

ORANGE ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 3, 2021 MEETING

Unapproved Minutes

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission held a meeting on Wednesday, November 3, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., lower level, Orange Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, Connecticut.

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

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

Chairman Parente welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked those seated at the table to introduce themselves for the record.

Review of the Minutes from the October 19, 2021, meeting and October 20, 2021 special meeting.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Judy Smith to accept and approve the Minutes from the October 19, 2021 meeting, as amended. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Smith, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Judy Smith to accept and approve the Minutes from the October 20, 2021 special meeting, as amended. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Smith, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

There were no additional comments.

Old Business

Commissioner Cornell asked Zoning Enforcement Officer Jack Demirjian to affirm whether there is a provision in the regulations for the owner of a school bus to park in the residential zone. ZEO Demirjian stated that he has researched the matter. He has not found a provision allowing that use. Discussion ensued.

There were no additional comments.

New Business

Commissioner Smith offered congratulations to Oscar Parente, Paul Kaplan, and Kevin Cornell on their triumphant win in the election for the Town Plan and Zoning Commission. Commissioner Smith noted that they bring tremendous expertise to the Town of Orange.

Commissioner Smith stated that she had the opportunity to watch the PowerPoint presentation, "The Magic's in the Message – Understanding Affordable Housing" by David Fink, Housing Consultant. Chairman Parente stated that the presentation is informative and would be helpful to all. After a brief discussion, ZEO Demirjian stated that he would send the link of the PowerPoint presentation to the commission.

ORANGE TOWN  
ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICE  
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Report of the Zoning Enforcement Officer

ZEO Demirjian stated that the proposed regulation regarding commercial vehicles will appear on the next agenda. He noted that he has received all responses from the regional authorities. A brief discussion ensued.

ZEO Demirjian stated that the developer of 197 Indian River Road updates him regularly. He said that the earth work is mostly done. He also noted that Beecher Walk, near the Transfer Station, is progressing.

There were no additional comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: 7:00 p.m. – (3)

Chairman Parente stated that there are three (3) public hearings tonight, which will be conducted together.

Chairman Kaplan read the legal notice into record.

**PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS-Submitted upon the initiative of the Town of Orange Planning and Zoning Commission. To prohibit cannabis establishments/distributors from all zoning districts within the Town of Orange.**

**PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS-Submitted upon the initiative of the Town of Orange Planning and Zoning Commission. To allow cannabis establishments/distributors in the C-1 and C-2 zoning districts by special use permit.**

**PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS-Submitted upon the initiative of the Town of Orange Planning and Zoning Commission. To install a Moratorium on any applications to permit cannabis establishments/distributors in the Town of Orange. The expiration date of said Moratorium will be one year from the date enacted or the effective date of associated newly adopted zoning regulations.**

Chairman Parente stated that the State of Connecticut has legalized recreational marijuana in the state of Connecticut. He noted that the commission has four (4) choices:

- 1- Do nothing. If an applicant applies, the Commission would be compelled to treat it as any other retail establishment.
- 2- Adopt a moratorium for one year.
- 3- Prohibit recreational use of cannabis.
- 4- To regulate the sale of recreational cannabis in Orange by Special Permit.

Chairman Parente asked for comments from the public in attendance.

Patrick O'Neill expressed his concern about opioid addiction and the opioid crisis. He stated that some people believe marijuana is a gateway drug and a potential pathway to addiction. He is concerned. Mr. O'Neill noted that other towns along the shoreline have prohibited recreational marijuana in their town. A brief discussion ensued.

Mitch Goldblatt, 291 Drummond Road, stated that recreational marijuana is now legal in Connecticut, even if people do not agree with it. The State has placed some restrictions on cannabis. The State has also allowed communities to regulate the sale/use of cannabis for their town/city. Mr. Goldblatt stated that the TPZC can limit the sale/use to a certain zone or zones, restrictions to the proximity to schools, places of worship, etc.

Mr. Goldblatt noted that there are pharmacies and liquor stores in town, as well as gun and cigarette sales. The benefit of cannabis is that it would be regulated. Mr. Goldblatt expressed his belief that the town needs to be welcoming to all types of legal businesses in town.

Mr. Goldblatt added that as a member of the Board of Selectmen, and an Orange resident, the revenue aspect of cannabis should be considered. A brief discussion ensued regarding how the town would be reimbursed for a portion of the tax the store generates in town. Chairman Parente noted that the money could only be used for certain purposes. Mr. Goldblatt concurred. He added that the money could be used for drug and alcohol education, youth services committees, and OVNA. Discussion continued.

Mr. Goldblatt expressed his belief that Orange should have a store/dispensary in Town. He voiced his appreciation to the Commission for the meeting.

There were no further comments from the audience. Commissioner Smith suggested asking Chief Gagne what his concerns are, etc. A brief discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Kevin Cornell and seconded by Paul Kaplan to close the public hearings. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Cornell, aye; Kaplan, aye; Smith, aye; Torrenti, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

Commissioner Cornell expressed his belief that it would be prudent to impose a moratorium. A moratorium would allow the commission to observe any issues which may occur in other municipalities. Also, Commissioner Cornell stated that a moratorium would give the commission an opportunity to receive expert advice from the police. He noted that it could help the commissioners tailor the regulations to avoid potential issues.

Chairman Parente stated that enacting a moratorium does not mean that the moratorium needs to be in effect for the entire year. The commission could end it at any time. After a brief discussion, the commission reached a consensus and agreed to enact a moratorium.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan to accept and approve the moratorium. He read the moratorium regulation text into the record. The motion was seconded by Kevin Cornell to accept and approve the PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS - Submitted upon the initiative of the Town of Orange Planning and Zoning Commission. To install a Moratorium on any applications to permit cannabis establishments/distributors in the Town of Orange. The expiration date of said Moratorium is November 5, 2022. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Cornell, aye; Smith, aye; Torrenti, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

The moratorium regulation language is attached to these Minutes.

A motion was made by Judy Smith and seconded by Paul Kaplan to reject and deny the PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS-Submitted upon the initiative of the Town of Orange Planning and Zoning Commission. To prohibit cannabis establishments/distributors from all zoning districts within the Town of Orange. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Smith, aye; Kaplan, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

A motion was made by Paul Kaplan and seconded by Judy Smith to reject and deny the PETITION TO AMEND THE ORANGE ZONING REGULATIONS-Submitted upon the initiative of the Town of Orange Planning and Zoning Commission. To allow cannabis establishments/distributors in the C-1 and C-2 zoning districts by special use permit. The motion carried with the vote recorded as follows: Kaplan, aye; Smith, aye; Torrenti, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 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; Smith, aye; Cornell, aye; Parente, aye. The vote was recorded as 5-0 to accept and approve the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Trantales,  
Administrative Assistant