

**Planning Commission**  
**Minutes of February 25, 2015 Meeting**

1670 Flat River Road  
Coventry, RI 02816

Meeting Called to order at 7:03pm by Chairman Russell Crossman.

Members Present: Chairman Crossman, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Nunes, Mr. Crowe, Mr. Kalunian, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Osenkowski and Ms. Fagan-Perry

Members Absent: Mr. Capwell

Also Present: Veronica Assalone, Esq., Planning Director Paul K. Sprague, and Associate Planner Jacob Peabody.

*Mr. Crossman reviewed the exits in the room in case of an emergency.*

Approval of Minutes:  
December 17, 2014

Mr. Flynn pointed out a typo on Page 2 of the minutes. The first sentence of Paragraph 5 should read: "Mr. Flynn said he could **not** accept a waiver for a 24-foot stretch of curbing instead of 30 feet curb to curb."

*Mr. Nunes made a motion to approve the corrected meeting minutes.. Ms. Fagan-Perry seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

Election of Officers:

*Mr. Flynn nominated Mr. Crossman for Chairman. Mr. Crowe seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

*Mr. Kalunian nominated Mr. Nunes for Vice Chairman. Mr. Bouchard seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

*Mr. Bouchard nominated Mr. Flynn for Secretary. Chairman Crossman seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

**SITE WALK**

Sitewalk/Pre-Application: "**Liberalis Subdivision**"; Liberalis LLC  
Proposed 2-Lot Minor Subdivision (FKA DaSilveria Subdivision)  
AP 310, Lot 22; Zone RR5  
Perry Hill Road

Approval was previously granted by the Planning Commission but has since expired; however, wetland approval is still valid with DEM. Chairman Crossman scheduled a site walk for March 21, 2015 at 9:00am.

## OLD BUSINESS

Sitewalk/Pre-Application: “Joe & Julian Plat”; Joseph Yammine  
*2-Lot Minor Subdivision*  
AP 310 Lot 33; Zone RR5  
182 Log Bridge Road

Mr. Soursa from Coventry Survey Company accompanied the applicant. The findings from the site walk conducted on January 17, 2015 were that both wells were on one lot posing a potential right-of-way problem. In addition, there was concern about where the lot line was drawn. Currently, it is in a “hockey stick” configuration.

Mr. Yammine explained that he would like to keep the larger parcel of land as a farm. He also hopes to one day purchase the adjoining property and house. Mr. Flynn explained he could still achieve that goal if he straightened the lot line. The subdivision would require a waiver from the Planning Commission due to the unusual shape of the larger lot. Chairman Crossman said he would also need approval from the Zoning Board for relief on frontage and side setbacks.

Chairman Crossman explained that if the straight line was drawn down the middle, Mr. Yammine would not require a waiver from the Planning Commission although he would still need a variance from the Zoning Board. It was stated that it is the Planning Commission’s desire to avoid unusually shaped lots in order to avoid setting a precedent of approving nonconforming lot lines.

### **PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING – continued from November 19, 2014**

Master Plan/Comprehensive Permit Application: “**White Tail Estates**”; Douglas Enterprises, LTD  
*Proposed 36-Lot Subdivision w/11 Affordable Units*  
AP 76, Lot 1; Zone RR2  
Leuba Road

Robert Craven represented the applicant. He stated that Mr. DeSimone made several attempts to meet the concerns of the neighbors during the public hearing, primarily the flow of traffic on Leuba Road, by reducing the number of lots in the plat. Mr. DeSimone stated that this would mean eliminating the duplexes which are the affordable housing units and this was not acceptable.

Chairman Crossman pointed out the fact that the Planning Commission has worked well with Julie Leddy and other private developers in promoting affordable housing for the Town of Coventry. Currently, the Town is at nearly 6% of the 10% mandate. Mr. Nunes reiterated his concerns that subdivisions end up costing the Town in the long run and there are a lot of variances and waivers that the applicant is seeking i.e. too much “take” on the developer’s part. Mr. Crossman pointed out the annual deficit to the Town was somewhere in the range of \$57,000.00.

Councilwoman Karen Carlson, 422 Waterman Hill Road, questioned the Commission that when a subdivision is considered, if the Department of Public Works was notified. Mr. Sprague explained that every single subdivision plan is submitted to the Police

Department, the Fire District, the Department of Public Works, and Human Services. Ms. Carlson was primarily concerned with the large amount of snowfall from this winter being plowed to the sides of the road.

