



Town of Groton, Connecticut
Planning & Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes

Office of Planning and
Development Services
Town Hall Annex
134 Groton Long Point
Road
Groton, CT 06340
860-446-5970

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Chair

Chair Jeffrey C. Pritchard

Members

Member Michael D. Kane

Member Susan K. Sutherland

Member Barbara Tarbox

Member Hal Zod

Alternates

Alternate Kevin Fiftal

Alternate Stephen Hudecek

I. ROLL CALL

I.1. Roll Call

Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present: Pritchard, Kane, Sutherland, Zod, Tarbox

Alternates Present: Hudecek

Alternates Absent: Fiftal

Staff Present: Jones, Glemboski, Schaufler

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

II.1. REGA21-03, Cannabis Establishment Zoning Text Amendments

Zod read legal notice.

Staff stated Governor Lamont signed Public Act 21-1 in June, legalizing the adult use of cannabis products and setting out a framework to regulate the industry. In addition to any required state licensing, municipalities may also regulate dispensaries, retail facilities, hybrid facilities, cultivators, micro cultivators and production facilities. The Act also sets out what municipal zoning regulations can address with regards to these uses.

If a municipality's regulations do not address cannabis related uses, they will be regulated as similar uses would be. For example, retail cannabis facilities would be regulated the same as any other retail use, without any special conditions.

This application is to amend the definition section of the regulations to define Cannabis and Cannabis Establishments.

This application defines Cannabis Establishments and it prohibited in all zones.

This text amendment is meant to be temporary in order to give the Commission time to develop regulations that address all types of Cannabis uses. This also allows time for some guidance from the state to help the development of regulations.

The Commission received three written comments regarding the text amendment:

Conservation Commission- Permanently prohibit Cannabis uses in Green Zones
 Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments- No negative inter-municipal impact
 Department of Energy and Environmental Protection- Consistent with CT Coastal Management Act

Staff read an additional email from Aundre Bumgardner who states that he opposes the proposed text amendment.

The Chairman asked for any public comments:

Carolyn Wilson, 1140 Ocean Ave., New London, Groton Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention (GASP), Ledge Light Health District, spoke of the importance of prevention policy and the effect it can have on the community.

Beth Tillman, states she would hate for the Town of Groton to overlook the tax base that cannabis establishments would provide.

Rosanne Kotowski, 24 Ann Ave, RTM District 5, agrees with the moratorium on the cannabis shops and wants it to be permanent.

Discussion was held as to this being a temporary prohibition. The Commission inquired about coordinating with all the zoning districts within the Town of Groton to have agreement on this topic within all zoning districts. The Commission would like swift action to be taken on establishing the new regulations regarding cannabis establishments.

Motion: To close the public hearing at 7:33p.m.

Moved by: Pritchard, Jeffrey C.		Seconded by: Zod, Hal		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Jeffrey C. Pritchard	X			
Michael D. Kane	X			
Susan K. Sutherland	X			
Barbara Tarbox	X			
Hal Zod	X			
Passed				

III. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

III.1. REGA21-03, Cannabis Establishment Zoning Text Amendments

The Chairman asked for any further discussion. No further discussion was held.

MOTION: To approve Zoning Regulation text amendment application REGA21-03 to:

- 1.) Amend Section 2.1 (Definitions) to add definitions of Cannabis and Cannabis Establishment
- 2.) Amend Section 4.1 (Table of Permitted Uses) to prohibit Cannabis Establishments in all zones

The Town of Groton Planning and Zoning Commission adopts zoning regulation text amendment REGA 21-03 in order to allow a comprehensive review of Public Act 21-1 and to consider where cannabis uses should be allowed and under what conditions pursuant to the following findings and reasons for approval:

1. This amendment is consistent with the Town’s 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) with particular regard to goals, objectives, and recommendations for the promotion of sustainable development patterns for Special Focus Areas, and the evaluation of current zones and development standards to determine if uses, setbacks, and other requirements are appropriate.
2. This amendment is consistent with the Town’s Municipal Coastal Program and the CGS Section 22a-90 through 22a-111 (Coastal Management Act) with particular regard for protecting coastal resources, protecting water quality, and carefully managing coastal development
3. This zoning text amendment is made in accordance with the comprehensive plan for the Town of Groton and provides for reasonable consideration of the environment and Long Island Sound in accordance with the provisions of CGS 8-2.

