

(DRAFT)

Town of Greenwich
Harbor Management Commission
Special Meeting
October 10, 2018
4:00 P.M.
Mazza Room, Town Hall

Minutes

Members in attendance:

Bruce Angiolillo	Chairman
Lile Gibbons	Vice Chairman
Mike Van Oss	Secretary
Bernard Armstrong	
Bill Ingraham	
Frank Mazza	

Absent:

Don Carlson

Alternates:

Absent:

Casey McKee
David Noble

Ex-Officio Members in Attendance:

Joseph Benoit	RTM
Katie DeLuca	Planning & Zoning Commission
John Toner	Board of Selectmen

Absent:

Sue Baker	Conservation Commission
Roger Bowgen	Shellfish Commission
Brian Kerzner	Department of Parks & Recreation
Rick Loh	Board of Parks & Recreation
Ian MacMillan	Harbormaster

Michael O'Connor

Police Department

Consultant in Attendance:

Geoffrey Steadman

1. **Meeting called to order at 5:02 P.M. by Chairman Bruce Angiolillo**
2. **Continuation of Discussion of “Greenwich Waterfront Business Zone (WB) Study, Recommended Zoning Revisions, Updated June 21, 2018” and proposed next steps.**

Chairman Angiolillo reported that since the Commission’s regular monthly meeting on September 19, he, Lile Gibbons and Frank Mazza visited Ebb Tide Marina on South Water Street in Byram at the invitation of the owners to get their perspective on the existing WB zoning restrictions and proposed changes.

Chairman Angiolillo then invited a continuation of the discussion of the proposed changes to the existing WB zoning and invited Katie DeLuca to participate. Chairman Angiolillo stated that he had noticed this Special Meeting in order to give the Commission the opportunity to express its views on the proposed changes to the WB zoning in advance of the upcoming October 30 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, at which the proposed changes may be considered. Katie DeLuca then advised the Commission that after hearing views expressed at the Commission’s September 19 meeting, as well as the views of others, it was now her intention not to present the proposed changes on October 30, but to circulate a further draft in the coming weeks. She again thanked the Commission for its participation and support.

Extended discussion followed, which addressed a range of issues and concerns.

Frank Mazza again stated that he is concerned about the proposed deletion in Sec. 6-107(a)(4) of the following language: “*...and to assure that these limited waterfront areas are reserved for the uses they are uniquely suited for and are not pre-empted by uses which can be more appropriately located elsewhere.*” He believes that the removal of that language risks constituting “the death knell” for traditional waterfront use in Greenwich. Acknowledging this concern, Katie DeLuca stated that this language should be restored and not deleted,

Focusing on Byram, Ms. DeLuca reviewed the existing conforming and non-conforming uses along South Water Street, the practical limitations on development there, including flood plain building limitations, street access, the inventory of potential redevelopment parcels, parking, and the conditions of the Byram River itself. Chairman Angiolillo agreed that South Water Street is presently “a mishmash”.

Using Ebb Tide as a hypothetical example, Lile Gibbons asked what would happen to its existing boat slips if the proposed changes to the WB zoning were approved and the property was redeveloped as something other than as a traditional marine business. Katie DeLuca replied that she expected that the slips would be required to remain in place.

Ms. DeLuca also stated that, if zoning changes are made, they should require that any new construction in the Byram WB Zone provide that the first floor be exclusively dedicated to a water related use. Offices and residential uses on the first floor would not be permitted. Lile Gibbons expressed her view that if housing is permitted on a second floor, then offices should be permitted there as well.

Ms. DeLuca reported that proposed change in base elevation for development in a flood hazard zone is going to be withdrawn, as there does not appear to be support for this change with the Planning & Zoning Commission.

In response to the discussion regarding Byram, Frank Mazza reviewed the decline in the number of boat slips in Greenwich Harbor and on the Mianus River in Cos Cob. He expressed his opinion that Byram is headed in the same direction.

Regarding redevelopment along the Byram River, Katie DeLuca shared her perspective that the physical limitations and constraints of the neighborhood and river suggest that zoning should be refocused to some extent from looking outward toward the river to looking inward toward the neighborhood.

Several members of the Commission returned to the question of whether the Town had exhausted its ability to provide economic incentives to waterfront property owners to encourage the development and preservation of traditional waterfront businesses. Katie DeLuca reiterated that she has been advised that tax incentives are unavailable without special legislation by the Connecticut Legislature. Chairman Angiolillo encouraged Ms. DeLuca to obtain formal legal advice from the Town's Law Department so as to clarify the matter. He noted that if the Town wished to impose an economic burden on a property owner for the benefit of the entire community, there should be ways to ameliorate that burden on the property owner to some extent.

Given that the redevelopment of the Row America property on River Road in Cos Cob had stalled, Bill Ingraham asked Katie DeLuca to address the status of that project. Ms. DeLuca stated that the project that had been approved required that the first floor be dedicated to the rowing activities, a traditional water dependent use. She expressed her view that Row America had concluded that the approved project may not be economical and that it had decided to wait to see what came out of the current review of the WB zoning.

Ms. DeLuca discussed the focus in the proposed WB zoning changes on supporting pedestrian walkways, emphasizing, in particular, the walkway developed along the Mianus River in Cos Cob. Bill Ingraham expressed his view that walkways are not a substitute for marinas, boat yards and traditional waterfront businesses. Bernie Armstrong asked how effective the existing walkway requirements are. Katie DeLuca stated they are working well, especially in Cos Cob.

Regarding the proposed reduction in the number of parking spaces required currently under the existing WB zoning regulations, Katie DeLuca stated that some reduction makes sense, given that many, if not the majority, of boats remain at their slips most weekends. She stated that she did not believe that there is support within the Planning & Zoning Commission at this point to reduce the parking requirements at marinas from 1.5 to .5 per boat slip. She said, more likely, there will be support to reduce the ratio from 1.5 to 1. Bill Ingraham commented that a consequence of reducing the number of parking spaces would be the reduction of the amount of space available to store, display and service boats during the off season, adding to the negative pressures on boating.

Given Ms. DeLuca's comments at the outset, Bernie Armstrong inquired about her process going forward. Katie DeLuca reported she would like to circulate an additional draft of proposed changes to the WB zoning regulations, incorporating the comments she has received, and do so by the end of October. She stated that she hoped to then put the proposed amendments on the agenda for November 8th Planning & Zoning Commission meeting.

Public Comment:

Tav Passarelli of Ebb Tide Marina commented that some boating-related services can be provided upland. He offered boat storage as an example. He stated that he supports reducing the parking requirement ratio from 1.5 to .5. He stated that he supports the current draft's Public Access requirements.

Alan Drenckhahn expressed his opinion that the WB Zone is not, and never was a good idea. He believes it is a burden and too restrictive. Referring to his own waterfront property on River Road in Cos Cob, he believes that he should be allowed to have a restaurant or other activities in addition to his boat yard and marina. He commented that "times have changed."

A motion to adjourn was made by Lile Gibbons, seconded by Bernie Armstrong to adjourn. Motion carried (Unanimous).

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Bruce Angiolillo
Chairman

Mike Van Oss
Secretary

Penny Monahan assisted the Secretary in the preparation of these minutes.