

DRAFT MINUTES
Special Meeting/Workshop
Canton Zoning Commission
Wednesday, August 7, 2013 7:00 p.m.
Library Community Center, Room F
40 Dyer Avenue, Canton, CT

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Bondanza called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: David Bondanza, John Huyghebaert, Phil Pane, William Sarmuk, Jonathan Thiesse. **Also Present:** Neil Pade, Town Planner and Lynn Charest, Acting Recording Clerk.

SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
Draft Zoning Regulations

Mr. Bondanza commented that this meeting is a continuance of the review of the final draft of the rewrite. Revisions of member and public comments from the last meeting were made. Mr. Pade noted that if anyone has objection to comments that changed text to let him know, although revisiting comments should be kept to a minimum.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Bondanza opened up the meeting to the public.

Alicia Canning, Co-chair Chamber Advocacy Committee, owner McDonalds Restaurant, 220 Albany Turnpike-Ms. Canning read from a prepared script. (see attached).

Mark Lange, 163 Robin Drive, owner Valley Sports Center- Mr. Lange explained his experience with signage in Canton. Valley Sports Center conducted an Open House recently and displayed signs. Those signs were removed by the Town. Began to think about what is allowed by town. Mr. Lange took a look at temporary signs around town. Has noticed some signs remain up, mostly non-profits, while some are removed. Mr Lange raised a question for the Zoning Commission members-what is purpose of sign regulations? Some taken down, some allowed to remain in place. He understands purpose of regulations. Mr. Lange proposed options focusing on temporary signs-

- Not allow at all (except for election signs).
- Have specific town bulletin boards throughout town to promote non-profits.
- 2nd option-permit temporary signs for non-profits but also allow businesses to do the same. Maybe a small fee for businesses?

Mr. Lange feels it's a worthwhile investment for his business and could be helpful for other small businesses as a means of advertising. Mr. Lange had one other question-how to monitor what signs are up and that they are compliant?

Arnold Goldman – High Valley Drive and business owner at 198 Albany Turnpike. Suggested that regulations allow businesses to have temporary signs for certain periods of time with a period of time off before another sign allowed. Perhaps a fee allowed. But believes by banning temporary signs it creates civil disobedience.

Michael D'Apice – 14 Mohawk Drive. Mr. D'Apice has a home based professional office and is also the current President of the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. D'Apice distributed a packet which was presented to the members of the Chamber of Commerce and included the On-Premise Signs Guideline Standards from the United States Sign Council

(copy attached). Mr. D'Apice suggests these are best practices however wishes to encourage the Zoning Commission members to allow more restrictive language where they feel guidelines are too liberal. He asks the Commission to consider this document during their consideration of signage regulations.

Betty Fiora- 15 Albany Turnpike- Ms. Fiora provided the Zoning Commission with her perspective as a resident on Albany Turnpike (Route 44). She stated she is frequently stopped and asked for directions by people driving up and down Rt. 44 looking for businesses they can't find or aren't visible from the street. She told the Commission that she owns the only independently owned billboard in town and has been told by businesses that Canton does not have adequate signage. Ms. Fiora also advised the Commissioners that some businesses owners who have owned their businesses for 25 years have been concerned that they will go out of business without adequate signage.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. ZONING MAP

Zoning Map- Mr. Pade invites the Commission members and the audience to gather around a copy of the existing zoning map displayed on table. Mr. Pade explains the age of the map, how the map was created, and what is in currently in place now. Mr. Pade continues to explain the proposed zoning map and highlights differences between the two. He advises that there was a decision to change to parcel based map which created changes in commercial corridor. Mr. Pade points out specific parcel changes on proposed maps. Changes on map reflect changes in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 in Zoning Regulation Re-write. Mr. Pade discussed the new R-4 zone, 4 acre zoning but allows clustering development based on site allowances. He encourages audience to bring any questions forward to Commission.

Chairman Bondanza-request for discussion of Collinsville Business District. Members agree to discuss topic. Mr. Pade explains that the decision to go out to Collinsville Business District was to survey what actually exists. Mr. Roland Klee surveyed each business by address. A summary provided at the bottom of the page shows uses found in the Collinsville Business District. The idea was to make the process more streamlined. Presently each use requires a special permit. It is important not to disrupt the synergy of residences and businesses in the district. He encourages the Commission to begin to consider what uses to be allowed by Special Permit/ possible prohibition of certain uses. The Commission agrees to review and come back to the topic. Mr. Pane raises concerns about parking problems within the District.

Mike D'Apice suggests Main Street program may be helpful in developing appropriate signage to direct visitors to parking not usually accessed before taking away certain business uses.

Mr. Pane mentions concerns about when Axe Factory gets redeveloped.

