



**TOWN OF KILLINGLY, CT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

MONDAY – OCTOBER 17, 2022

**Workshop Meeting - In Person
6:00 PM**

**TOWN MEETING ROOM – 2ND FLOOR
Killingly Town Hall
172 Main Street
Killingly, CT**

WORKSHOP MINUTES

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK, KILLINGLY, CT
2022 OCT 24 AM 7:18
Elizabeth M. Wilson

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair, Keith Thurlow, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL - PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION:

Michael Hewko, Virge Lorents, John Sarantopoulos, Matthew Wendorf and Keith Thurlow.
Brian Card was absent with notice.

ROLL CALL - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION:

William Cheng; Dale Desmarais, Mark Tillinghast, Todd Cooke, Jay Lirette.
Kevin Cole was absent.

Staff Present – Ann-Marie Aubrey, Director of Planning & Development; Jonathan Blake, Planner I/ZEO;
Jill St. Clair, Director of Economic Development.

Also Present – Attorney Evan J. Seeman; Robinson+Cole; Keith Kumnick, Commercial Real Estate Broker with
Colliers International; J.S. Perreault, Recording Clerk.

II. **WORKSHOP DISCUSSION**

* Review / Discussion / Action

* Comparison of General Commercial Zone Regulations to Business Park Regulations

Keith Thurlow explained that this workshop is to get input from the EDC regarding their recommendation as to what to do about the Business Park (remain Business Park or change to General Commercial). Brian Card had advocated for something other than the text changes that had been recently approved, with conditions (effective November 22, 2022, at 12:01 a.m.). The Applicant's representatives, Attorney Evan J. Seeman with Robinson+Cole and Keith Kumnick, Commercial Real Estate Broker with Colliers International, were present in the audience.

Ann-Marie Aubrey explained that an Applicant had come before the PZC. Warehouse was already allowed as an accessory use, but the Applicant wanted to make it allowed as a primary use. Mr. Card had suggested looking at making the Business Park a GC zone because warehouse and distribution is allowed in GC.

Ms. Aubrey explained that she had done a comparison of a GC Zone to a BP Zone (copies of the comparison chart that she prepared were provided):

- There are many restrictions/requirements in the BP Zone that are not in any of the other zones in Town.
- The Business Park has been in existence for over twenty years and nobody has developed anything on it yet. There must be something lacking in how it is written.
- Ms. Aubrey explained about the dimensional table. Setbacks are somewhat extreme compared to other districts.
- Every use in the Business Park requires a special permit.
- There are lots in the Business Park that would not be able to be used.

Virge Lorents spoke about the history of the Business Park explaining that the PZC, at the time, imposed the more restrictive regulations than in GC in response to intense demand by neighbors. She feels that, while public opinion matters, the PZC over-reacted.

John Sarantopoulos stated that he feels that the EDC should have weighed in on the Application that came before the PZC two months ago. He spoke of his opinion that the Business Park was structured for high tech to go in there. He said that he agrees with Brian Card to zone it GC.

Ms. Aubrey commented that we are aware that there is an issue and we are trying to resolve the issue in the best way that we can that will help the community overall. Everyone has the right to develop their land within certain requirements of the Town. She suggested reviewing the comparison chart as she is looking for instruction from both the PZC and the EDC. There is no deadline.

Mr. Thurlow asked if Attorney Evan J. Seeman and Keith Kumnick if they had any comments/feedback.

Attorney Seeman stated that he reviewed the comparison chart and found it helpful. He said that they were in attendance to observe.

Keith Kumnick offered to answer any questions.

Motion was made by Virge Lorents to suspend the rules to open the floor to discussion with Members of the Economic Development Commission and the public.

Second by John Sarantopoulos. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

Dale Desmarais spoke about the history of the Business Park and how the biggest problem was the infrastructure (\$2 million, at the time, to get water there). He said that he had gone to a meeting in Hartford and the Business Parks were empty. He explained that he has been told that there is a lot of interest in northeast Connecticut right now with rail siding and property along I-395 (they don't want the problems of going through neighborhoods).

Mr. Thurlow stated that you won't necessarily need city water or city sewer.

