

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 2-25-25

AT 10:26am AND RECEIVED BY

Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission TOWN CLERK

Regular Meeting

Monday, February 10, 2025

7:00 p.m.

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers – Town Hall

Town Hall – 45 South Main Street

MINUTES

Chairman Seichter called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Roll Call: Present: James Seichter, Chair; J.P. Venoit, Vice Chair; James Fitzsimmons, Regular Member, Jeffrey Kohan, Regular Member; Joseph Sanders, Alternate; Bryan Rivard, Alternate; David Parent, Alternate; and Kevin Pagini, Town Planner.

Consideration of Minutes – January 13, 2025, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Venoit: Motion to approve the Minutes of Monday, January 13, 2025, Meeting of the Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission as submitted.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons: Second

Vote: Unanimous to approve with Commissioner Kohan abstaining.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Text Amendment – Section 4.7 – Downtown Apartment (DA) District Continued - #904-24

Mr. Pagini explained that the purpose of this amendment is to expand housing. He explained that the second amendment would negate the first amendment if it's approved. This one could be withdrawn. The second allows more and essentially gets rid of the Downtown Apartment District and allows it in all the areas included in the amendment.

Chairman Seichter clarified that the second amendment is broader and does more to encourage housing. His opinion is that it is more productive to focus on the second amendment for a Middle Housing District. There was consensus to proceed with the second amendment.

Mr. Pagini noted that the first amendment can be withdrawn and brought back if the Commission wants.

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Seichter called for a motion on the amendment.

Commissioner Venoit: Motion to withdraw application #904-24, Text Amendment to Section 4.7 – Downtown Apartment (DA) District.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons: second

Vote: Unanimous

2. Text Amendment – Section 6.38 – Middle Housing #901-25

Commissioner Venoit read the legal notice and noted the correspondence. #901-25 – Text Amendment to add new Section 6.38 and amend Section 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 4.8 and 4.16 to allow Multi-family dwelling units. Changes will affect the R-6, R-11, R-15, RF-40, CA, CB, I-20 and I-40 zones. (Full text available in the Planning and Zoning Office.) Correspondence included a memo from Kevin Pagini, Town Planner to Town Clerk, Town of Durham; Town Clerk, Town of Hamden; City Clerk, City of Meriden; and Town Clerk, Town of North Haven dated January 16, 2025; memo from Kevin Pagini, Town Planner, to Stephanie Camp, South Central Regional Council of Governments and J.H. Torrance Downes, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments; draft regulation amendment for Section 6.38, Multi-family Housing, section 4.1 Residence Districts (R-18, R-15, R-11, R-6), Section 4.5 Commercial (CA) Districts, Section 4.6 Commercial (CB) Districts, and Section 4.16 Route 5 District (RF-40); overlay map; PowerPoint Presentation on Middle Housing dated February 5, 2025; and a memo from J.H. Torrance Downes, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, to James Seichter, Chairman, Wallingford Planning & Zoning, dated February 10, 2025.

Mr. Pagini presented the PowerPoint on Middle Housing. He explained that Middle Housing is used by the State of Connecticut in place of multi-family housing. He showed examples and explained the differences between Cottage Housing, Duplexes, Triplexes, and Townhouses. Middle Housing is anything between single family and mid-rise. He explained the current lot sizes and the percentage of current multi-family housing for the affected districts. He noted that any CB use is already allowed in the I-40 so the I-40 doesn't need to change. Many of these districts are near transportation corridors. He proposed allowing expanding existing residential properties.

Mr. Pagini reviewed the changes to the text in the amendments. New section 6.38 states that the purpose is to permit and encourage multi-family dwelling units, middle housing, cottage style housing and unique multi-family development ideas in existing and new buildings within designated zoning districts and encourage affordable housing developments by easing of bulk/building and lot requirements. He explained which districts would need Site Plan Approval versus a Special Permit and reviewed the minimum lot sizes. He noted that Sections B, C and D are for market rate housing. Section E covers Affordable Housing in all of the districts and eliminates the minimum lot size. He included a tiered structure for bonuses for affordable developments and the Commission may approve further bulk standard reductions to give developers more incentive.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons asked about the term Middle Housing. Mr. Pagini replied that it is used by the State since multi-family has bad connotations. Commissioner Fitzsimmons stated that he likes Middle Housing and Non-market Rate versus Affordable, for the same reason. He asked if the intent is that these would still be rental properties instead of single ownership. Mr. Pagini replied that they could be condo like ownership. Commissioner Fitzsimmons noted that single family detached condos are not lots due to the common ownership of the land, so we need to make sure appropriate wording is used.

He commented on the possibility of residential development on Route 5. He pointed out the residential developments on Route 5 in North Haven and suggested discussing residential development there.

