

SALISBURY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

November 9, 2021, 5:30 PM

Remote Meeting by Live Internet Video Stream and Telephone

Members Present:

- 1 Dr. Michael Klemens (Chairman)
- 2 Cathy Shyer (Regular Member)
- 3 Allen Cockerline (Regular Member)
- 4 Bob Riva (Regular Member)
- 5 Debra Allee (Alternate) joined at 5:51pm
- 6 Dr. Danella Schiffer (Alternate) joined at 5:51pm
- 7 Martin Whalen (Secretary) joined at 6:42pm
- 8
- 9

Staff Present:

- Abby Conroy, Land Use Administrator (LUA)
- Alison Forman, Land Use Assistant

Members Absent:

Brief Items and Announcements

- 11
- 12 1. Call to Order
- 13

14 Chairman Klemens called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. with four regular members. He briefly
15 discussed that the Commission would begin meetings with a quorum. Going forward he will seat
16 Alternate Members as needed in the absence of Regular Members before public hearings begin. This
17 will avoid seating an alternate(s) at the beginning of the meeting only to have to unseat them a few
18 minutes later when a regular member arrives.

- 19
- 20 2. Minutes of October 4, 2021
- 21 3. Minutes of October 18, 2021
- 22 4. Minutes of October 26, 2021
- 23

24 The Chairman requested the minutes of October 4th, 18th, and 26th be tabled.

New Business

- 25
- 26
- 27
- 28 5. ZP-2021-0094 / Indian Mountain School (Sleboda) / 204 Interlaken Road / Request for
- 29 Temporary Zoning Permit to use a 30-foot Airstream Trailer as a Nurse's Station (Section 906) /
- 30 Map 6 / Lot 6-2 *Consider Authorizing Staff to Issue Temporary Zoning Permit*
- 31

32 LUA Conroy gave a brief explanation of the application for a temporary zoning permit to be used as a
33 nursing station in an airstream trailer at the lower campus of IMS due to the Covid pandemic.
34 Commissioner Shyer inquired as to what they used before. It was established that the upper campus
35 nursing office was used prior, but with Covid it would be in the best interest to separate the two.
36 The Chairman requested a motion to authorize the LUA to issue the temporary permit.

37
38 *Motion:* to authorize the Land Use Administrator to issue ZP-2021-0094 / Indian Mountain School
39 (Sleboda) / 204 Interlaken Road / Request for Temporary Zoning Permit to use a 30-foot Airstream
40 Trailer as a Nurse's Station (Section 906) / Map 6 / Lot 6-2
41 Made by Cockerline, seconded by Riva

42 Vote: 5-0-0.

43

44 **Other Business**

45

46 6. POCD Review Session

47

48 LUA Conroy explained the objective of identifying the top ten problems or issues that face Salisbury
49 over the next decade. In preparation for the meeting, the Commissioners were asked to consider what
50 problems they felt needed to be addressed. She indicated that six of the eight Commissioners
51 responded. The responses from the Commissioners were grouped into related topics. The Chairman
52 clarified that many of the responses included strategies and solutions, but did not identify problems.

53

54 *Topic 1: Housing*

55 The Commission favored the term *housing diversity* as preferable to *affordable housing* as it
56 encompassed groups such as seniors, veterans, young people and the disabled. The term *diversity* does
57 not limit housing issues solely to affordability, but includes social issues such as aging in place for
58 seniors. It was agreed to review the Northwest Hills Council of Government Plan of Conservation and
59 Development as it had valuable perspective on these issues.

60

61 The Commission stated concern about the ever-growing income gap between certain groups of
62 residents within the community. Increased real estate prices and the cost of building materials have an
63 impact on residents that are living on fixed incomes, as well as lower to middle income residents. It
64 was agreed that this is an issue of importance, and more statistics are needed to fully understand and
65 try to address the topic.

66

67 The Commission concluded that supplementary information is needed from the public to fully
68 understand the scope of this problem. The Commission came to the consensus that a diversity of
69 housing solutions is necessary to address a variety of housing types and income levels was a high
70 priority.

71

72 At 5:51pm, Alternates Debra Allee and Danella Schiffer joined the meeting

73

74 *Topic 2: Land Use Administration*

75

76 The Commission identified several problems with overall land use administration. One is inconsistent
77 and ambiguous regulations. The Commission agreed that the POCD needs to be re-organized and
78 consolidated to make it user-friendly. The regulations also need to be evaluated for their relevance to
79 recent development pressures and, where appropriate, revised to address these pressures.

80

81 Another problem identified by the Commission is a lack of communication and coordination as well as
82 uniformity of procedures between commissions and various departments within the Town. Over time,
83 a “silo mentality” has evolved both within certain commissions and departments This is inefficient as
84 well as leading to confusion and inconsistent procedures. The Commissioners agreed that increased
85 investment in professional staff and acquiring land-use permitting software would have the most

86 beneficial impacts. They also agreed that a long-term vision needs to be addressed and reflected in our
87 annual budgetary requests.

