

MINUTES OF CITY OF WEST HAVEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday, July 30, 2019
7:00 PM
Harriet North Room, 2nd Floor
City Hall, 355 Main Street
West Haven, CT 06516

1. Call to Order:

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

Roll Call:

Commission Chair Hendricks, Commissioners Gene Sullivan, Christopher Suggs, Steven Mullins, John Biancur, Alternate Commissioners Deborah Johnson and Greg Milano, Commissioner of Planning and Development Fred Messore, Mayor Nancy Rossi (7:10 p.m.), ZEO Conniff and Assistant City Planner David Killeen.

2. Presentation – Overview of the Village District Concept and the Areas to Be Discussed in Small Group Sessions

Commissioner Hendricks welcomed the participants in the workshop and asked for a show of hands to see how many had attended the June 18 informational session and how many were attending the first time tonight. Approximately 60% of the group was in attendance at the June 18 meeting. In response to encouragement received at that meeting, the Commission wanted to move forward with a proposed regulation as soon as possible. She explained that the regulation would be an “overlay district”, which means that the underlying zones would continue to regulate allowed uses, densities and bulk standards. The overlay would create an area in which the Village District design standards would apply. She explained that we would be breaking down into small groups to discuss six sections of the draft Village District regulation on which the Commission has been working. She asked Assistant City Planner Killeen to provide a brief presentation of the Village District Concept and to introduce the small groups that would be meeting tonight. Mr. Killeen gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the details of the Village District and what it will do for the city. Village District allows municipalities to protect the unique character of certain areas and to guide new development in that area. He also presented the history of the center of the city from the 1700s and the buildings that exist today, which present different types of architecture. The proposal of this district will guide business owners on facades and to reviewing architecture to protect the character of the center. The process of implementing the Village district was explained and what aspects of a structure will be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission in context with setbacks, rear parking and uniformity of cornices and building heights. Interior modifications will not be regulated and other improvements that are not visible from the street or are minor changes. Examples of buildings were shown depicting a

Village District design. The area that is initially envisioned for the Village District is generally from the railroad tracks to the north, south to Atwater St, Washington Avenue to the East and Savin Avenue to the West. Buildings on both sides of the street would be included under this regulation.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Killeen gave an overview of what will be done in small groups. Each group would be reviewing different sections of the actual wording under consideration for the Village District Regulation. Each group will be facilitated by a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Planning and Development staff. Each individual will receive a copy of the draft language for the session in which they are involved. Then, the group would discuss what they like about their section of the regulation and what they would like to see changed. The Commission is interested in hearing whether the proposed language is enough, not enough, or if there are any issues with the proposed language.

The group was then asked to look at their name tags. A number was assigned to each name tag before tonight's meeting. The number indicates the number of the discussion group to which each person is being asked to participate. If an individual has a strong preference, they may participate in an alternate session that meets their interest. The meeting groups were as follows:

Session 1 -- Applicability/ Exceptions & Design Principles – Cathy Conniff, ZEO, Facilitator; Board of Education Meeting Room

Session 2 -- Design Standards: Building Placement & Orientation – Gene Sullivan, P&Z Commissioner, Facilitator; Board of Education Meeting Room

Session 3 -- Building Facades – Christopher Suggs, P&Z Commissioner, Facilitator; Board of Education Caucus Room.

Session 4 --Landscaping; Steven Mullins, P&Z Commissioner, Facilitator; Council Chamber.

Session 5 -- Parking; Deb Johnson, P&Z Commission Alternate, Facilitator; Council Caucus Room.

Session 6 --Sidewalks, Streetscape; Dave Killeen, Assistant City Planner, Facilitator; Harriet North Room.

At this point, individuals moved into their small group discussions accordingly. The following is a summary of the notes taken during each small group discussion:

SESSION #1 APPLICABILITY/EXCEPTIONS & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Reduce 30% to 25% to really improve
- Cost? Commercial & Residential
- Permit= Review
- Building Official involved
- Exempt siding? Not minor repair
- 25% minor repairs

SESSION #2. DESIGN STANDARDS :BUILDING PLACEMENT & ORIENTATION

NO CHANGES!

SESSION #3.BUILDING FACADES

- Feedback from John & Colleen
- Façade materials:
 - Historic Buildings-how to modify (renovate)? Need definition
 - Re: Library-these are restrictive
- How to distinguish between buildings w/different designs within area?
- Substantial Rehabilitation-include definition
- Existing buildings of different heights, how affected? Ex:Altschuler

SESSION #4. LANDSCAPING

- Continuity in design
 - Keep uniform
 - Regulate in term of size
- Comply with State Regulations
- List types of trees & plants
- Give Proper ways of taking care of plants.
- Coordinate landscape with sidewalk plans
- Subcommittee agrees that this is great, however if not enforced, means nothing.

SESSION #5-PARKING

- Permeable surfaces where possible.
- Care with screen walls- (not too high or too many).
- Granite vs concrete curbs.
 - Cost vs flats.
- -Signs- to locate parking (standard signs).

SESSION #6-STREETScape & SIDEWALKS

- Cameo Cleaners is a good example
- Muni lot-nice lot need to encourage use (*valuable resource/opportunity to support pedestrian & bicycle travel)
- The City should think of ways to be less car-centric
- Need better signage to parking (and other wayfinding in City, e.g. Beaches)
- Make area more walkable
- Consider “cut out” to sidewalk for bus stops
- Use of Bio Swales on roads (like NH)
- Add language to enhance drainage control (MS4)

Participants returned to the Harriet North Room following their small group sessions. Each group reported on their findings. Chair Hendricks thanked everyone for their participation and informed them that their comments will be taken into account by the Commission as the draft regulation is finalized for a formal public hearing which would be tentatively scheduled for September 24. She thanked the participants for their participation as well as the Commission members and Planning and Zoning staff. She especially thanked Alternate Commissioner Greg Milano for his leadership on this effort. She informed the group that they would receive invitations to the public hearing. Mr. Killeen asked that participants verify that they had signed in clearly so that the office would be able to contact them.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.