Mr. Nunes commented that he drove up Leuba Road before the meeting to see for himself the condition of the road after all the snowfall. He said the road has been crowded in so badly that it was difficult for two cars to pass each other. He failed to see how adding more traffic to the road would work without the road being substantially upgraded. Mr. Kalunian added it was his experience that between the garbage cans and snow pushed to the sides of the road in the Mt. Laurel area, traffic flow was a challenge.

*Chairman Crossman inquired if there was any additional public comment. A motion was then made by Ms. Fagan to close the public hearing portion. Mr. Nunes seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

Chairman Crossman addressed Mr. DeSimone as to why he was limiting the Cape Cod berms in the cul-de-sac. Mr. DeSimone answered that he was not a proponent of concrete curbs and felt they were not necessary in the cul-de-sac. Mr. Crossman expressed his concern that when the snowplows rip up the berms it then becomes the responsibility of the Town to replace them. Mr. DeSimone disagreed stating if the berms are installed correctly this won't happen. Mr. Nunes, who drives a snowplow for the State of Rhode Island, concurred with Chairman Crossman that plows do indeed often damage berms.

*Mr. Nunes then made a motion to deny this proposed development with regards that it is not consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan. He read, "The property is located in a RR2 Zoning District which requires a minimum of two (2) acres per parcel. The subject parcel is less than two (2) acres per lot.*

With local needs the proposed development is not consistent in that it will increase the number of vehicles in the area. Due to traffic congestion between Leuba Road and Teakwood Drive concerns for the traffic have not been adequately addressed and local needs 'have not' been adequately addressed. Therefore, the proposal is not consistent with local needs. The lack of sidewalks along Leuba Road between the development and Route 117 creates a risk of harm to pedestrians. Increased vehicular traffic along Leuba Road which is the primary ingress/egress point to the development is inconsistent with local needs in that Leuba Road is extremely narrow with sharp turns which create an unreasonable risk of harm to the public. The health and safety of current and future residents has not been adequately addressed in as much as small width and lack of shoulders on Leuba Road.

The Town has increased its percentage of low and moderate income housing and plans on meeting the 10% mandate by 2025. The Town has increased its affordable housing stock through such developments as Coventry Meadows, Golden Ridge, and the proposed Tiffany Village since the enactment of the Town's Affordable Housing Production Act and will continue to increase the Town's low/mod income housing stock."

*Ms. Fagan seconded the motion. All members were in favor of denial of the project. Motion passed.*

**PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Master Plan/Recommendation to Town Council: "River's Edge Condominiums";

ASCO Group c/o John Assalone

Proposed 19-Single Story 2-Unit Condominiums w/Private Street Creation and Proposed Zone Change to Planned Unit Development (PUD)

AP 53, Lot 26; Zone 11

1320 Main Street

*Veronica Assalone, Esq., recused herself due to a potential conflict.*

Attorney John Brunero, 1070 Main Street, Coventry, represented the applicant. He described the development as an age restricted, 55+, community thus there will be no school-age children enrolled in the Town's educational system. The property is currently zoned Industrial which does not allow for the condominium units; however, the Town Council can change the zoning with a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

The units are one-story, approximately 1,770 square feet including a one-car garage and parking areas accommodating more than the number of vehicles of the units would entail. Services, subject to approval, will include public sewers and water and underground utilities. There will be one entrance with a loop system interior. The existing structure on the property will be razed. There is a 200 foot wetland buffer to the Pawtuxet River which will be open space with walking trails. Also, the trees in this area will be maintained.

A proposal of storage units will be presented at the Preliminary design stage. The condos are built on slabs and would provide storage for the condo owners. A traffic analysis shows minimal impact to the traffic flow of Route 117. A projected positive tax cash flow for the Town and Fire District would be approximately \$240,000.00 per year. Garbage pickup, snow removal, and road repair would be private and not the responsibility of the Town. Police, Fire and Rescue services are the only services requested for this community.

Mr. Nunes questioned if the storage units may be built solely for condo association or would it be mini-storage available to the public. Mr. Brunero would have to confer with his client for this answer. Right now, the design of storage units is open to discussion. Mr. Crossman voiced his concerns about the storage being permitted if the PUD is granted by the Council. Mr. Brunero stated that the storage units would be allowed within the underlying Industrial zoning and will be included with the PUD. There will be a separate entrance to the storage units.

