

FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021

FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

Mar 10 2021 1:21 pm

NOTE: *This was a Virtual meeting on GoToSeminar due to the pandemic.*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair Paul Fontaine, Jr., Vice Chair
Peter Capodagli Alyne Butland
Amanda Koeck Laura O’Kane
Alex Lopez Tracey McGrath (Associate member)

STAFF: Mike O’Hara, Tom Skwierawski, Mary Jo Bohart

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 6:04 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Zoning Ordinance update: Phase 2, Bundle 3:

Hearing opened. The Board considered the proposed amendments in the following order and took each one up separately. Tom presented them.

1. Adaptive Industrial (AI)

Adapted from the Mill Conversion Overlay district. Purpose is to encourage the conversion of former mills, but to make it clearer as to the permitted uses in this district, as opposed to the MCO, which as an overlay district, did not show up on the Zoning Map and was not clear to a potential developer or to the Bldg. Commissioner. Property owners will also have the option of going with the uses permitted in Industrial District. It also replaces the West Fitchburg Corridor Overlay District.

Mr. O’Kane: Do we want to allow Residential uses in AI district? Agreed: Yes to keep flexibility (examples: CanAm Machinery (Mill #1), and the former Traders of the Lost Arts).
Also agreed: Keep Lumberyard as PB. Change Municipal Use from N to Y.

Mary Jo questioned why Airport is an “N” there is a lot of property at Fitchburg Municipal Airport that is planned for development

Tom: But Airport IS permitted in the underlying Industrial district. Agreed: Need to better clarify that Industrial uses are permitted in the AI district.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Lopez) to recommend in favor of this amendment provided that clarification is made. Vote 7-0 in favor.

2. Commercial Recreation District (CR)

This district would replace the Westminster Hill Road Commercial Recreation Overlay District and be listed as a separate district in the Table of Principal Uses. The district would be comprised of the “Game On” parcels (approx. 95 ac.) and the Great Wolf Lodge parcels (approx. 40 ac.). Residential uses would be prohibited, but recreational and related uses such as hotel, restaurants, mobile food operations, etc. would be allowed.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Koeck) to recommend in favor of this amendment as discussed. Vote 7-0.

3. Earth Removal

Currently, Earth Removal is by Special Permit, but there are no standards in the Ordinance. Ms. Caron with some recommendations from the Bldg. Commissioner took examples from Franklin & Milford to come up with this proposed amendment. Discussion on whether SPGA should be ZBA (as proposed in amendment) or Planning Bd. Agreed to leave it with ZBA.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Koeck) to recommend in favor of this amendment as discussed. Vote 7-0.

4. Motor Vehicle & Equipment Sales

Initiated by a City Councilor – Seeks to establish a 10,000 sq. minimum lot size in the definition. Ms. Caron: Dimensional standards don't belong in a definition. Suggested that they be relocated to Sec. 181.42, Dimensional - Special Provisions & Exceptions. Also suggested - add to M.V. Repair or Body Shop definition that vehicle sales is permitted as an accessory use, but that a limit could be put on the number of vehicles for sale on a lot in the same 181.42 section, # TBD later.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to recommend in favor of this amendment as discussed and revised. Vote 7-0.

5. Site Plan Review

Expands applicability of Site Plan Review to include several additional uses including Container Farming, multifamily of three or more units, etc. Also, Earth Removal will be subject to Planning Bd. site plan review if ZBA is the SPGA. Amends timelines for action on Site Plans from 60 days to 90 days. Clarifies waiver provisions in Sec. 181.94.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Koeck) to recommend in favor of this amendment as discussed and revised. Vote 7-0.

6. Dimensional Table Amendments

Sec. 181.414, Table of Dimensional Regulations proposed to be amended to add RC - non-single family lot (10,000 sq. ft., 80 ft. frontage) to distinguish from RC - single-family lot (5,000 s.f., 50 ft. frontage).

Q: Should there be a difference in height requirement in the C district? 50 feet was suggested.

Q: Should setbacks be established in the new Commercial District, instead of Zero Lot Line? Agreed: No.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Lopez) to recommend in favor of this amendment as proposed. Vote 7-0.

7. Use Table Amendments

Board reviewed several proposed changes to Sec. 181.313. Ms. Caron discussed sections on "Agricultural-Exempt" and "Agricultural-Non-exempt" suggested by the Bldg. Commissioner.

Container Farming added to Table. Nursing Home - put back as SP-Planning Bd.

M.V. Repair - Keep as BA in NBD & allow Industrial. Bank: Keep as BA in RB.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to recommend in favor of this amendment as proposed. Vote 7-0.

8. Zoning Map Amendments

Board reviewed numerous changes, recommendations and corrections to the entire zoning map.

9. Deletion of Overlay Districts

With the adoption of the Adaptive Industrial and Commercial Recreation districts as recommended earlier tonight, and other previous Zoning amendments recommended for approval by the Board, the following districts are superfluous & therefore should be eliminated:

- 181.83 Mill Conversion Overlay District;
- 181.85 Municipal Parking Overlay District;
- 181.88 Student Housing Overlay District;
- 181.99 West Fitchburg Corridor Overlay District; and
- 181.89A Westminster Hill Road Commercial Recreation Overlay District.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to recommend in favor of this amendment as proposed. Vote 7-0 in favor.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Koeck) to close the Public Hearing. Vote 7-0 in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Koeck) to adjourn. Vote in favor.
Meeting adjourned: 10:19 p.m.

Next meeting: March 9th

Minutes approved: March 9th