

**Chaplin Planning & Zoning Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Chaplin Senior Center  
March 11, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Doug Dubitsky (Chair), Pete Fiasconaro (Vice-Chair), Helen Weingart, Randy Godaire, Dave Garceau (virtually online), Alternate Ken Fortier, Alternate Bill Ireland

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Alan Burdick, Eric Beer.

**ALTERNATES SEATED:** Seat Ken Fortier for Alan Burdick and seat Bill Ireland for Eric Beer.

**ALSO PRESENT:** First Selectman Bill Rose, Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) Jay Gigliotti Jim Larkin from NECOGG and Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES 02.11.21 PUBLIC HEARING:**

**Motion to approve by P. Fiasconaro, seconded by R. Godaire. All in favor, motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES 02.11.21 SPECIAL MEETING:**

**Motion to approve by H. Weingart, seconded by P. Fiasconaro. Correction to Old Business B – Correct spelling of Jim Larkin. All in favor, motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES 02.18.21 POCD SPECIAL MEETING:**

**Motion to approve by K. Fortier, seconded by D. Garceau. Correction to Page 3 regarding abandoned roads should read - Chaplin continues to identify abandoned roads and has recently discontinued part of Old Hampton Rd at the intersection of Cross Road; Middle Rd; Tutko Rd; and Ross Rd at Diana's Pool. Abstentions by R. Godaire, P. Fiasconaro, motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES 03.04.21 POCD SPECIAL MEETING:**

**Motion to approve by D. Garceau, seconded by P. Fiasconaro. Abstentions by B. Ireland, Ken Fortier, R. Godaire, motion carried.**

**CITIZENS HAVING NEW BUSINESS:**

D. Dubitsky spoke as a citizen regarding numerous bills that are before the legislature that would have the State take over zoning from Municipalities. There is a Public Hearing on Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 10am via Zoom. The bills would eliminate minimum acreage requirement for single-family houses, allow as of right 4-unit apartment buildings on every lot in a residential zone without zoning approval, would mandate every single-family house access to accessory apartment as of right with some setbacks, set very stringent enforcement measures for affordable housing, would allow anyone to turn their house into a rental, must allow cluster housing where houses can be pushed together with apartments built with no less than 15 units per acre, would be mandatory for every town no matter the size, would drastically change the way towns regulate land use and would have adverse consequences on small towns like Chaplin. Towns would have until June of next year to revise their zoning regulations or they will become null and void. The agenda and proposed bills can be found on D. Dubitsky's Facebook Page. Everyone is encouraged to read the bills, contact their legislators and sign up to testify online.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. RC20-131-Proposed Text Amendment-Jocelyn Bennett-applicant, proposed amendment to Section 5.2.B of the Chaplin Zoning Regulations-Addition of Section 13 “Semi-Primitive Campground”:**

ZEO J. Gigliotti presented revised proposed revision and legal opinion on the regulation revision from the Town Attorney (the PZC has the authority to change the regulation). The Commission has reviewed the Public Hearing testimony (some in favor and some against) and letters of support (2-3) and letters of opposition (15-20). Comments from the Commission:

- H. Weingart commented that the evidence is overwhelmingly against with challenging issues and expressed concerns with the following: difficulty in monitoring, too many issues raised (including fires, fireworks, noise, liability), nothing that addresses sewage disposal, negative impact to neighborhoods (refer to Strategy under Home Based Business in the POCD), ongoing traffic and no taxes to the town.
- K. Fortier commented that this a minor addition to a property and the issues brought up by H. Weingart occur on larger properties. It is a good regulation.
- R. Godaire agrees with H. Weingart and expressed concerns with the impact to the town (raised previously by the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman), the reduction in setback distance, the 5-acre lot size (should be increased). Friends and family on a property would have a personal connection (people you don't know would have a business connection).
- B. Ireland commented that the issues raised have been addressed very well and suggested not renewing annual special permit if not abiding by regulations (the Commission has lots of authority to address special permits). It is good for the town to give people the right on how to use their property. The Economic Development Commission encourages commercial use as an opportunity for economic development that supports tourism that would bring more people to town to shop at local stores (refer to Town-Wide Economic Development Strategies in the POCD). He is in favor of the proposed amendment.
- D. Garceau expressed concerns with the 5-acre lot size (average lot size in Chaplin is 5 acres) that should be increased. Every piece of property is different and would impact the campfire location.
- P. Fiasconaro expressed concerns with the distance to abutting properties not being enough and the burden on infrastructure that is not a benefit to the town.

