

*RECEIVED August 10, 2022 2:33 PM.
Kimberly Keil, Assistant Redding Town Clerk*

Redding Planning Commission

Redding Center, Connecticut 06875-1028

Meeting Minutes

August 9, 2022 - 7:30 P.M.

Town Hall Hearing Room

100 Hill Road – Redding, Connecticut

Present: Dan Barrett, Chairman; Regina O’Brien, Secretary; Commissioner Chuck Cilo; Commissioner Steve Gagnon; Commissioner Roger Van Ausdal; Alternate Jim Bacon.

Also Present: Julia Pemberton, First Selectman; Peg O’Donnell, Selectman; Aimee Pardee, Land Use Director; members of the public.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. All regular members of the commission were seated.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

July 26, 2022 Regular Meeting. The Chairman noted that Chuck Cilo, who at the time was an alternate, was seated for the vacant seat on the commission; Mr. Cilo has since been appointed to that seat.

July 30, 2022 Special Meeting/Site Walk. There were no corrections made.

The Chairman declared the meetings approved as corrected.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Referral from Board of Selectmen. In accordance with CGS 8-24, referral of proposed improvements at Topstone Park, 72 Topstone Road: replacement of existing playground equipment, addition of bear-proof garbage containers, addition of baby changing facilities, and addition of benches. *For discussion.*

The Chairman noted that the commission has 35 days to provide a report to the selectmen but further noted that the clock has not started since the commission has not received a written referral. The commission then proceeded with a discussion.

Mr. Gagnon asked about the parameters of the discussion: whether the commissioners should be strictly framing their discussion within the context of the Town Plan of Development (“The Plan”), or whether personal opinion should be considered. Mr. VanAusdal also asked for clarification, noting that his grandchildren had mentioned the desire for a pavilion at Topstone Park. Ms. Pardee opined that the discussion should be kept to the agenda items as they relate to The Plan, keeping in mind the role of other boards such as the Board of Selectmen and Park and Rec.

Ms. O'Brien asked if the proposed playground could only be used during the summer season which lead to a general discussion of seasonal accessibility to the proposed playground, and also grounds maintenance, off-season access to bathroom facilities and garbage removal.

The commission discussed possible tree removal. Ms. O'Brien noted the "arboreal feeling" of the park, with Mr. Cilo and the Chairman suggesting that healthy trees should not be removed. There was concern expressed by several commissioners regarding the size of the proposed playground and maintenance of the proposed equipment. Mr. VanAusdal expressed support for adding benches and changing facilities.

The Chairman expressed concern regarding the management of the project and his belief that, as a town property, Topstone Park improvements should be managed by a town entity.

Ms. O'Donnell asked the commission about the possible addition of "bear proof" garbage cans, noting that there is a dumpster on site. There was a general discussion of garbage management on town properties.

The commission will continue discussion once the referral is received from the Board of Selectmen.

2. Continued Discussion regarding Short-Term Rentals. Letter received from Andrew Reisini, 5 South Lane, raising the need for regulation of short-term rentals. *For discussion.*

The Chairman stated that he had been looking at how this issue is handled in other towns, and that he had also read related materials that had been issued by two of the state councils of government. Ms. Pardee said that, currently, the zoning regulations do not adequately address short-term rentals. Mr. Bacon said that he had quite a few questions about how the town would manage such rentals.

The Chairman suggested that this issue should be studied by a committee created by the Board of Selectmen. He suggested the make up of the committee. After a general concurrence by the commission, The Chairman suggested the following statement:

- The Planning Commission recommends that the Redding Board of Selectman establish a Short-Term Rental Committee to research the relevant issues and draft a proposal to the town regarding the regulation of short-term rentals in Redding.
- We further recommend that the Committee include, at minimum, one representative each from Planning, Zoning, and the newly established Economic Development Committee, as well as the Zoning Enforcement Officer.
- If the town should hire a planner, then consideration should be given as to whether and how they participate.

Mr. Gagnon moved that the commission adopt the statement and make the stated recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Cilo seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/DISCUSSION

1. Discussion of Letter from Commissioner VanAusdal regarding possible actions by the Planning Commission.

The Chairman introduced a letter that had been drafted by Mr. VanAusdal regarding possible Planning Commission projects. Mr. VanAusdal noted that he had also discussed his ideas with First Selectman Julia Pemberton.

The Chairman reviewed the subjects of the letter. The first item was possible changes to the area of the memorial green at Cross Highway and Lonetown Road. Ms. Pardee stated that she would refer the ideas to the Town Historian and Town Historical Consultant.

The next item of discussion from the letter was the center of West Redding. Ms. Pemberton noted challenges such as the need for the post office to access their parking area with trucks but also spoke in support of creating a park south of the post office on Simpaug Turnpike. She also noted that the Economic Development Committee being formed will be discussing West Redding. Ms. Pardee stated that preliminary plans have been received for the re-building of 3 Side Cut Road.

The last item of discussion from the letter was the Gilbert and Bennett property. The Chairman said that an advisory committee has been created for steering the town's actions regarding the property. Ms. Pemberton updated the commission noting that Tighe & Bond, the firm that has done the Phase 1 environmental review, is working on next steps and also writing the next grant applications. The Chairman asked about hiring a planner; Ms. Pemberton said that the scope of a planner's participation is still being evaluated ie: if a firm is needed for a master plan or if a consultant could suffice. She noted that Tracy Kulikowski, a Redding resident who is also a planner and attorney for the Town of Weston, has recently agreed to serve on the Gilbert and Bennett Advisory Committee.

As a last note, Ms. Pemberton stated that the Georgetown Bible Church has a contract buyer: the buyer is a foundation dedicated to art and music education.

Concluding the discussion of Mr. VanAusdal's letter, the Chairman suggested that commission members review the recommendations section of the The Plan to see if there are any action items that they think should be prioritized at this time.

2. Chairman's Comments.

The Chairman had no further comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Submitted by,
Aimee Pardee