88

89 At 6:42pm Commissioner Whalen entered the meeting.

90

91 *Topic 3: Village Centers*

92

93 The Commission identified a lack of commercial activity, diversity, and overall vitality within village
94 centers. The creation of an Economic Development Commission was proposed to support, attract and
95 recruit targeted types of businesses needed for day-to-day living, and to support overall economic
96 activities. The Commission acknowledged a problem with attracting economic development in the
97 village centers citing outdated regulations that create nonconformities. It was suggested that parking
98 regulations are an impediment to attracting businesses and could be changed or even eliminated. The
99 Commission identified problems of parking, traffic flow (volumes and speed), walkability, as well as
100 pedestrian circulation and safety.

101

102 The Commission also discussed whether the needs of Lime Rock's village center are comparable to
103 Lakeville and Salisbury. Is there a lack of investment in the Lime Rock village center? The Commission
104 agreed that the Lime Rock village center was not experiencing the same problems as Lakeville and
105 Salisbury, that Lime Rock Park was an important part of the vitality of that Village, and that the
106 Commission had recently created flexibility to adaptively re-use residences along Rte. 112 for certain
107 commercial activities. The Commissioners concluded that there was not an economic development
108 problem in the village of Lime Rock.

109

110 *Topic 4: Open Space/Land and Resource Conservation*

111

112 The Commission considered whether there is a problem with land trusts abandoning responsibilities on
113 held easements. Is there a need to monitor their activities? The Commission decided that this was not
114 a problem for the PZC, rather it may be pertinent to the newly- established Conservation Commission.

115

116 The Chairman expressed that there was a problem with a lack of protection around wetland resources
117 especially those that are ecologically sensitive. The Commissioners agreed.

118

119 The Commission also agreed that climate change is a problem and that there may be mechanisms
120 under their jurisdiction that can be used to increase resiliency to the effects of climate change,
121 especially altered rainfall patterns.

122

123 Alternate Schiffer identified control of invasive species (plants/animals/insects) and plant diseases on
124 both public and private (residential) properties. It was noted that the spread of many invasive species
125 is a result of climate change.) Pollution, lack of ecological connectivity, and forest clear-cutting were
126 also identified as problems.

127

128 *Topic 5: Agriculture*

129

130 The Commission identified concerns related to agricultural vitality and preservation of farming
131 resources. Commissioner Cockerline stated that an aging farming community contributes to those
132 concerns. The benefits of a right-to-farm ordinance were discussed.

133

134 *Topic 6: Volunteer Based Commissions and Committees*

135

136 The Commission recognized that our commissions and committees are primarily comprised of older
137 individuals. An inability to attract younger generations to serve on Town commissions and committees
138 poses a problem for Salisbury. It was debated amongst the Commission whether there is a problem
139 with political pressure placed on elected and appointed Town officials. It was also recognized by the
140 Commissioners that most members of the Town’s regulatory commissions lack training.

141

142 *Topic 7: Enforcement*

143

144 The Commission agreed that a citation (fining) ordinance needs to be considered as a tool to impose
145 financial penalties on those who disregard zoning and other Town regulations. It was identified that
146 some of the violations may be occurring due to a lack of awareness, but also that limitations in staffing
147 the Land Use Office would make it difficult to implement a fining ordinance.

148

149 The Commission also discussed reviewing the Mount Riga Zone, as activities in that that area may “fly
150 under the radar” because of the remoteness of the Zone and its unique pattern of land ownership.

151

152 Some Commissioners expressed concern over a lack of a noise ordinance in the Town.

153

154 *Topic 8: Infrastructure*

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156 The Chairman expressed that maintaining a quality water supply is an issue that is not within the
157 purview of the Commission and is a responsibility of the Aquarion Water Company and therefore
158 should not be included in the POCD.

159

160 The Commissioners identified a growing problem pertaining to traffic volumes and speed on Route 44
161 and passing through the villages of Lakeville and Salisbury, and that the truck traffic was of special
162 concern both for noise but especially safety. Lime Rock village experiences traffic volume and speeding
163 on Route 112, often associated with events at Lime Rock Park.

164

165 The Commission recognized that maintaining a local hospital was essential, but emphasized the
166 complexity of this issue that spanned multiple towns, as well as regional and State governments.

167

168 *Topic 9: Finance and Economics*

169

170 The Commission concurred that there is an over emphasis on maintaining a low mil rate as opposed to
171 increasing the quality of government services including investments in full-time staff and technology.

172

173 *Topic 10: Demographics*

174 The Commissioners identified a lack of demographic data and the need for updated accurate
175 demographics for the Town. The Chairman suggested reviewing page number 5 of the Northwest Hills
176 Council of Government's Plan of Conservation and Development.

177
178 The Commission recognized a continued problem with short term rentals and the potential to displace
179 renters in the area.

180
181 The Commission also acknowledged a problem with over-use of recreational areas, the dramatic
182 increase of user volume, and the lack of parking space, signage, and other facilities. It was agreed that
183 this was both an infrastructure and open space problem.

184
185 The Commission set the next POCD review session for November 29th at 5:30 PM. The Chairman
186 requested that the Commissioners review the existing POCD and identify what may have been missed
187 in our list of problems. He also stressed the need to show progress with updating our POCD to request
188 an extension to prepare the POCD through the State's Office of Policy and Management to avoid losing
189 discretionary State funding to the Town.

190
191 *Motion:* To adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

192
193 Made by Cockerline, seconded by Shyer.

194 Vote: 5-0-0 in favor.

195
196 Respectfully submitted,

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198
199 Alison Forman, Land Use Assistant