

ORANGE ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 7, 2022 MEETING

Approved Minutes

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission held a meeting on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., lower level, Orange Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, Connecticut.

Judy Smith, Vice-Chairman
Paul Kaplan, Esq., Secretary
Kevin Cornell, Esq., P.E.
Tom Torrenti, P.E.

Jack Demirjian, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Tamara Trantales, Administrative Assistant
Robin Gengaro, Recording Secretary

Vice-Chairman Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting. She stated that Chairman Parente was not available to attend this meeting. Vice-Chairman Smith presided over the meeting. Those seated at the table introduced themselves for the record.

Review of the Minutes from the May 17, 2022 meeting.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Tom Torrenti to accept and approve the Minutes from the May 17, 2022 meeting, as amended. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Smith, aye. The vote was recorded as 4-0 to accept and approve the motion.

There were no additional comments.

Old Business

Commissioner Cornell stated that when Covid began, it was decided that the Zoning Dept. would not cite sign violations unless a sign. Now that the pandemic has begun to wane, he has noticed that there is a noticeable decrease in sign violations along the Boston Post Road. Zoning Enforcement Officer Jack Demirjian stated that he has resumed addressing sign violations.

There were no additional comments.

New Business

None

Report of the Zoning Enforcement Officer

Zoning Enforcement Officer Jack Demirjian stated that he has submitted the Affordable Housing Plan to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). ZEO Demirjian stated that the commission has met all the requirements. The commission will need to revisit it in five years.

Commissioner Kaplan asked about the cannabis moratorium. ZEO Demirjian stated that the moratorium started in mid-November of 2021. He noted that the commission could address it at any time. The State has given out the first round of licenses. A brief discussion ensued.

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ZEO Demirjian stated that he would reach out to Milford to see what their status is on cannabis.

There were no additional comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: 7:00 p.m. – (2)

PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS – Article I §383-14, Article VIII §383-66 & §383-67, Article XIV §383-141 & §383-143.4 and Article XVIII §383-174. Submitted by Noble Energy Real Estate Holdings, LLC. To amend the Orange Zoning Regulations to define and allow “Electric Vehicle Showrooms” and “Community Travel Centers” as special uses in the LI-2 District, along with parameters for location and eligibility of these new uses. (Continued from the May 17, 2022 meeting)

Vice-Chairman Smith stated that the commission had suggested some changes to the proposed text. ZEO Demirjian emailed them to the TPZC. The language was reviewed by Town Attorney Vin Marino. ZEO Demirjian read the definitions of an electric vehicle, an electric vehicle showroom establishment, service and maintenance, and a community travel center into the record. A brief discussion ensued.

Vice-Chairman Smith stated that the public hearing has already been closed. Commissioner Kaplan stated that the applicant gave a nice presentation. He noted that although this project would not be his first choice of a business in this location, he believes that it would be a good use with the amended language. Commissioner Torrenti concurred. Vice-Chairman Smith stated that this is a small parcel. She expressed her belief that any negative impacts would be minimal.

Commissioner Cornell stated that he had two problems with this concept. He does not think automotive travel uses should be in the LI-2 zone. He also does not want this use to be a detriment to businesses on the Boston Post Road. Commissioner Cornell expressed his belief that retail uses creeping into the light industrial zone is not in the best interest of the town. A brief discussion ensued.

Vice-Chairman Smith stated that if the commission approves a zone change or text amendment, they must make findings to support the decision. She noted that the commission continues to promote business development in an economic area. She stated that this proposal supports economic development. It is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). A brief discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Tom Torrenti to accept and approve the Petition to Amend the Orange Zoning Regulation, in accordance with the POCD 2015. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, nay; Smith, aye. The vote was recorded as 3-1 to accept and approve the motion.

Commissioner Kaplan expressed his belief that this project would be a good addition to the Town of Orange.

There were no additional comments.

PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS -Submitted Upon the Initiative of the Orange Town Plan & Zoning Commission. To amend the Orange Zoning Regulations by amending Articles XIII & XIV to conform to PA 21-2, Section 182 regarding outdoor dining/seating.

Commissioner Kaplan read the legal notice into the record.

ZEO Demirjian stated that the commission is amending the zoning regulations to comply with the new state law that permits outdoor dining as of right. He stated that the new regulations no longer require food establishments to obtain a special permit. ZEO Demirjian has reviewed the regulations with Town Attorney Vin Marino. ZEO Demirjian stated that the existing language for establishments seeking outdoor seating and are not food establishments, such as cigar stores, need a special permit. A site plan is still required for outdoor dining. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Torrenti suggested adding Section D since it is a safety related issue. After a brief discussion, the commission agreed that Section D should be included in the final language.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Kevin Cornell to close the public hearing. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Cornell, aye; Torrenti, aye; Smith, aye. The vote was recorded as 4-0 to accept and approve the motion.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Kevin Cornell to accept and approve amending the zoning regulations to conform to PA 21-2, Section 182 regarding outdoor dining/seating, as well as adding Section D. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Cornell, aye; Torrenti, aye; Smith, aye. The vote was recorded as 4-0 to accept and approve the motion.

There were no additional comments.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Tom Torrenti to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Smith, aye. The vote was recorded as 4-0 to accept and approve the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Trantales,
Administrative Assistant