



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
Regular Meeting  
March 13, 2024, 6pm  
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall  
350 East Main Road  
Middletown, RI 02842

**Board members present:**

Paul Croce, Chair  
Michael Fenton, Secretary  
Art Weber  
B.J. Owen

**Also present:**

Ron Wolanski, Town Planner  
Michael Monti, Assistant Town Solicitor  
Anita Guo, Principal Planner

**Member absent:**

Bill Nash, Vice Chair  
Leon Amarant

Mr. Croce called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

**1. Approval of minutes**

- a. February 14, 2024 regular Planning Board meeting
  - i. Mr. Croce suggested two amendments.
  - ii. **Motion** by Mr. Fenton, seconded by Mr. Weber to accept the suggested change and to approve the amended minutes. **Vote:** 4-0-0

**2. Correspondence**

- a. None

**3. Agenda modifications**

- a. The remaining agenda items were heard in the following order: 4a, 5a, 5b, 4b, and 6.

**4. Old Business**

- a. **Public Hearing** - Application of Seascape Holdings, LLC for Development Plan Review for construction of a new 30' x 64' commercial building for office and storage use. The application includes requests for waivers from certain provisions of the commercial

development design requirements of Section 521 of the Middletown Rules and Regulations Regarding the Subdivision and Development of Land, and request for a variance from section 603 of the Middletown zoning ordinance, Town Code Chapter 152 to allow a side setback of 5.1 feet along the easterly property line where 18.7 feet is required. Property located at 985 Aquidneck Ave., Tax Assessors Plat 113, Lot 208.

- i. Mr. Croce inquired whether the applicant is waiting for the lot line definition to be amended and adopted by the Town Council which Mr. Wolanski confirmed. There was discussion that the applicant would have to readvertise with the new zoning relief request.
  - ii. **Motion** by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Weber to remove application from the agenda without prejudice. **Vote:** 4-0-0.
- b. Recommendation to the Town Council on a proposed policy to promote the responsible use of fertilizers and pesticides to limit adverse impacts on the town's environment, including ground and surface water resources.
- i. Mr. Wolanski shared the Open Space and Fields Committee had requested to review and recommend language to the draft policy. Those recommendations have been incorporated into the most current draft. Mr. Wolanski stated he has not heard any concerns from conflict solicitor Marissa Desautel.
  - ii. Mr. Weber expressed satisfaction with the new draft.
  - iii. **Motion** by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Fenton to approve and forward the draft policy to the Town Council for consideration. **Vote:** 4-0-0.

## 5. New Business

- a. **Public Hearing** – Request of Valley Rd. MOB, LLC for modification to the building design for a previously approved Development Plan Review application for a proposed medical office building, including requested waivers from certain design requirements of Section 521 of the Middletown Rules and Regulations Regarding the Subdivision and Development of Land. Property located on Valley Rd. approximately ¼ mile north of the intersection of Valley Rd. and East Main Rd., Tax Assessor's Plat 107NE, Lot 402B.
- i. **Motion** by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Weber to open the public hearing. **Vote:** 4-0-0.
  - ii. Attorney Dave Martland represented the applicant. Mr. Martland shared to accommodate the tenant's needs, the interior layout and building design had to be revised. The changes include the addition of eight windows to the east elevation and removal of 2 out of 4 windows on the north elevation. Architect David Horton shared the changes were to accommodate the patient exam rooms for privacy reasons. Mr. Croce noted the change is an improvement from the previously approved design.
  - iii. Mr. Fenton asked whether the applicant considered using faux windows on the north elevation. Mr. Martland said the north elevation is not facing a right-of-way and shared the net increase in windows is an improvement. Mr. Horton shared that faux windows would look fake next to the real windows. Mr. Weber and Ms. Owen expressed satisfaction with the design.
  - iv. **Motion** by Mr. Weber, seconded by Ms. Owen to approve the modification to the plans, make the five required findings, and approve the waiver request.

1. Requested waiver:

- a. **Section 521.2.B. 1 & 2** – Windows must make up 20% – 60% of each façade and be of true or simulated divided-light design. **The amount of window glazing on façade(s) visible from the public way does not meet this requirement.**

2. **Vote:** 4-0-0.

- b. Request of Mesolella Development Corp. for a one-year extension of the Final Plan approval for a comprehensive permit application submitted pursuant to Middletown Zoning Code, Article 17, *Low and Moderate Income Housing – Comprehensive Permit*, for construction of a new residential/commercial Mixed-use Development Project located at 1747 West Main Rd. Assessor's Plat 111, Lots 8 and 9.
  - i. Attorney Dave Martland represented the applicant. Mr. Martland said the project team has been working diligently the past year to get tax credits and other funding. However, the team has not obtained a building permit within the past year but is expecting to obtain one within the next few months.
  - ii. Mr. Weber said he expected the project to be done sooner. Mr. Wolanski said the applicant is entitled to a one-year extension but must go before the Planning Board.
  - iii. **Motion** by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Fenton to grant a one-year extension of the Final Plan approval to January 9, 2025. **Vote:** 4-0-0.

6. Updates

- a. Status Report on Planning Board Action Items.
  - i. Monthly status project update was provided to the Board.
- b. Committee reports
  - i. Comprehensive Plan Update Committee – Mr. Wolanski shared next meeting is tomorrow night and will continue working with Housing Element. There was discussion about working on the housing element vision statement.
  - ii. Tree Commission – Ms. Owen shared the Tree Commission is looking to get funding to address the beech tree disease at Albro Woods. Mr. Wolanski shared the Planning Department has been contacted by the Open Space and Fields Committee and Tree Commission to help with applying for grant funding.
  - iii. Open Space and Fields Committee – Mr. Fenton stated the committee is also working on the Albro Woods project and discussed the fertilizer policy.
  - iv. Conservation Commission – No updates.
- c. Upcoming meetings:
  - i. March 14, 2024, 6pm – CPUC public workshop meeting
  - ii. March 27, 2024, 6pm – Special Planning Board meeting – Public Hearing on proposed amendments to the development regulations and application fees
  - iii. April 10, 2024, 6pm – Regular Planning Board meeting.
- d. Mr. Weber asked about the old Benny's redevelopment project. There was discussion that there has been a change in tenants and the property owners are still working on it.
- e. Mr. Fenton asked about the road diet on East Main Road discussion during a recent Town Council meeting and the effects on transportation. Mr. Wolanski shared he expects the Town Council will decide on that topic.

**Motion** by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Weber to adjourn. **Vote:** 4-0-0  
Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Fenton, Secretary

DRAFT