Mr. Osenkowski stated that he spends many weekends Paine Field at the Recreation Center which is located directly across the street from the planned development and there is a great deal of traffic that causes congestion on Route 117. Timothy Behan, PE, from Commonwealth Engineers conducted a traffic analysis of Main Street which is a State roadway and the plans, change of use, and curb cut will have to be submitted to the RI Department of Transportation for review and approval as part of this application. The RIDOT will also require a site distance analysis and also a traffic trip analysis to determine the local impact on the highway system.

This site distance for this development was 700 feet in both directions well beyond the required 360 feet. There will be a stop sign placed at the entrance area. The roadway adjacent to the property has a wide shoulder for overflow parking from the ball fields across the street. This situation was addressed by providing long radius entrances in each direction. The morning peak hour traffic with this development increases to 17 vehicles per hour, 20 per hour in the afternoon. These numbers are conservative because in an age restricted community the number of trips are actually less because there are many retirees who do not commute to work – some residents may also be snowbirds and live in the community seasonally. This is significantly less than the DOT threshold of 100 cars per hour.

Mr. Flynn mentioned it was discussed during the site walk whether other Coventry residents would be allowed to use the right-of-way. Mr. Brunero answered that there may be a possible wetland violation.

*Mr. Bouchard made a motion to open up the discussion to Public Hearing. Mr. Flynn seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

Dennis Levesque, 1319 Main Street, stated that the traffic in front of his house is atrocious 8 months of the year between registration and ball games at the Community Center and there are often parked cars on both sides of the road. The addition of 19 condo units would only add to the traffic problem. Another concern is during the flooding of 2010, water from the golf course drained into the wetlands and the water rose very high from the stream.

Kyle Phillips, 1280 Main Street, is against the storage units being proposed for this development and would like to see a 30 foot buffer of arborvitae planted for privacy for along his property line.

Karen Potter, 1280 Main Street, questioned the screening process for the residents purchasing the condominium units primarily sex offenders who may be child molesters especially with the play ground and ball fields at the Community Center. Mr. Brunero said that as the developers they are prohibited from doing a background check but if someone is a sex offender, they are required to register with the police department and the police will notify the residents in the area. Ms. Potter also reiterated concerns regarding the traffic congestion as well as her concerns for privacy on her property. Mr. Brunero stated that the right-of-way is not public and only for the benefit of 3 parcels in the area.

*A motion was made to close the Public Hearing portion for this petition by Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Kalunian seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

*Ms. Fagan made a motion to approve a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to change zoning from I1 to PUD to accommodate the proposed project and that it is consistent with the Community Comprehensive Plan by reading: "The proposed Preliminary Plan nineteen (19) two-unit duplex condominium project is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan. The Housing Element of the Plan encourages high density infill affordable housing development in the eastern section of Town. The Housing Element of the Plan encourages senior housing as a form of infill development where public water and sewer services are available. The proposed development has access to public water and public sewers.*

The proposed development will not have any significant negative impact to the environment. The applicant will need to secure a Freshwater Wetlands Permit and RIPDES permit from RIDEM prior to the Preliminary Plan stage of proceedings. The applicant will need to secure approvals to connect to public water and sewer systems.

The proposed development has permanent access to a public way. The applicant will need to secure a Physical Alteration Permit (PAP) from RIDOT.”

*Mr. Nunes seconded the motion.*

Ms. Fagan continued to read:

“The developer proposes to submit a Storm water Management Plan consistent with RIDEM’s current Low Impact Design (LID) standards utilizing BMPS. The drainage plan should be submitted to the Town Engineer prior to Preliminary Plan stage of proceedings.”

Chairman Crossman then suggested an amendment to the motion to incorporate the Planning Director’s report into the approval.

*Mr. Nunes seconded the amendment to the motion. All members with exception of Mr. Osenkowski voted aye for the motion. Mr. Osenkowski voted nay on this petition. Motion passed by majority vote.*

***Chairman Crossman requested a break at 8:54pm. Meeting resumed at 9:06pm.***

Pre-Application: “**Stonehill Estates**”; Centerville Builders, Inc.  
*Modification to Preliminary/Final Plan approval of 22-Lot Major Subdivision with Street Creation*

AP 69 Lot 45; Zone R20

Station Street

John Revens, Jr., 946 Centerville Road, Warwick, represented the applicant. Mr. Revens returns with design improvements such as hammerhead driveways, 10 acres of open space which a determination has to be made as to whether it will be owned by the Town or the homeowners association, and roadway improvements in lieu of some Impact Fees.

Mr. Flynn stated that he would like to see the open space go to the Town for passive recreation. Chairman Crossman was in agreement.