Ms. Aubrey explained that we need to look at what would feasibly work at that site. Construction technology has changed from 20+ years ago.

Jonathan Blake explained that there are some uses in the Business Park that don't exist elsewhere in Zoning (e.g. Data Center). He explained about other uses in the different zones. He explained that, if we re-zone, we would eliminate the Business Park and try to recapture those uses and, at the same time, look to add that language to the other zones. Some make more sense in Industrial rather than in GC. Discussion continued.

Ms. Aubrey explained that they have been looking for a different way to rewrite the whole Zoning Regulations to make them more user friendly. Currently, there is not consistency for the same use in the different districts. Mr. Blake explained that there had been an attempt to change the Business Park to Industrial which was denied by the Commission. He said that the GC, with some tweaks, seems to be a good match for the property. Ms. Aubrey explained that she had researched by looking at the *North American Industry Classification System* which is the system used across the United States. She explained how a chart can be used for easy comparisons.

Mr. Thurlow asked Attorney Seeman or Mr. Kumnick if they had any comments. Attorney Seeman explained that they did not feel comfortable with proposing to remove an entire zoning district from the Regulations and secondly, they couldn't re-zone the entire BP Zone because they don't represent all of the property owners.

There was discussion regarding Walmart.

Mark Tillinghast explained that a concern in the beginning, for the EDC, was trying to maximize the use of the property. He explained that a reason for some of the restrictions was to make sure that there would be a road for people who owned property in the back so they would have an opportunity to develop or sell their properties, as well as for the good of the Town.

Ms. Aubrey explained that you don't have to control that by a conceptual plan.

Jill St. Clair explained that you have to be market ready. The infrastructure has to be there. She consulted the *National Strategy for Research and Development Infrastructure of 2021* to see what the government is incentivizing to get companies to come here. She said that we are a manufacturing community and with that comes warehousing. She suggests re-zoning to General Commercial capturing those uses in the Business Park and remove the barriers to activate that space.

Mr. Thurlow explained that he agrees with eliminating the BP Zone.

William Cheng asked Mr. Kumnick for his opinion and also for the opinions of the EDC.

Mr. Kumnick explained that, from a marketing perspective, the most active is the industrial side (warehouse distribution) and industrial uses (light manufacturing, light assembly). He said that maybe some of the other uses on Lake Road would fit there also. He does not feel you will be getting a large office campus or Research & Development facilities. They are gravitating toward Cambridge and Yale because they want to be right near the universities. He said that the Commission needs to decide what kind of development it wants to see there.

Attorney Seeman explained that the reason that they submitted the text change application was primarily because warehouse and distribution was only allowed as an accessory use in the BP Zone.

Mr. Kumnick explained that, historically, there were issues with utilities. They investigated the utilities and the sewer has been approved (it runs in Westcott Road). The Town Engineer had stated that, for most uses, there are no capacity issues. Water is on the other side as would require a pump to get it up there, but the cost was not prohibitive. Gas is also on the other side of I-395.

Todd Cooke commented that there could be a lot of push back from the public.

Dale Desmarais commented that all of his customers in the Industrial Park are looking for warehouse space (20,000 – 150,000 s.f.). He said that there is a big need for a giant freezer (1 million square foot) in this area right now.

Jay Lirette commented that he agrees with Mr. Thurlow and Ms. St. Clair and that we need to look at what is vital by industry and by community.

Mark Tillinghast stated that it is a residentially sensitive area, but he is of the mind. Times have changed. He likes the idea of the warehouse and putting the BP uses in the GC that aren't currently in there. There was discussion regarding the circumstances under which the EDC and the PZC meet together to share ideas.

Mr. Thurlow commented that he likes working together with the EDC for the Town.

There was discussion regarding when to have another workshop together with the EDC. It was decided to have another Workshop on Monday, November 21, 2022, at 6 p.m.

III. MOTION TO ADJOURN

*PLANNING ZONING COMMISSION

*ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

NOTE: Must end meeting before 7:00 pm – so Planning Zoning Commission can start their regular meeting.

Motion was made by Virge Lorents to adjourn at 6:58 p.m.

Second by Michael Hewko. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0). There were no objections voiced.

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Clerk