Mr. Pade spoke of possible way finding signage shown on the Town Commerical Center Plan that may possibly be constructed using funds award by the OPM Main Street grant. He encourages the Commission to think about parking requirements and to look at shared parking. (continue on next month's agenda)

2. CHAPTER 7, BASIC STANDARDS

Chapter 7, Basic Standards-7.1.D,Section 4; pg 119-Mr. Pade discusses buffers.

Mr. Huyghebaert inquires as to how 7.1.D, Section 4(d) would this be handled, by staff or Commission?

Mr. Pade clarified that site plans will continue to be reviewed by Zoning Commission, and do not require public hearing, however ZC can require one.

Section 7.1.E-Parking Area Landscaping Standards (pg 120)

Mr. Samuk questions proposed parking. How to handle smaller parking lots?

Mr. Pade explains how landscape regulations try to break up large asphalt lots.

Mr. Pade reminds that no more than 50% development on a lot without Special Exception permit.

Mr. Thiesse –Suggests removal of #4 (pg 120). Discussion continued with no removal of #4.

Mr. Pade discusses #6, long term maintenance in parking lots in regards to curbing. Add pre-cast concrete. He also states that graphic has to updated to reflect 18' stall depth (Diagram 7.1.E.1)

Discussion of #9-Commission suggests changes to this section.

7.1.F-Minimum Landscaping Standards-Discussion of 1(b)-Tree variety. Mr.

Pade reminds Commission that regulations which are too vague do not stand up favorably in court. Commission agrees to change 1.(b)-to ten(10)percent to thirty-three(33) percent & five (5) percent to twenty (20) percent.

Discussion continues 7.1.F-Item #4-(pg 122)- suggest change of wording to include 'fruit bearing' trees. It is decided this term is too broad.

Item #5 correction to reflect Town right-of-way.

7.1.G Completion Bonding and Maintenance

Item 2-remove 'neatly'; combine #3 into #2; rest of items re-numbered

Item 8-add 'from the date of installation'

7.2-Parking & Loading

7.2.A Purpose

7.2.B. (3)-Discussion of this proposed regulation.

7.2.C (2)-Discussion requested-Mr. Arnie Goldman, in audience wishes to discuss small, non-conforming lots on Route 44 (Albany Tpk). Current regulations do not allow paving of the entire lot which were once residential but now are commercial. Finds current regulation impractical. Mr. Pade explains the Commission has increased flexibility to coverage limitations as part of changes made to Section 4.

7.2.C (7)-Changes done to add wording or adjacent properties'

7.2.D-Clarification of item #6(c)-no changes

7.2.E Loading Spaces

Change of square footage for Minimum Loading Requirement

Section 7.3 – Signage. Chairman Bondanza suggests that the Commission review what was distributed by the Chamber of Commerce prior to continuing with this Section.

Mr. Thiesse suggests using this point in the meeting to gather comments/concerns from audience for section 7.3, giving Commission time to digest and consider.

Mr. Arnie Goldman-spoke of Chamber's suggestions. 1) Internally illuminated signs are prohibited. Why not allow internally illuminated but address ways to make them tasteful. Allow them and let business owners decide. Mr. Goldman

states internally illuminated are more expensive than flat signs which are difficult to read driving along roads with high speed limits. Would like the regulations to allow replacement of existing illuminated signs. 7.3.B (4)-Believes that temporary signs should be allowed. Instead of blanket prohibition and come up with a creative solutions, perhaps limit times for display. Suggests research of other towns regulations.

Mike D'Apice speaks-Advocacy group of the Chamber meets every two weeks, he suggests the group meet and review the proposed regulations. He would be happy to present back to the Commission as Best Management Practices.

Chairman Bondanza appreciates the audiences input as the Commission is now looking for specifics.

Mr. Thiesse thought if audience had specifics, the Commissioners could better consider these during their own review between meetings.

Mr. Pade addresses the issue with Temporary Signage. He feels issues regarding temporary signage is not going to go away. Temporary sign create complaints and require a lot of the ZEO's time. He would like to figure out a balance for both the business owners and the complaints of too much signage/ signage clutter in town.

Chairman Bondanza agrees it is a balance between interests. He acknowledges the audiences input and that they represent one area (Chamber of Commerce).

Mr Pade points out to Chamber and the Commission to see Page A-71- (Appendix).

Mr. Arnie Goldman encourages the Commission to look at Page 132. He would like Commission to reconsider this regulation when non-conforming sign is damaged.

Mr. Pade reminds the Commissioners that they should come prepared to meetings to have comments made. He would like to complete this re-write process and possibly get the new regulations enacted in January 2014.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no further comments from the public.
The commission will commence the next meeting with Chapter 7.3, Signage.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: by Mr. Thiesse to adjourn at 9:44pm. Second by Mr. Pane.

VOTE: Bondanza-yes; Pane-yes; Huyghebaert-yes; Sarmuk-yes;