Robert Lamoureux, also representing the applicant, stated that markers could be placed along the boundary lines to distinguish backyards from the open space. Iron pins or 4X4 posts could be used on along the boundary line. Deed restrictions will be placed on the open space. An easement will be available for Kent County Water to be able to loop Station Street’s water to Boulder Drive which could also benefit residents of the development and surrounding area.

Mr. Kalunian suggested that rather than moving a utility pole the builders “trench over” i.e. slide the pole a distance of up to approximately 6 feet at a minimal cost. Mr.

Sprague stated that the original maximum impact fee would stand based on the other filing with the movement of the telephone pole.

Mr. Lamoureux contradicted that off-site clearing of the property and the right-of-way plus the 10 acres of open space would be dedicated in lieu of the impact fees which is valued at approximately \$45,000-\$60,000.00.

*Mr. Nunes made a motion to open up the petition to Public Hearing. Ms. Fagan seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

No one approached the podium.

*Mr. Nunes made a motion to close the petition to Public Hearing. Mr. Kalunian seconded. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

*Mr. Nunes made a motion to approve the proposed Preliminary Plan of Stonehill Estates by reading:* "The proposed Preliminary Plan ten (10) lot Major Residential Subdivision is generally consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan. The area is designated as Medium Density Residential (MDR) on the future Land Use Map of the Plan which recommends 1 dwelling unit/.5 acres – 1 DU/2 Acres. Most of the lots in the proposed subdivision are consistent with the future Land Use Map. The proposed subdivision is consistent with a recent state statute which allows for an inconsistent zoning map to control land use discussions until the zoning ordinance is updated so as to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Providing adequate measures are undertaken by the developer to protect the wetland there will be no significant negative impact to the environment. The developer has secured a Preliminary Subdivision Determination from RIDEM. RIDEM has verified the wetlands. The proposed drainage plan will reduce storm water runoff to adjacent properties. The applicant must secure a RIPDES permit from RIDEM.

Each of the lots in the proposed subdivision meets the minimum dimensional requirements of the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Each of the lots has adequate and permanent access to a public street. Each dwelling unit shall provide hammerhead driveways.

An Environmental Review Team (ERT) report performed by an independent engineer made recommendations respecting the applicant's plans which were thereafter adopted by the developer. The applicant shall implement sight distance improvements as depicted on the plans to include signage, selective trimming of trees and brush and relocation of a utility pole. The developer shall install roof runoff drainage systems on the new dwellings.

Granting of this proposal will not be inimical to public health, safety, and welfare." Final can go administratively and it needs to be specified to Kent County Water that the easement is strictly for access and does not indicate land ownership to KCWA.

The Planning Director's report should be incorporated into the approval. Impact fees shall be waived in lieu of the donation of the open space land and the offsite improvements.

*Ms. Fagan seconded the motion.*

Mr. Nunes amended the motion to withdraw the ERT report.

*Ms. Fagan seconded the amended motion. All members were in favor. Motion passed.*

Recommendation to Town Council  
2015-2016 Capitol Improvement Budget

Mr. Sprague explained that it is in the Town Charter for the Planning Commission to be responsible for insuring to the Town Council whether or not the CIP is consistent with the Town Council's Comprehensive Community Plan.

*Mr. Bouchard made a motion to approve the proposed the FY 2016 Capital Improvement Budget to the Town Council by reading:* "The Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed Capitol Improvement Budgets and CIP of the Police Department, Department of Public Works, Department of Human Services and Department of Planning and Development. In so doing, it has taken into consideration of relative needs for each program, the relation of each project for plans for development of the Town, and relationship to other programs or projects.

Based upon the foregoing, the Planning Commission finds as fact that each of the foregoing department's proposed Capitol Improvement Projects and Capitol Improvement Budgets and that they are consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan."

Planning Commission recommends to the Town Manager and Town Council that the proposed CIB and CIP be incorporated into the Town's FY of 2015-2016.

*Mr. Flynn seconded. All members with exception of Ms. Fagan voted aye for the motion. Ms. Fagan voted nay. Motion passed by majority vote.*

## **DISCUSSION**

*None.*

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Planning Commission Issues of Interest  
*None*

Public Works Director  
*None*

Planning Director Report  
*None*

Public Comment

*None*

*A motion was then made by Mr. Bouchard to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Nunes seconded. All members in favor. Motion passed.*

Meeting adjourned at 9:47pm.

Minutes prepared by Susan Volpe