



Town of Middletown Planning Department

350 East Main Rd., Middletown RI 02842 (401) 849 4027

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES- SPECIAL MEETING

November 2, 2017

Town Council Chambers, 350 East Main Rd.,
Middletown, RI

Board members present:

Paul Croce, Chair
Matt Sullivan
Bill Nash
Terri Flynn
Jim Williams

Rita Lavoie, Principal Planner
Chris McNally, Assistant Town Solicitor

Members absent:

B.J. Owen
Liz Drayton

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Croce at 6:00pm.

1. Present and accept public comment on proposed zoning ordinance amendments to allow for mixed-use development in the general business (GB) and limited business (LB) zoning districts.

- There was a motion by Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Flynn to open the public workshop.
- Vote 5-0-0
- Mr. Croce reviewed the planning board's work on the topic thus far including two previous workshops by the board
- Ms. Lavoie gave a PowerPoint presentation providing details of the proposed amendments and how the proposal relates to the goals of the comprehensive plan
- There was a motion by Mr. Nash, seconded by Mr. Sullivan to receive correspondence from Ms. Darcy Roland dated November 2, 2017
- Vote 5-0-0
- Members of the public were invited to speak
- **Mr. Allen Shers of 190 East Main Road** suggested that the draft should have a positive result for all parties involved: town, developer, users, and that Town should consider adding more incentives to the amendments. He encouraged the board to leave

the language as broad as possible. He spoke of the proposal appearing adapted to the former Vanicek property.

He asked the board to reconsider some prohibited items; Catering and Food Packaging, Membership athletic clubs. As well as reconsider the proposed performance standards, density by number of bedrooms, setbacks and height regulations.

He asked the board to include design incentives to encourage stone walls and decorative sidewalks.

- Board members asked questions of Mr. Shers regarding his experience with incentives in Portsmouth, RI
- There was discussion by the board regarding:
 - No minimum lot size requirements for mixed use
 - Density incentives in mixed use
 - Streamline process for mixed use approval making it more attractive to developers
 - Allowing creativity and flexibility under the ordinance
 - Planning Board granting of variances under the mixed-use ordinance
 - Density regulations
 - Adding language about referring mixed-use proposals to the Technical Review Committee
 - Development potential along Valley Road
 - The intent of the proposal being flexible and responsive to market shifts
 - If the intention comes through the draft language
 - The downside of flexibility
 - Use tables in the LB and GB zones
 - The granting of variances from the provisions of the article including the ability of an applicant to request a variance from the prohibited uses
- **Michael Arsenault of 685 Aquidneck Ave** asked if the polo center's vacant lot will be able to become a mixed-use development. He also asked about walkability and mentioned that there will be a traffic increase anywhere that a new mixed-use development is built.
- The board indicated that the polo center lot would be subject to the proposed mixed-use regulations.
- There was further discussion by the board regarding the ability of the Planning Board to grant use variances.
- It was clarified by Mr. McNally that the granting of a variance by the Planning Board would adhere to the same rules that the zoning board must follow including demonstrating hardship, granting the least relief necessary and, for uses, that the subject parcel does not have other beneficial uses.
- Motion to close the public workshop by Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Flynn.

- Vote 5-0-0

- Motion for a favorable recommendation to the Town Council by Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Nash.

- There was discussion by the board regarding:
 - Correcting typos in the document
 - Removing new single and two-family dwellings from the language of the proposal
 - Changing language regarding Transportation Communication and Utilities
 - Flexibility and discretion of the board
 - Consolidation of items 2 e,f,g,h
 - Wind turbines
 - If hotel/motel should be excluded based on previous drafts
 - Trade schools, updating the language to match the use table
 - Mobile homes and trailers already excluded
 - Green building program or equivalent applicable standard
 - Incentivizing design standards
 - Removing stormwater facilities from allowable uses of the required landscaped area
 - The motion was amended to include the following changes:
 1. adding language that the board may refer a proposal to the TRC;
 2. removing language relating to "new" single family houses;
 3. correcting typos;
 4. revising prohibited uses to include all uses under the Governmental, Educational, and Institutional on Privately Owned Land heading;
 5. allowing equivalents to LEED certification for incentives and;
 6. removing stormwater facilities from allowable uses of the required landscaped area.

- Vote 5-0-0

- Motion to adjourn by Mr. Nash, seconded by Mr. Williams

- Vote 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

Respectfully submitted: Rita Lavoie
 Principal Planner
 amended 12-12-17