**Motion to approve RC20-131-Proposed Text Amendment-Jocelyn Bennett-applicant, proposed amendment to Section 5.2.B of the Chaplin Zoning Regulations-Addition of Section 13 “Semi-Primitive Campground”, made by R. Godaire, seconded by K. Fortier. The motion failed and the application is denied with the following vote:**

**YES: B. Ireland, K. Fortier.**

**NO: H. Weingart, D. Garceau, R. Godaire, P. Fiasconaro.**

### **B. Plan of Conservation & Development:**

Jim Larkin from NECOGG presented draft POCD with the latest revisions. The question regarding the number of driveways and curb cuts impact to accidents is still outstanding pending discussion with the Engineer. The Commission reviewed the draft POCD with the following changes:

#### **Business & Employment**

Pg. 8 – Delete 1<sup>st</sup> sentence in second highlighted paragraph regarding percentage of employment for Agriculture and move the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence regarding Chaplin hosting small farms to the end of the first paragraph.

#### **Strategies for Implementation**

Pg. 12 – add photo of Scenario #3 (Scenario #1 and #3 will be presented at the Public Hearing). Discussion was held regarding extending the Commercial Zone. D. Dubitsky recommended ending the Commercial Zone at Route 198 for the purpose of getting the POCD done (can discuss extending at a later date). Two responses were received from the public opposed to extending the Commercial Zone to Cross Rd.

### **Transportation**

Pg. 15 – map needs to be completed and will show the Airline Trail and Natchaug Trail.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

Pg. 18 – Bill Rose reported that there are too many obstacles (private property and swamp) for a walking path behind the Town Hall to Chaplin Street (would need a foot bridge). H. Weingart has a sketch of the sidewalk that runs behind the Town Hall to the Shoulder Path on Route 198.

### **Water Supply**

Pg. 20 – The Owls Nest Day School is no longer in Chaplin (another daycare is trying to open there). Delete the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph beginning with Protection of this resource is critical for future uses. Jim Larkin will check on map for Aquifer and send a copy to the ZEO.

### **Chaplin's Historic Town Center**

Pg. 27 – H. Weingart suggested adding to the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph after the Chaplin Historic District Commission - that was created in 1974 to preserve the unique qualities of its fine architecture and cultural historic route.

### **Lasting Marks on the Land**

Pg. 28 – Bill Rose reported a state statute already exists for border walls. Change 1<sup>st</sup> Strategy to read – Consider educational measures to ensure people understand boundary line walls.

### **Natchaug River**

Pg. 29 – H. Weingart reported there are 5 monitoring stations on the river in Chaplin for chloride, metals and nutrients. Delete all but last sentence in 2<sup>nd</sup> yellow highlighted paragraph regarding siltation. Move the last sentence regarding interest in protecting the Natchaug River to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> yellow highlighted paragraph pertaining to water temperature.

### **Open Space**

Pg. 31 – delete 4<sup>th</sup> Strategy highlighted in yellow.

### **Chaplin Town Hall**

Pg. 36 – change the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph highlighted in yellow to a Strategy that enhances online Technology.

### **Edward Garrison Park**

Pg. 37 – delete sentence in 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategy highlighted in yellow regarding checking property ownership.

### **Education**

Pg. 39 – Jim Larkin is working on the breakout of per capita costs for Chaplin Elementary and Parish Hill.

### **Chapter 10 from the old POCD** (not included in this draft)

Jim Larkin is working on Chapter 10 that is Table of Strategies organized by chapter with who is responsible. H. Weingart suggested organizing by primary groups responsible.

### **List of Roads from the old POCD** (not included in this draft)

Add list of roads back in.

Jim Larkin will draft a reference pertaining to no conflict with the six Development Principles of the State POCD.

**A Special Meeting will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup> at 5pm to review the POCD via Go to Meeting.**

## **C. Home Occupations:**

**Motion to table Home Occupations, made by H. Weingart, seconded by R. Godaire. All in favor, motion carried.**

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- Letter from Town Counsel regarding legal opinion on proposed text amendment (presented earlier on the agenda).
- Two letters were received regarding the Public Hearing on Semi-Primitive Campgrounds.
- Correspondence was received from the public regarding not going beyond Route 198 for the Commercial Zone.

**REPORT OF THE ZONING OFFICER:**

ZEO J. Gigliotti presented monthly report that is available at the Town Hall. Items requiring direction or action are as follows:

- There were no permits.

153 Chewink Rd – Cleanup continues at a slow pace and is still non-compliant. D. Dubitsky suggested setting up another meeting to help the owner with a loan application.

Parcel of Land on Willimantic Rd - The town may end up with this property through tax foreclosure and would like to install a Town/Community Billboard (electronic or with changeable letters) on this property. D. Dubitsky suggested doing research and bring to the next meeting for discussion.

**ITEMS PRO RE NATA:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion to adjourn 10:10 PM by P. Fiasconaro, seconded by H. Weingart. All in favor, motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott