

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**MADISON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PLANNING MEETING MINUTES  
Aug. 4, 2016**

The regular planning meeting of the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission was conducted Thursday, Aug. 4, 2016, at 7 p.m., in Meeting Rooms A and B at Madison Town Campus.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chairman Ronald Clark, Vice Chairman Francine Larson, Thomas Burland, John K. Mathers, and Joseph Bunovsky, Jr.

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Secretary Christopher Traugh, James Matteson, Amanda Kaplan, and Joel Miller

**ALTERNATES PRESENT**

Richard Chorney and Brian Richardson

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson

---

The planning meeting of the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order at approximately 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Ronald Clark.

**Planning Subcommittee Breakout Work Sessions:**

**Planning Subcommittee A (Room A) – Review of potential development sites for higher density residential development.** Commissioners on this subcommittee include Thomas Burland, Richard Chorney and Joseph Bunovsky Jr.

Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson explained the discussion centered on opportunities to increase residential density in the residential zoning districts (R-1 to R-5). Mr. Anderson explained that he reviewed all properties that contained a minimum of four acres in the residential zoning districts, and approximately sixteen parcels had the potential to lend themselves to higher density residential development, according to Mr. Anderson. Subcommittee commissioners went through each of the parcels to determine whether they would be comfortable if someone came through with an application for such development at these sites. It was determined these parcels do lend themselves favorably to higher density residential development, Mr. Anderson stated. They would have the potential to support higher density residential development, once the Planning and Zoning Commission crafted the regulation, according to Mr. Anderson. While state regulations are stringent in calling for 30 percent of a higher density residential development to be affordable, it is possible for Madison to craft a regulation that would specify that only 20 percent be affordable, according to Mr. Anderson; lowering the percentage might make it more feasible for developers to become involved in creating such housing.

**Planning Subcommittee B (Room B) – Continue discussing sign regulations.** Commissioners on this subcommittee include Vice Chairman Francine Larson, Chairman Ronald Clark, John K. Mathers, and Brian Richardson.

Vice Chairman Larson stated that at the previous subcommittee meeting, they had considered creating sign regulations that would be less complex and simpler. However, she believes it will be very difficult to be simple, given the options there are available for signage. Commissioner Richardson stated that the subcommittee needs to find a town whose regulations Madison could adopt. Chairman Clark stated it would be helpful to know what are the problems the town has with the current sign regulations. There are challenges with flashing signs, neon signs, and lit signs, Commissioner Mathers stated. Madison has a downtown village district which should be a little more carefully managed; the open, neon, and flashing signs might work well in some areas of town, but not in the downtown village district, Chairman Clark stated. Commissioner Richardson suggested the little signs with the wires, which crop up all over town, should not be allowed at all. Animated signs are concern, Commissioner Mathers stated, adding that Hilton Head, South Carolina, is a town which has done well in regulating signs. It is nice to have downtown retain its quaintness, Commissioner Mathers stated. Litchfield and Monroe are two towns in Connecticut that appear to have good sign regulations, according to the commissioners.

Vice Chairman Larson quoted a definition from Litchfield, as follows, "Signs shall be used only for goods sold, services rendered, or establishments on the premises and shall be accessory to a use only on the premises." Monroe goes further in its definitions by placing more details inside bulleted passages; it also defines agricultural signs, animated or moving signs, and billboard signs. Litchfield's sign definitions include pictures. Vice Chairman Larson stated she likes the way Monroe's is written because it is cleaner, and it defines every sign, including lights. In Madison's sign definitions, string or festoon lighting is not permitted, she stated. Signs commissioners stated they do not like are the sandwich board signs, A-frame signs, LED open signs, and flashing signs. Vice Chairman Larson asked if merchandise on the sidewalk is considered a sign. Chairman Clark stated such merchandise would be considered a display. He also suggested input be sought from the Economic Development Commission and the Chamber of Commerce. Monroe has a definition for an illuminated sign and an internally illuminated sign, Commissioner Mathers explained.

In conclusion, the subcommittee outlined its future needs: Commissioners would like to see the full Monroe sign regulations; commissioners agree the Downtown Village District should have separate and more stringent sign regulations; at this point, it appears Monroe would be the template to start with; and commissioners did see some regulations of Litchfield that seemed helpful, especially sign sizes, so perhaps the next step, after receiving the full Monroe sign regulation document, would be to compare Monroe and Litchfield and then look at Madison's, to determine what changes should be made.

### **Brief report from Subcommittee Breakout Work Sessions.**

Commissioner Mathers, regarding sign regulations, stated that the subcommittee would like to know specifically what are the zoning enforcement officer's biggest concerns and complaints about the current sign regulations. The zoning enforcement officer knows what is good about the current regulations and what is bad about them, and his assistance will be needed in critiquing the subcommittee's work, according to Chairman Clark. The future needs of the subcommittee were summarized, and Mr. Anderson stated that Zoning Enforcement Officer John De Laura and he could take that direction and obtain the Monroe sign regulations, so work is able to continue. Vice Chairman Larson explained that the subcommittee has Monroe's sign definitions but not its regulations, and it has all of Litchfield's regulations; the subcommittee would like to see how

*Page 2. Madison Planning and Zoning Commission, Planning Meeting, Aug. 4, 2016*

Monroe applies its definitions to its regulations. Mr. Anderson stated that the sign approval process also needs to be revised, because it is a lengthy process for business owners to have to go through ACCA; perhaps the process should be handled administratively. One problem is that those applying for signs do not realize that ACCA is an advisory committee and that ACCA has no regulatory power, according to Chairman Clark. A new sign regulation could dictate the sign application and approval process, Mr. Anderson stated. Vice Chairman Larson stated that she would like to see what an applicant is given for process, when applying for a sign. Mr. Anderson stated that a thorough discussion is needed in this area, and he would also like the town attorney to review whatever the commission creates; in addition, input should be received from the Economic Development Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and local business owners, to determine what might be the issues in the process. Signs change quite a bit, every time a business changes, Mr. Anderson stated.

Regarding the affordable housing, Mr. Anderson summarized the discussion that was centered on how to increase residential density. A total of 16 four-acre parcels have been identified as lending themselves favorably to higher density residential development, and between 30 to 40 one and two bedroom units could be built, which could include affordable housing in the mix. Mr. Anderson stated there is a need in town for affordable housing and for higher density residential development.

**Remarks:** SCROG Regional Planning Agency (Chris Traugh, P&Z Rep.) ~ No report.  
Commissioner Chair ~ No report.

Town Planner ~ Mr. Anderson reported Landon Lumber will appear before ACCA for an architectural review and then come before the Planning and Zoning Commission in September; Joseph Milano is expected to have an application for Sunrise; and a zone change application is expected for 59 Boston Post Road to make it fully commercial, with retail, restaurants, and apartments above.

Other Comments ~ None.

## **Adjournment**

**Vice Chairman Larson made the motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.; it was seconded by Commissioner Bunovsky and unanimously approved.**

Vote to adjourn passed, 7-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Clark, Vice Chairman Larson, and Commissioners Burland, Chorney, Richardson, Bunovsky, and Mathers.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marlene H. Kennedy, clerk