

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Avon held a virtual *GoToMeeting* on Tuesday, July 18, 2023. Present were Peter Mahoney, Chair, Lisa Levin, Vice Chair, Mary Harrop, Dean Hamilton, Joseph Gentile, Robin Baran, and Alternate Elaine Primeau (did not sit). Chet Bukowski and Alternate Julie Rousey were absent. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and Community Development.

Mr. Mahoney called the meeting to order at 7pm.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

OTHER BUSINESS

Housing Task Force (possible appointment of members)

Mr. Peck reported that the Task Force needs two representatives from the public and three members from the Commission. Christine Graesser and Pam Monroe were present and interested in joining the Task Force.

Pam Monroe said that she is interested in the Task Force because of her past experiences with non-profit management; she noted that there was always a lot of talk about affordable housing. She likes putting together collaborations. She noted that she has lived in Avon for 15 years and currently she is working for an appraiser.

Mr. Mahoney indicated that Ms. Baran and Mr. Bukowski will serve on the Task Force with a third to identified at a later date. There will also be two community members and one Staff person. He noted that the first meeting of the Task Force may be in September. He welcomed input from all members of the Commission.

Ms. Levin said that her vision of the Task Force is to study, educate, and make people aware of the options relative to housing in the community.

Mr. Peck indicated that the initial phase of the Task Force will likely be about one year while information is being gathered; quarterly meetings may be appropriate. It will be a collaborative effort.

Christine Graesser said that she has lived in Avon for 30 years and has seen a lot of changes adding that she has tracked development. She noted that she is retired from being a law librarian at different law firms and also at the legislature. She has experience researching zoning regulations and development policies. She has been on the Avon Land Trust Board and was President for nine years so she has experience interfacing with people in connection with property issues and/or development. She has connections with other groups that could bring expertise to the Task Force.

Mr. Gentile asked Ms. Graesser how she feels about the concerns that local communities have about losing their autonomy of their zoning. Ms. Graesser said that some have expressed concern about the potential for loss of local control due to the reform Bill and the way the Statute reads now.

Discussion - Revision to Zoning Regulations – IP Zone – Apts/Affordable Housing

Mr. Peck addressed the proposed amendment to the IP Zone Regulations. He indicated that the Fire Marshal has no concerns with a four-story structure in the IP Zone. The proposed amendment changes the lot coverage to a maximum of 35% (from 20%) and no building or parking can be closer than 50 feet (from 100 feet) to a residential boundary. He explained that these minor changes would allow for a residential development in the IP Zone with a 20% affordable component. Any application would require a special permit and site plan to be reviewed by the Commission.

Zoning Regulations Revision - Overview of Baseline Report - Update from SLR Consultant

Robert Collins, SLR Consultants, displayed and reviewed the baseline report for the update to the Zoning Regulations. The review included all ten sections of the Regulations, the Zoning Map; the 2016 POCD; legislative changes to the CT General Statutes; and planning trends (green development standards, green roofs, EV charging stations, complete streets, non-point source pollution) worth considering. Definitions (Section II) need to be reviewed/updated/expanded; Floodplain regulations (Section III) need to be reviewed; review/consideration for different districts (Sections IV – VI, residential/commercial/industrial) as well as current permitted uses; and review of the parking and sign regulations (Section VII). Public Act 21-2, relating to outdoor dining; Public Act 21-29, related to affordable housing/ADUs and parking; and Public Act 20-25, related to general parking and EV charging, will also be reviewed to ensure that everything is in agreement with the Zoning Regulations. There is also new legislation related to short-term rentals that could be addressed. Mr. Collins explained that the next step (after the baseline review) is to create an annotated outline to show how the existing zoning code will align into the new format, as reorganization of the entire zoning regulations is a major point. He concluded by noting that there will likely be some working sessions with the Town/Commission to review proposed changes.

In response to Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Peck indicated that he is very happy with the baseline review adding that the reorganization of the Regulations will streamline the content and make it easier for everyone to navigate and understand.

In response to Ms. Levin, Mr. Collins noted his understanding of the need for the Zoning Regulations to be user friendly. Once the annotated outline and/or TOC are available the entire application process from beginning to end should become clearer. How exactly the regulations will be structured can be discussed but there is definitely the ability to cross reference information as needed.

In response to Mrs. Harrop, Mr. Collins confirmed that once the entire process is complete a public hearing will be held where the Commission will vote to adopt the new Zoning Regulations. Mr. Peck concurred.

In response to Mr. Gentile, Mr. Collins explained/clarified that we need to ensure that Avon's AHOZ Regulations match up with the current requirements of the State Statutes, which they probably do but it needs to be checked.

Mr. Gentile noted his concerns that if the requirements don't match up then we are basically changing our AHOZ to an 8-30g and then we don't need an AHOZ if the requirements are the same; he asked if we will still have some control. Mr. Collins noted that the wording could be changed to "compare" or "compatible" instead of "match up".

STAFF UPDATESAvon Village Center

Mr. Peck reported that he continues to express concern to the developer about the mix of tenants. He also reported that he was told that the next phase of development, to include residential buildings, will be coming in soon. He noted that there are still buildings left to be constructed as part of the current phase 1A.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Linda Sadlon

Avon Planning and Community Development