Commissioner Rivard asked how significant a change will this be? Will it encourage non-market rate development? Mr. Pagini replied that he believes it will. He added that there will be some State money available, so we need to allow it in the districts to be eligible. Commissioner Rivard clarified that this would put our zoning consistent with being able to take advantage of those opportunities.

Commissioner Sanders referred to the Route 5 zone and asked if there is a limitation on height. Mr. Pagini replied that they are just as in the bulk standards, 40 ft with the ability to go up with the set back. He does not recommend changing that at this time. We can offer further height if the developer does affordable.

Chairman Seichter noted that the R-16, R-11 and R-15 complying with bulk standards in 5.1.B. That doesn't include R-16, R-11 & R-15. Those are in 5.1.A. Mr. Pagini agreed to take a look at that. Commissioner Seichter asked about complying with the landscaping buffer regulations in 6.14.D.4. He believes it is too aggressive here. Regarding the affordability section and bonuses, he suggested adding language extending the affordability period beyond the traditional 40 years. Mr. Pagini noted that he will also be adding language on senior housing. Chairman Seichter noted that the parking regulations are inconsistent. Mr. Pagini suggested looking at the parking regulations separately. Commissioner Seichter stated that parking can affect how a developer looks at a project and what they might be able to do. Regarding residential development on Route 5, he noted that our Route 5 is different than the Route 5 in North Haven. There are areas that might work. He noted that it all comes back to the challenge of acquiring property. Many properties are too small and would need to be combined.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Wiedenmann, 1443 Durham Road, thanked the Commission for taking on this task. This could be one of the best regulation changes in the last 10 -20 years. We want to make sure developers will prefer to use it. Don't make it more difficult to use than 8-30g. He suggested limiting Special Permit to certain size project or certain zones. The proposed minimum lot sizes vary by zone. It may be appropriate to tie the minimum size of the lot to size of the existing lot. Then every lot is a conforming lot in that zone. Like the incentives for affordable housing. He suggested being cautious about going beyond 30% as developers will go with 8-30g. Maybe 80% units for a longer time of affordability might be more attractive.

Chairman Seichter stated that there would be no action tonight but he hopes to keep the momentum up. He encouraged Mr. Wiedenmann to meet with the Town Planner to find ways to encourage development. The Commission needs to understand the impediments for developers and still meet the concerns of the public.

Mr. Wiedenmann commented on ownership. The OSPRD regulation requires an association to manage the overall property including common areas. He discouraged focusing on ownership but on how the property will be managed.

Steve Knight, 289 Ivy Street, stated that he is a member of the Wallingford Works for Housing group. He is delighted to hear the discussion on finding more attainable housing. He noted a State Bill was introduced to perhaps take away some of the local control for Planning & Zoning. He hopes that the Commission will continue to change the regulations to encourage developers.

Mr. Pagini stated that he likes the suggestion on lot sizes. This makes sense in the R-6, R-11 and R-15. So maybe there can be a lower lot size for developments in some districts. He added that he included the Special Permit for the RF-40 because residential may not be appropriate in all areas. He suggested discussing the parking regulations at the next meeting. He added that he is open to ideas for bonuses.

Commissioner Parent stated that it is hard to understand this stuff. If we can stay with it long enough we will get it to a point where we are confident. We are serious about this and are on the right track. He appreciated the feedback from the public.

Chairman Seichter stated that he is not looking to revise all of the town parking requirements. He wants to focus specifically for this regulation. Does this mean Section 6.11 needs adjustments? We need to be conscious of providing enough as there is not always public parking nearby. He'd like to give more thought to bonuses for affordable housing. He would like to discuss development on Route 5 more. Mr. Pagini proposed capping the number of units in a district. He noted that some redevelopment on Route 5 could actually reduce traffic.

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Seichter called for a motion to continue the public hearing.

Commissioner Venoit: Motion to continue the public hearing for application #901-25 Text Amendment – Section 6.38 – Middle Housing

**Commissioner Fitzsimmons: second
Vote: Unanimous**

BOND RELEASES

3. Sunwood Development Corp. – 862 North Farms Road/Erosion and Sediment Bond

Mr. Pagini reported that this can be released.

Commissioner Venoit: Motion to release the Erosion and Sediment bond for Sunwood Development Corp. at 862 North Farms Road as recommended by the Town Planner.

**Commissioner Fitzsimmons: second
Vote: Unanimous**

4. Galarraga – 110 North Plains Industrial Road

Mr. Pagini reported that this is not ready to be released.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

5. Annual Report

Commissioner Kohan noted that the second paragraph needs to be cleaned up.

6. ZBA January Decisions – no meeting

7. ZBA Notice of February 18, 2025 – no comment

8. Zoning Enforcement Report – no comment

Mr. Pagini reminded Commission members of upcoming training opportunities.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Venoit: Motion to Adjourn the Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission for Monday, February 10, 2025, at 8:15 pm.

**Commissioner Fitzsimmons: Second
Vote: Unanimous**

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary