

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Granby
Planning & Zoning Commission
Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 7:00 pm

Members Present: Eric Lukingbeal, Matthew Peters (via Zoom), Eric Myers, Jonathan Boardman, Brennan Sheahan, Christine Chinni (via Zoom), Alternate Robert Lavitt, and Alternate Paula Johnson
Absent: Mark Lockwood
Also Present: Director of Community Development Abigail Kenyon and Land Use Coordinator Renee Deltenre (via Zoom)

1. Call to Order

Acting Chairman E. Myers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Seating of Alternates, if applicable

R. Lavitt was seated for M. Lockwood.

4. Public session, items not on the agenda or subject to a public hearing/input

None

5. Action on the minutes of February 14, 2023

ON A MOTION by E. Lukingbeal seconded by J. Boardman, the Commission voted (6-0-1) to approve the February 14, 2023 minutes as presented. B. Sheahan abstained.

6. Public Input and Commission Discussion: Granby Center Study Scope

A. Kenyon provided an overview of the project and discussed how the Commission is soliciting ideas from the public for items that should be included in the study.

Benjamin Perron, 25 Archie Lane, stated that the Granby Center Study should include discussion on the T1 zone, which is south of the center. Regulations and/or actions should be implemented to ensure that the T1 zone does not become another town center.

Katherine Bogli, 198R Salmon Brook Street, shared the same concerns regarding the T1 zone.

Terri Ann Hahn, 6 Allan Place, recommended that the town look into the Center Commons zone, as the regulations are commercially based and do not allow flexibility for pre-existing assets; i.e., residential properties, historic homes, etc. Consideration for future sidewalk projects would increase connectivity and the walkability of the center. T. Hann also recommended the implementation of gateways and associated signage, as well as improved signage showing the variations in speed limits throughout the area.

Glenn Ballard, 289 Granville Road, distributed written comments to the Commission outlining his recommendations for the study. He expressed concerns regarding next steps and the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, as well as the need for visually-oriented planning, accountability, meaningful public participation and outside assistance.

Meg Jabaily, 20 Oakridge Drive, discussed the need to look into behavior mapping, patterns and universal design for inclusion, health and aesthetics. She stated how users are the most important audience and the town needs to think about who this study will benefit.

Peter Bryanton, 5 Sullivan Drive, thanked the Commission for seeking public engagement in this process and recommended that a market study be done to better understand what will meet future needs of the town.

Kelsey VonKaenel, 15 Oakridge Drive, expressed concerns regarding traffic on Oakridge Drive, which is being used as a cut-through street. She also stated that the Geissler's shopping plaza needs to be cleaned up and the Commission should take outdoor noise into consideration.

Melissa O'Brien, 16 Old Stagecoach Road, expressed concerns regarding the lack of walkability throughout town and would like to see more sidewalks.

Mark Higby, 25 Oakridge Drive, expressed concerns regarding trash and rules that currently are not being enforced. He also mentioned the possibility of conducting a local survey amongst residential homes within the area.

Deborah Holcomb, past resident, expressed concerns regarding the town's walkability and would like to see more connectivity.

Gerald Ledger, 89 Bushy Hill Road, would like to see more walkability throughout town and expressed concerns for public safety, especially in regards to the recent road construction.

Susan Regan, 62 Hungary Road, would like to see the Town Green updated and noted concerns regarding the condition of several properties in the area and traffic on Hungary Road, primarily at the intersection of Hungary Road and Route 20.

Michael Ware, 45 Hungary Road, discussed concerns regarding walkability throughout the center and also stated concerns regarding the intersection of Hungary Road and Route 20.

E. Myers re-iterated that this is an ongoing discussion and the public will have additional opportunities to comment. He encouraged those who prepared correspondence to submit their documents to town staff. A. Kenyon stated for the record who had submitted documentation prior to the meeting via email.

7. Public Hearings

a. Application seeking a Special Permit under Zoning Regulations Sections 8.6.13 and 8.6.14 for an illuminated building sign that exceeds the allowable size for property located at 565 Salmon Brook Street, C2 Zone: File Z-3-23.

Applicant Paul Bianca of Bianca Signs was present via Zoom to discuss the application. The owners of Sotelo's Pizza & Restaurant are looking to install a new sign within the existing sign cabinet on the roof, which measures 90 square feet. The proposed sign would consist of 48 square feet within the middle of the sign cabinet and be illuminated via internal LED lighting. The Commission discussed the possibility of utilizing back lit letters instead of having the entire sign cabinet illuminated, and having the sign turned off when the business is closed. E. Lukingbeal also noted the proposed language on the sign had a spelling error.

Benjamin Perron, 25 Archie Lane, had concerns with the proposed size of the sign versus what the regulations allow without a Special Permit. He also noted concerns with illuminated signs.

The public hearing closed at 7:59 p.m.

b. Application seeking a Special Permit under Zoning Regulations Section 8.6.13 for a wall sign that exceeds the allowable size for property located at 12 Mechanicsville Road, C2 Zone: File Z-4-23.

