EAST HADDAM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX – 1 PLAINS ROAD – MEETING ROOM #1 & 2
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 14, 2024

- **CALL TO ORDER -** Mr. Brownell called the meeting to order for the East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission at 7:15 p.m.

- **ATTENDANCE**

  PRESENT: Crary Brownell (Chairman), Deborah Langdon (Regular Member), Ed Gubbins (Regular Member), Bernard Gillis (Regular Member), Ms. Dumaine (Alternate Member), Stephen Lohmeyer (Alternate Member), Ms. Kinsman (Alternate Member).

  ABSENT: Richard Pettinelli (Secretary), Jim Curtin (Vice Chairman), Justin Anderson (Regular Member).

  OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Ventres (LUA).

  Mr. Brownell asked that Ms. Dumaine fill in for Mr. Anderson, Ms. Kinsman for Mr. Pettinelli, and Mr. Lohmeyer for Mr. Curtin.

- **ACKNOWELEDGEMENT – Fox Hopyard Golf Club, LLC (applicant & property owner), 1 Hopyard Road (property location), Map 608, Lot 204. Special Exemption for a proposed swimming pool, pool house, pickleball court.**

  Mr. Ventres informed the commission that the applicant has submitted architectural drawings for a new swimming pool, pool house, pickleball courts, along with plans for parking, and drainage.

  Mr. Gubbins made a motion to schedule a public hearing for Fox Hopyard Golf Club LLC, for June 11, 2024, seconded by Mr. Gillis and the vote passed unanimously.

- **MINUTES –April 23, 2024**

  Add Ms. Kinsman and Ms. Dumaine to attendance. Correct minor clerical errors.

  The minutes for April 23, 2024, accepted as amended.

- **BILLS – Halloran Sage $360.00**

  Mr. Gubbins made a motion to pay the bill for Halloran Sage, seconded by Ms. Kinsman and the vote passed unanimously.

- **HOME OCCUPATION APPLICATIONS**

A. HOME OCCUPATION APPLICATIONS - PZC#24-13 - 90 Mott Lane (property location), Stacey Hathaway (Property owner & applicant). Map 075, Lot 053. Companion/Homemaker.

Mr. Ventres informed the commission members that the applicant has submitted her application and her proof of mail receipts. He explained that the applicant will not have any customers coming to her home as she travels to the homes of her clients to provide homecare.

Mr. Gillis made a motion to approve PZC#24-13 - 90 Mott Lane (property location), Stacey Hathaway (Property owner & applicant). Map 075, Lot 053, Companion/Homemaker; seconded by Ms. Kinsman and the vote passed unanimously.

Ms. Kinsman made a motion to change the order of business seconded by Ms. Langdon and the vote passed unanimously.

- **LANDUSE ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

Mr. Ventres stated that he has been working on closing out permits and inspections for various construction projects. He explained the process and added that it is important to complete for insurance purposes, safety compliance, resale value and liability. Mr. Ventres added that closing out permits ensures compliance with building codes and safety standards. Discussion ensued regarding the height of buildings that are located on the Connecticut River with unique situations and varying elevations.

Mr. Ventes said that the Subcommittee walk is scheduled for June 22, 2024; an agenda will be sent out. He added that the walk will kick off with SLR consulting so that the whole team gets a view of the site.

Mr. Ventres informed the commission members that the Building Inspector, Bill Thody, will be retiring very shortly.

- **PUBLIC HEARINGS – 7:45 p.m.**

Mr. Brownell read into the record the public hearing legal notice for Application #24-08 - 423 East Haddam Moodus Road (property location), Christopher Antilla (applicant), Brownell Properties, LLC (property owner). Map 064, Lot 049. New and Used Auto Dealership – Text Amendment.

A. Application #24-08 - 423 East Haddam Moodus Road (property location), Christopher Antilla (applicant), Brownell Properties, LLC (property owner). Map 064, Lot 049. New and Used Auto Dealership – Text Amendment.

First Date: May 14, 2024 Last Date: June 18, 2024

Mr. Ventres informed the commission members that the applicant has submitted his application along with a narrative on what he would like to do, which is operate from the inside of the existing building. The applicant expects that 80-90% of its business to be conducted online and the business would comply with all CT DMV requirements. There would be a waiting room for customers, an office and ADA bathroom, also, an interior area to display automobiles and service them. Mr. Ventres added that there would be eight exterior parking spots for staff and customers and moving cars around when necessary.

The commission members discussed displaying vehicles and the type of displays that are allowed, motor vehicles and boats, and site plan review as well as the East Haddam Zoning Regulations regarding automotive sales and general repair. Mr. Ventres provided handouts with information on the regulations.

Discussion also ensued regarding mechanics and whether a mechanic is required to be on staff for 35 hours. The commission members feel that it is essential to consider regulations for oil disposal, proper disposal of used oil is crucial for environmental protections and there are guidelines and regulations in place for handling and disposing of automotive fluids, including oil.

Mr. Gubbins made a motion to continue Application #24-08 - 423 East Haddam Moodus Road (property location), Christopher Antilla (applicant), Brownell Properties, LLC (property owner). Map 064, Lot 049. New and Used Auto Dealership – Text Amendment, to the next regularly scheduled meeting; seconded by Ms. Kinsman and the vote passed unanimously.

Mr. Brownell read into record the public hearing notice for PZC#24-05 - Proposed Revisions of the Zoning Regulations.

B. PZC#24-05 - Proposed Revisions of the Zoning Regulations

1. Revision to Regulations to reflect changes to the Gateway Standards in Section 5 Definitions and Section 9.10 Conservation Zone.

Mr. Ventres read into record the letter from Connecticut River Gateway Commission dated 05-14-2024.

Mr. Ventres explained that the Gateway definitions were necessary for compliance with the requirements set by the Gateway. Other than the exemption for the East Haddam Village and density, everything else aligns with what the Gateway was seeking. He added that they comply because they have the Gateway exemption. Mr. Ventres stated that the Connecticut River Gateway Commission reviewed the proposed regulation amendments. These amendments do not conflict with Gateway standards, they would not negatively impact the Gateway conservation

zone. The amendments aim to preserve the unique scenic, ecological, scientific, and historic value of the Connecticut River.

Mr. Ventres added that property owners within the Gateway Zone are expected to follow preservation practices, including tree preservation and dark sky-compliant lighting. The proposed revisions allow for farm Stores, farm markets, breweries, wineries, and accessory use on farms and the Connecticut River Gateway Commission approves these proposed amendments.

Ms. Kinsman made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Gubbins and the vote passed unanimously.

Mr. Gubbins made a motion to approve the Revisions to the Gateway Standards in Section 5 Definitions and Section 9.10 Conservation Zone as amended effective June 15, 2024, seconded by Ms. Dumaine and the vote passed unanimously.

2. Revisions to the regulations pertaining to certified mailings versus certificate of mailing requirements when notice is given to abutters.

Mr. Ventres informed the commission members that in the past, when using certified mail for legal purposes, the recipient was required to sign the green card as proof of receipt. However, this process could be costly and time-consuming. Recently, there has been a change that allows for a more efficient alternative, which is the certificate of mailing. Below is a summary of changes to this regulation.

- **Certificate of Mailing:** Instead of requiring the recipient's signature, you can now send a certificate of mailing. This document serves as proof that you sent the mail via certified mail. It doesn't require the recipient to sign anything upon delivery.

- **Cost Savings:** The certificate of mailing is significantly cheaper than the traditional certified mail with return receipt. This cost reduction benefits both applicants and businesses.

- **Recipient Awareness**: Sometimes recipients for not pick up their certified mail promptly or may not even realize what it is. With the certificate of mailing, there's no need for them to sign anything, making the process more straightforward.

Ms. Dumaine made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Langdon and the vote passed unanimously.

Mr. Gubbins made a motion to approve Revisions to the certified mailings versus certificate of mailing requirements when notice is given to abutters, effective June 15, 2024, seconded by Mr. Gillis and the vote passed unanimously.

3. **Revisions to the Agricultural Regulations – Section 30 to allow farm stores, farm markets, breweries, wineries, and accessory uses on the farm.**

Discussion ensued regarding the below topics:

The Farmer Pipeline Problem:

Many young farmers face barriers to entering the agricultural market due to high entry costs and competitive challenges, the average age of farmers is over 58 years old, and many do not have succession plans for their farmland.

Wineries and Percentage Requirements:

Connecticut law has a loophole that allows wineries to produce wine with a lower percentage of grapes grown and harvested on their own property. Some wineries grow only 25% of their grapes on-site, while others, like the one you visited, grow 90%.

Mr. Ventres added that the changes are in alignment with Connecticut General Statutes.

Mr. Ron Gross, Chairman of the Agricultural Commission addressed the commission members. He explained that both the Agricultural Commission and the Economic Development Commission have been working together reviewing the regulation change. Mr. Gross stated that the Agriculture Commission's role is to recommend policies to the office of the first select person. The document worked on, approved by the Economic Development Commission, reflects months of effort, and aims to ensure a fair approach for all.

Mr. Aaron Taylor, Agriculture Commission member, and owner of a commercial vegetable farm, said in order to have a winery that due to the climate in Connecticut you often have to buy additional products for it to be viable.

Ms. Kinsman made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Langdon and the vote passed unanimously.

Mr. Gubbins made a motion to approve Revisions to the Agricultural Regulations – Section 30 to allow farm stores, farm markets, breweries, wineries, and accessory uses on the farm, as amended effective June 15, 2024, seconded by Ms. Kinsman and the vote passed unanimously.

Mr. Gubbins made a motion to have June 15, 2024, be the effective date for all three regulation changes, seconded by Ms. Kinsman and the vote passed unanimously.

- **ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Gubbins made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., seconded by Ms. Dumaine and the vote passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted, Susan Magri