He further stated the CDC has not been helpful in seeking development projects for this parcel.

Town Administrator Breene stated West Greenwich was always blessed with on and off ramps on 95 and discussed the difficulties of bringing utilities to the property. He also explained that solar is currently allowed in RFR-2 and this meeting is to see if the Council is willing to give up some of the industrial land to this project.

Chairman Ward stated he did not receive any objections from the Planning Board on what would remain commercial and what would transfer to RFR 2. This project may entice some business and industry to move forward in that area. He believes this has been a good faith effort on the applicant.

Councilman Boyer stated the meeting with the applicant went well and the applicant has made an effort to appease some of the towns concerns. He further stated there would need to be a reversion clause.

Discussion ensued on the reversion clause.

Councilman Boyer stated the reversion clause should start at 25 years.

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Council President Tourgee asked what other projects would be permitted in that area.

Councilman Boyer reviewed the following types of industry permitted in industrial: petroleum, contractors, plumbing, concrete work , wrecking demo, junk yard and scrap yard by special permit to name a few.

Councilman President Tourgee explained residents had expressed concern with noise.

Planning Board member O'Loughlin explained the only noise you would hear would be the hum of the transformer. It would be no different than the noise from the substation at the Dunkin Donuts on Hopkins Hill.

Councilman Boyer explained there was concern from residents regarding access to the property from Robin Hollow Road.

Franks Epps, Owner and Developer from Victory SOL LLC stated the only access from Robin Hollow Road would be for emergency services.

Discussion ensued on under ground and above ground power and it was stated there would not be either on Robin Hollow Road.

Mr. Epps showed where the transformers and power lines would be located.

Discussion ensued on the set backs and buffers from residents. It was explained it would be a minimum of 250 feet.

Planning Board member O'Loughlin questioned what type of inverters. Mr. Epps stated string.

Planning Board member Berry stated this is a good mix for the site and would prevent more housing along Robin Hollow Road.

Mr. Epps explained what he would be seeking with regards to the zone change.

Discussion ensued on a residential restriction for the proposed parcel changed to RFR 2. It was also noted there would be a reversion clause if the project was not completed or if they go out of business.

Council Vice President Rekas Sloan questioned the status of the abutting land owner selling land to the project. Attorney Pagliarini advised that was not looking optimistic due to the State statue.

Attorney Pagliarini reviewed the industrial land available.

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Discussion ensued on bringing gas to the site.

Councilman Boyer asked if geothermal was a go.

Attorney Pagliarini stated they will pursue the geothermal as the project progresses.

Councilman Boyer questioned if the hydroponic site would use 30 percent of power produced. Mr. Epps explained the power source used.

Planning Board member Berry asked if you could scale back the Industrial A use.

Mr. Epps stated they have condensed the site as much as possible; but they still need to meet the purchase power agreement.

Planning Board member Bryan asked what is the development timeline.

Mr. Epps stated there is very little clearing to do; however they will need to correct DEM violations that occurred with the previous owner. There would need to be a small amount of clearing where string inverters would go. The clearing should take 1-2 months to prepare the property and an additional 3-4 months for solar to be completed. Then National Grid would still need to bring lines to the site. He further explained the National Grid's timeline. The transmissions study stated a construction time period of 8-12 months.

Council President Tourgee questioned what the buffer zone would be.

Mr. Epps stated they will not touch the 225 feet from where the current trees are.

Mr. Epps stated they plan to conserve the historic cemetery and old house foundations on the property and they also need to improve the current "cart path" road.

Discussion ensued on the Drum Rock property and purchase.

Chairman Ward stated typically when you have Industrial A with RFR 2; a buffer would need to remain at 100 feet.

Mr. Epps stated he would not object to that buffer.

Council President Tourgee expressed concern with wetlands being affected. Mr. Epps stated the only wetlands that would be touched, is the violations to be remedied, by the previous owner.

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Attorney Pagliarini stated the issue is with 8 acres of wetland and that will need to be rezoned.

Mr. Epps showed the area that would be rezoned.

Town Administrator Breene explained when they sold to Drum Rock; they sold the frontage and the plan was to change the access to the site, directly across from Breakheart Hill Road. He further explained Barnett currently is not feasible. This is the opportunity to plan the road for access and for future development to come.

Chairman Ward stated it would be advantageous to have some conceptual designs of the road for review and include the fire departments opinion as well.

Council President Tourgee commented on the difficulty of moving Breakheart Hill Road.

Town Administrator Breene stated there needs to be a plan for the infrastructure.

Discussion ensued on the road.

Councilman Boyer stated the developer needs to come up with a road network plan.

Discussion ensued on access to the road.

Planning Board member Bryan stated the town can be proactive with how the land is controlled and road is developed.

Attorney Pagliarini stated that it would be developed during Master Plan.

John Ruzzo, 426 Victory Highway questioned Barnett and access to the road.

Discussion ensued on frontage.

Mr. Ruzzo stated he owns a parcel and he may be agreeable to selling the land to reconstruct the site.

It was noted that would be a benefit for all parties involved.

Discussion ensued on individual parcels and history of the plat subdivision and road creation.

Attorney Pagliarini stated they would like to move forward if both boards agree.

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Chairman Ward reviewed the following items as proposed conditions: a reversion clause at twenty five years, residential covenant, and reversion if not used for approved development, and they would need to resolve the traffic patterns.

Council President Tourgee polled the Council on moving forward with the project.

All members were in favor of the project moving forward.

Council President Tourgee stated that previously DEM was going to buy the parcel to put an ATV park in and this has been the best plan they have seen in many years.

Town Administrator Breene commented on the history of the land.

Council Vice President Rekas Sloan moved to adjourn at 8:00 P.M. Councilman Boyer seconded.

VOTED: Tourgee- aye, Rekas Sloan - aye, Andrews - aye, Boyer- aye, Mulcahey - aye

The Planning Board also adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

ERIN F. LIESE, CMC

TOWN CLERK