Applicants/owners David Hrdlicka and Brent Davenport of Shaffer Beacon Mechanical, LLC were present to discuss the application. They are looking to install a new 42 square foot wall sign on the side of the building that faces the parking lot, which currently has a temporary banner in place. No sign illumination is proposed; however, there is an existing exterior light located above the proposed sign that casts light onto the parking lot and entry.

Michael Gron, 395 Salmon Brook Street, stated that he would like to see adjustments made to the existing light and has no issues with the proposed sign.

The public hearing closed at 8:07 p.m.

R. Lavitt was unseated and P. Johnson was seated.

c. Application seeking an amendment to Zoning Regulations Section 3.11, which would allow rear lots in the R4A Zone by Special Permit: File Z-2-23.

A. Kenyon summarized the discussion at the prior meeting and provided a list of properties within the R4A zone that would be impacted by this regulation amendment. In total, there are 104 properties within the zone and at least 17 or 16% could have at least one rear lot. A. Kenyon reiterated that this list does not take into consideration environmental constraints, which is evaluated on a site by site basis.

Stanley Kardys, 201 Case Street, re-stated for the record that he is part owner of 186 Case Street and is looking to carve out and preserve the front portion of the property for agricultural purposes. He referenced meeting minutes from the 2006 Case Street Study Committee and stated how preventing rear lots will destroy farmland and lead to even more development.

Phillip LaPointe, 210 Case Street, spoke against the application.

Anna Sogliuzzo, 15 Old Orchard Road, would like to see the Case Street streetscape preserved with homes pushed back and stated how this restriction is not in any other residential zone.

Heather Lombardo, 19 Broad Hill Road, spoke in favor of the application and asked the Commission to consider farming implications and the preservation of agricultural land.

Applicant Matt Reale, 96 Daniel Trace, Burlington, stated that rear lots would allow for less development in regards to 186 Case Street, as current regulations would allow more development along the frontage and impact the existing streetscape.

The Commission discussed the application at length and stated how approving rear lots would not guarantee the preservation of agricultural land along the road frontage. P. Johnson questioned whether a consideration for agricultural preservation could be included under Section 8.14 of the regulations. E. Lukingbeal and C. Chinni stated that they are not comfortable with changing the regulations based on one application. A. Kenyon stated for the record that she had received correspondence via email from Pat Orłowski and Edward Dombkowski, which were distributed to the Commission prior to the meeting.

The public hearing closed at 8:37 p.m.

P. Johnson was unseated and R. Lavitt was seated.

8. Receive applications and schedule public hearings

None

9. Consideration of above applications, where the Commission has concluded the public hearing

a. Application seeking a Special Permit under Zoning Regulations Sections 8.6.13 and 8.6.14 for an illuminated building sign that exceeds the allowable size for property located at 565 Salmon Brook Street, C2 Zone: File Z-3-23.

ON A MOTION by E. Lukingbeal seconded by J. Boardman, the Commission voted (7-0-0) to approve an application seeking a Special Permit under Zoning Regulations Sections 8.6.13 and 8.6.14 for an illuminated building sign that exceeds the allowable size for property located at 565 Salmon Brook Street, C2 Zone, File Z-3-23, subject to the following conditions:

1. The sign background shall be opaque and only the letters may be illuminated; and,
2. The sign must be turned off when the business is closed.

b. Application seeking a Special Permit under Zoning Regulations Section 8.6.13 for a wall sign that exceeds the allowable size for property located at 12 Mechanicsville Road, C2 Zone: File Z-4-23.

ON A MOTION by C. Chinni seconded by B. Sheahan, the Commission voted (7-0-0) to approve an application seeking a Special Permit under Zoning Regulations Section 8.6.13 for a wall sign that exceeds the allowable size for property located at 12 Mechanicsville Road, C2 Zone, File Z-4-23, as proposed.

c. Application seeking an amendment to Zoning Regulations Section 3.11, which would allow rear lots in the R4A Zone by Special Permit: File Z-2-23.

There was no deliberation and discussion was continued to the next regular meeting on March 14, 2023.

10. Commission Discussion: Neighborhood and Commercial Transition Zone (T1) proposed regulation changes

In response to the Commission’s concern regarding setbacks and the streetscape buffer, A. Kenyon prepared and distributed multiple maps to demonstrate alternative setbacks. The Commission discussed at length the various setbacks and if one setback should be implemented, which would allow developers to choose whether or not parking should be in the front or the rear of the building. There was a general consensus that many lots would be rendered undevelopable with a 75 and 100-foot setback requirement. In order to provide an adequate landscape buffer, the Commission suggested a 30-foot parking setback and 60-foot building setback. Discussion was continued to the next regular meeting, where staff will present maps depicting the proposed setbacks and conversation will include drive-thru establishments.

11. Staff Report and Correspondence

A. Kenyon informed the Commission that she met with the Department of Transportation regarding the road re-construction project in Granby center. Construction will ramp-up come the beginning of April and consist of night work and detours, which will be advertised to the public in the Granby Drummer and on the Town Website.

12. Commissioner Reports and Correspondence

None

13. Adjourn

ON A MOTION by J. Boardman seconded by E. Lukingbeal, the Commission voted (7-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Deltenre
Land Use Coordinator