This text amendment shall become effective November 15, 2021.

Moved by: Pritchard, Jeffrey C.		Seconded by: Sutherland, Susan K.		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Jeffrey C. Pritchard	X			
Michael D. Kane	X			
Susan K. Sutherland	X			
Barbara Tarbox	X			
Hal Zod	X			
Approved				

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

IV.1. September 14, 2021 Minutes

Motion: To approve minutes as written.

Moved by: Pritchard, Jeffrey C.		Seconded by: Tarbox, Barbara		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Jeffrey C. Pritchard	X			
Michael D. Kane	X			
Susan K. Sutherland	X			
Barbara Tarbox	X			
Hal Zod	X			
Approved				

V. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

V.1. Public Communications

The Chairman stated an email from Harbor View Landing in regards to noise complaints had been added to the agenda packet.

Beth Tillman, 925 River Road, stated that the request for proposals for the Pleasant Valley School property was developed without public hearing or input. She asks that the PZC please hold the project to the letter of the zoning regulations. She thanked the Commission for holding firm on the Mystic Oral school project.

VI. SPECIAL PERMITS

None

VII. SUBDIVISIONS

None

VIII. SITE PLANS

None

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

X.1. New Applications

SIT21-20, Factory Square Restaurant Addition, 12 Water St.

X.2. Referrals

None

XI. COMMISSION REPORTS

XI.1. Report of Chair

The Chairman stated that Harbor View Landing held another event with loud music that went until 10 p.m. Staff will contact the owner to discuss.

The Chairman stated he has signed site plans for Rodgers Development and Iglesia Church.

Chairman Pritchard inquired if any agreements have been reached in regards to the Mystic Education Center. Staff stated that at this time there are no updates or other information to give. Staff will provide an update as soon as possible.

The Chairman shared that he has an upcoming meeting for Council of Governments and asked that he be contacted if anyone wants to give any information to be discussed.

XI.2. Report of Commission

Sutherland asked if there have been any changes for public access to the Mystic River or any update for the traffic study that was done for Mystic. She asked if staff would provide an update at the next meeting.

Tarbox inquired as to the situation on 3 Water Street regarding the tables and chairs on top of the roof. She stated this was not part of the approved plans and hopes that rules and regulations set by the Commission will be enforced. She would also like to commend the Zoning Official for taking care of the blight situation on Lambtown Road. She would like an update on other sites mentioned at previous meetings as well. She requests the Zoning Official look into the blight situation on 176 Walker Hill Road.

XII REPORT OF STAFF

XII.1. Report of Staff

Staff reported that the Town Council Committee of the Whole is having a presentation on a housing market study that will be shared with the Planning and Zoning Commission at a later date.

The Commission inquired about the parking lot on Pearl St. and if Public Works approved the change of egress that was discussed at a previous meeting. Staff noted that Public Works did not approve the change.

XII.2. September ASP Report provided to the Commission.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

XIII.1. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn meeting at 7:55p.m.

Moved by: Pritchard, Jeffrey C.		Seconded by: Tarbox, Barbara		
Committee Members	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	RECUSE
Jeffrey C. Pritchard	X			
Michael D. Kane	X			
Susan K. Sutherland	X			
Barbara Tarbox	X			
Hal Zod	X			
Adjourned				

Next Meeting: October 26, 2021

Hal Zod, Secretary
Planning and Zoning Commission

Prepared by Debbie Schaufler
Office Assistant II