

**Town of Willington
Planning and Zoning Commission
February 20, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

A. Call to Order

W. Parsell called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

B. Roll Call/Seating of Alternates

Walter Parsell
Bob Shabot
Doug Roberts
Rebecca Sinosky
Joe Hall
Michael Johansen (Alternate)

Also Present:

M. D'Amato- Zoning Agent
E. Delaney- Asst. Zoning Agent (via Zoom)

C. Applications for Receipt

None

D. Public Hearing

None

E. New Business

1. PZ-24-1: Special Permit Renewal, Section 15 Excavation Sand and Gravel at 180 Tolland Tpk. Owner: Holt Mountain LLC.

John Patton indicated that there is nothing new is happening at this location, it's the same process we've been doing every day. He brought up that they contract sweepers to help keep the dirt off Rte. 74. We did pave and once paved it solved 99% of the problems, but every now and again when there is a big mud week, we do have the sweepers come down and take care of the mud that tracks out onto 74.

W. Parsell verified with staff that there had been no complaints.

M. D'Amato brought the narrative up so that everyone could see the overview of the operation.

J. Patton mentioned that they do blast from time to time and that they do have a list to be informed. So, anyone who would like to be notified before can call into their office and be added to the list. He brought up that if it can be helpful if people are aware of the blasts ahead of time.

W. Parsell asked how often they blast.

J. Patton said they average at about once a month. Sometimes if we are developing an area, we have some smaller ones every couple of weeks but mainly once a month. In the summer it may be more frequent depending on how big of a blast and how busy the company is. In average we are doing about 13 blasts a year.

2. PZ-24-2: Special Permit Renewal, Section 15 Excavation Sand and Gravel at 171 Tolland Tpk. Owner: L. Becker

J. Patton said this is the location that is behind the office. Very little gravel comes out of this spot. It is mostly reclamation now. We brought in about 40,000 yards of fill for reclamation. After taking millions and millions of yards out of there since the early 50's we are kind of trying to bring it back.

W. Parsell asked if it was pretty much spent.

J. Patton said it is, there is more there but not a lot. Not enough to focus on right now. There is a lot that needs to be reclaimed though, everything that is brought in gets tested to make sure that there are no contaminants. We do have a licensed environmental professionals that test it. We also have monitoring wells since we do have fill brought in. These wells get tested quarterly to see if we have anything leeching.

J. Hall asked if some of the wells that they were monitoring were close or on the watch list.

J. Patton said no that was the storm water on the 180 parcel. It was something in there that was a bit elevated. It was across from the quarry, but it was storm water outflow not the monitoring wells. The monitoring wells were installed in 2021 and we have not had problems with them at all. But everything that comes in is tested.

W. Parsell asked if that was prior to it coming on site.

J. Patton said yes, there may be a point where we set up some bins for people to dump material in, and then when that 500-yard bin is full we will have it tested and make sure it meets our criteria. Once it does it can be offloaded. We are talking a couple years though before we discuss incorporating that type of operation.

3. PZ-24-3: Special Permit Renewal, Section 15 Excavation Sand and Gravel at 9 George Dr. Owner: L. Becker

J. Patton said that this location has been here since the early 60's. No graveling is done down here as far as digging. We just do processing of the material from the quarry. This is what we call a wash plant. Some jobs require washed stone and that is what we do down here.

4. PZ-24-4: Special Permit Renewal, Section 15 Excavation Sand and Gravel at 328 Ruby Rd. Owner: Ruby Assoc.

J. Patton informed the commission that nothing gets done at this property. We like to keep the permit active just in case we at some point want to start up again. Nothing has been done here for years though.

R. Sinosky motioned to approve the sand and gravel operations to be renewed for one year. B. Shabot seconded it. All in favor.

F. Unfinished Business

G. Approval of Minutes:

02/06/2024 – Tabled to next meeting.

12/19/2023 – B. Shabot moved to accept the minutes. W. Parsell seconded it. All in favor.

H. Correspondence

None.

I. Public Participation (items not listed on the agenda)

None.

J. Staff Report/Discussion

1. Regulation Amendments

M. D'Amato provided an updated memo that was previously given to the commission. This memo outlined potential regulation amendments that we should consider for various reasons. As well as things that have come up over time. What I've included is outdoor dining, minimum floor area for housing, home occupations, some of the review criteria based on legislative changes, accessory dwelling units, signage, strategic development zone, commercial lighting, and driveway standards. These are all things that were put on your plate either through applications, legislative changes, or things we have discussed. I ticked off the two that we have finished which was outdoor dining and accessory dwelling units.

W. Parsell asked that Home Occupations be put onto the next agenda. He also asked to tackle signs.

M. D'Amato mentioned that some of the big changes we are waiting until we get the draft of the codified regulations from General Code. That way we aren't trying to work through older Section numbers. We are expecting to have the codified text in the next month or so. For the Strategic Development Zone, he recommended waiting to see what the EDC does with the Strategic Plan. As part of that scope, the consultant will evaluate two to three development programs that are not just randomly picked. If they evaluate potential developments and there is some consensus surrounding that, then it would make sense that if anything is done with the SDZ to try and align it with what has been contemplated by that plan. It would be more refined vs. leaving it wide open. If there has been some viability demonstrated by the consultant of those programs, in theory it's a little better than just putting some uses down and seeing what shakes out.

B. Shabot said that it would give some good guidance.

W. Parsell said when you give the SDZ an honest look, you could see that the process worked.

B. Shabot mentioned that revisiting it a second time, if we had the results of the EDC study would give us more basis and maybe be easier for the general public to understand. As well as it won't be just us speaking it will be a consultant as well.

D. Roberts asked if a consultant had been chosen.

M. D'Amato said yes, Strategy 5 out of Andover, MA.

D. Roberts asked if he has experience with towns like ours.

M. D'Amato said he has worked all over the country for both cities and towns and that he has also worked for the private sector trying to either analyze a development to figure out if it's going to work, but also trying to help towns understand the financial component to development. He is involved with development and really looking at the demographics and what the market is doing, what the rents are, interest rates etc. He looks at the projects ahead of time to help towns make sure that what the developer is giving them is legitimate.

W. Parsell asked how he fits that in to the POCD.

M. D'Amato said he believes he's going to derive some of those programs that he's going to evaluate from the POCD. He may find something in there that doesn't align with the market but is in the process of reviewing the POCD, the Affordable Housing Plan and previous town budgets. He's getting all this stuff together because the EDC is going to have a kickoff meeting with him next week. From there we will figure out how to work them with other commissions. The work areas for the project are preliminary research, reviewing all plans, documents, data, historical context, etc. He will also do a land analysis looking at spatial connections, neighborhood relationships, development and opportunity areas, areas of existing preservation, historic cultural areas, infrastructure, existing planned, as well as identifying development constraints whether it be topographic, geographic, etc. Then a market analysis will be conducted.

W. Parsell asked what happened with the overflow parking for FedEx.

M. D'Amato said he has not heard anything since the text amendment application was approved.

K. Adjournment

W. Parsell adjourned the meeting at 8:15pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Evelyn Delaney - Assistant Land Use Agent