

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT
Monday, November 27, 2023 7:00 pm

**Regular Meeting – HYBRID
Minutes**

Members Present: Chairman Rick Nassiff, Vice-Chair Vera Englert, Thomas Currier , Robert Powell, Richard Napolitano, Ed Madrak (Alternate), L. Preston (Alternate)

Members Excused: Walter Tabor, Justin Riendeau, and Don Schofield (Alternate)

Staff Present: Town Planner John Guskowski (via Zoom), Board Clerk Mary Kay Hyman

Others Present: Fire Chief Scott Haddad (via Zoom), Fire Marshal Mike Lester (via Zoom), Rhonda Kincaid of CDE, Michael Magaldi (via Zoom) and and 3 Others Present

1. CALL TO ORDER: R. Nassiff called the meeting to order at **7:00 PM**.

2. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

E. Madrak was seated for J. Riendeau

L. Preston was seated for W. Tabor

3. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA: None

4. APPROVAL OF PZC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES of November 13, 2023:

R. Powell asked that the November 13, 2023 Minutes be modified to reflect that he stated he is opposed to the new verbiage which would allow zero side yard setbacks from lot lines.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the Amended Minutes of November 13, 2023 R. Powell **SECONDED**, R. Napolitano **ABSTAINED. MOTION PASSED 6:0:1**

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:

5.1 ZEO Report – R. Nassiff tabled discussion to a future meeting.

6. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

Rhona Kincaid of the Coalition of Diversity and Equity provided the following input regarding the Regulation Amendment Section 52.7.19.

I'm speaking as a member of Coalition on Diversity and Equity. Our Columbia Affordable Housing Subcommittee has met to review the Draft Zoning Regulation Amendment (based on current Section 52.7.19) and would like to submit some brief preliminary comments and questions tonight.

We want to thank the Planning and Zoning Commission for your efforts to encourage a broader range of housing options in Columbia, including affordable housing. Our larger group next meets on December 12th and may provide the Commission with additional input.

1) Was there any developer input as this draft amendment was written? If not, we'd respectfully recommend that the Planning and Zoning Commission look for developer input to help ensure the draft is as development-friendly as possible.

2) With clear criteria for Planned Neighborhood Housing, is a Special Permit necessary? A developer might be more encouraged to build in town if he/she didn't have to go through that process.

3) Is it intended that this amendment would replace Section 52.7.21 Multi-Family Housing? If not, there appear to be some inconsistencies between the two.

4) It would be helpful to understand the reasoning for a number of the proposed criteria, e.g., maximum unit density, minimum number of acres, minimum frontage, etc. We believe the more flexible the regulations, the more likely a developer can build something that is affordable and sustainable. For example, if we read this correctly, the draft amendment has a limit of six units per building, but the existing Multi-Family Housing regulations allow 12 units (if it is a two-story building).

5) Evaluation criteria includes consideration of "the existing and future character of the neighborhood" and "safeguards to prevent detrimental impact to adjacent property and the neighborhood in general." Without clear definitions, these criteria appear subjective. Are the criteria actually needed if a developer meets all the regulations listed in the amendment?

6) We'd also suggest the evaluation criteria include consideration of how a proposed project contributes to achieving the Town's Affordable Housing Plan goal of 30 additional affordable housing units.

Thank you for your time and work on this amendment, and for the opportunity for input. We will continue to review the draft and submit any additional questions or comments.

R. Nassiff welcomed continued input from the CDE and invited them to attend the PZC Subcommittee Meetings.

Fire Marshal M. Lester Spoke regarding the Drafted Regulation changes not mentioning the water supply for Multi-Unit Structures. He asked if the current regulations for Cisterns would apply. He stated he has ideas and will plan to attend the next meeting.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action): None

8. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)

8.1 C.G.S. 8-24 Review - HVAC and Air Quality School Project

R. Nassiff asked J. Guskowski why this is in front of the PZC.

J. Guskowski described the Statutory requirement of Section 8-24 that requires any acquisition, sales, or significant improvement of Town property to be referred to the Planning Commission for comment related to the Plan of Conservation & Development”

R. Nassiff stated this is mechanical in nature.

T. Currier asked where this would impact Planning and Zoning.

R. Napolitano replied maybe regarding noise.

R. Nassiff asked J. Guskowski for his input regarding the impact.

J. Guskowski stated the impact is primarily the Cost and Land Use.

R. Nassiff stated his perspective is to consider, as there is no change to Zoning and it is being managed by the Board of Selectmen.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **APPROVE** and Support the HVAC/Air Quality Project (C.G.S. 8-24), R. Powell **SECONDED**, R. Napolitano and V. Englert **ABSTAINED. MOTION PASSED 5:0:2**

8.2 Section 51.7 - Minor Modifications of Approved Special Permits

R. Nassiff stated he feels the following Regulation changes are ready to go to Public Hearing. He asked J. Guskowski to give a brief overview of each of the changes.

J. Guskowski stated changes to 51.7 are to streamline minor changes for property owners.

R. Powell asked that J. Guskowski change the first line in 51.7 to “Minor Changes to (not in)”.

J. Guskowski agreed.

8.3 Section 31.2 and 31.3 - Site Plan vs. Special Permit Uses in CM Districts

J. Guskowski stated changes to 31.2 and 31.3 are to streamline the Application Process and to move items, from Special Permit to Commercial District.

8.4 Section 21.2.1 - Family/Home Day Care

J. Guskowski stated changes to 21.2.1 are to Comply with changes to recent State Law.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **RECEIVE** and **SCHEDULE** the Public Hearing for Regulation Changes to Sections 51.7, 31.2, 31.3 and 21.2.1 for Monday, January 08, 2024. R. Powell **SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 7:0:0**

9. REGULATION REVISIONS (Discussion)

9.1 Section 3 revisions

9.2 Section 52.7.19 Planned Neighborhood Housing

R. Nassiff stated discussion of these revisions will be discussed at the PZC Subcommittee Meetings set for 6:00 PM before the Regularly scheduled PZC Meetings.

10. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION:

R. Nassiff asked D. Holcroft if he had any comments or questions.

D. Holcroft responded not at this time.

R. Nassiff thanked R. Napolitano for his time and dedication to the PZC.

R. Napolitano said a kind farewell and reminded the Commission that it is about the people.

11. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: None

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pending Legal Action per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B)

The Commission did not go into Executive Session

13. ADJOURNMENT:

R. Napolitano **MOVED** to **ADJOURN**; R. Nassiff **SECONDED**. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at **7:34 PM**.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Kay Hyman, Board Clerk.

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.