

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**MADISON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PLANNING MEETING MINUTES
Sept. 1, 2016**

The regular planning meeting of the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission was conducted Thursday, Sept. 1, 2016, at 7 p.m., in Meeting Rooms A and B at Madison Town Campus.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Ronald Clark, Vice Chairman Francine Larson, James Matteson, and Joel Miller.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Secretary Christopher Traugh, Thomas Burland, Amanda Kaplan, John K. Mathers, and Joseph Bunovsky, Jr.

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Richard Chorney and Elliott Hitchcock

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.

8-24 Referral—Discuss and take action on an 8-24 Referral from the Board of Selectmen regarding purchase of 351 Copse Road (known as the “LeSage Property”). The parcel is located in an RU-2 Zoning District, totals approximately 8.4 acres, has frontage on both Copse Road and Green Hill Road, and abuts the Green Hill Road school campus.

Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson explained that an 8-24 Referral is part of the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 8-24, which requires Planning Commission approval before a town purchases land, wants to construct a building, or complete a land-use project; in this case, the Planning Commission has to see if the town proposal is within the guidelines of the Madison’s Plan of Conservation and Development. Since the 8.4 acres is adjacent to two public schools and currently has two ball fields on it, which the town of Madison constructed and maintains, Mr. Anderson stated that it meets the Plan of Conservation and Development under the category *Maintain Excellence in Community Programs*, part D of “Continue These Policies,” on page 12 of the plan: *D. Consider acquiring land adjacent to existing facilities to enable future expansion since it will be more efficient and economical than establishing new facilities elsewhere.* The town has been leasing half of the property for 10 years, under a lease to purchase plan; the town has assessed it at \$470,000, and it is expected to cost \$800,000 for the town to purchase it. Mr. Anderson stated that the fact that the property could be subdivided is the reason the sale price is \$800,000. There is also a house on the property, which Commissioner Joel Miller stated is historic, having been built between the late 1700s and early 1800s. Once the Planning Commission approves the 8-24 referral, Mr. Anderson stated that it will go before the Board of Selectmen for approval and then to the Board of Finance and town meeting for purchase. Currently, there is no specific proposal for the future

use of this parcel, Mr. Anderson stated, but the Board of Education has been in the midst of a school consolidation study, and the land at this site could be used to build a new elementary school, if the consolidation study recommends closure of the three elementary schools now in use, for the construction of one elementary school at the Green Hill Road school campus site. He stressed that no specific project is planned, however.

Chairman Clark explained that this 8-24 referral is before the Planning Commission as town purchase or ownership of the parcel as it currently exists, and the planning commissioners are not to be acting on any use other than the fact that the site currently has two ball fields and will continue to be used for two ball fields—unless the Planning Commission receives another 8-24 referral from the town for a new use. All other uses beyond the current situation would go through the Planning and Zoning Commission for approval. Mr. Anderson stated that this 8-24 referral is simply acquisition of the property, not the house; any disposition of the house, for instance, would also have to go through the same 8-24 referral process. Mr. Anderson explained that the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance have decided purchase of this parcel is a priority for them; he, himself, was not a part of the negotiations involved in purchasing the piece. Commissioner Miller stated that there is no planning function in this request. Chairman Clark stated that the plan is simply that the town is leasing the property now with playing fields, and the plan is to buy it so the town can continue to use it for playing fields.

Mr. Anderson explained that from a land use standpoint, if the town buys the parcel and decides, for instance, to build a school, the town would have to submit an 8-24 referral and a special exception application to the Planning and Zoning Commission to expand the use of the land to build a school; the town could also decide to use the property for housing for the elderly, if it desired, which would also require Planning and Zoning Commission approval.

Commissioner Richard Chorney made the motion to approve the 8-24 Referral with a favorable report; it was seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock and unanimously approved.

Vote to approve the 8-24 Referral passed, 6-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Clark, Vice Chairman Francine Larson, and Commissioners Hitchcock, Chorney, James Matteson, and Miller.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

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

Commission Chair ~ No report.

Town Planner ~ No report.

Other Comments ~ None.

Planning Subcommittee Breakout Work Sessions:

- a. Planning Subcommittee A (Room A) – Continue discussion regarding housing diversity and affordability.**
- b. Planning Subcommittee B (Room B) – Continue discussing sign regulations.**

Brief report from Subcommittee Breakout Work Sessions.

Due to limited attendance, with subcommittee commissioners missing, it was decided that the regular planning subcommittee agenda items would be suspended, in favor of discussion on next steps to take in the areas of sign regulations and housing diversity and affordability.

Regarding the signs, Mr. Anderson stated that he and Zoning Enforcement Officer John De Laura received copies of the Monroe and Litchfield sign regulations and would be providing them to the commissioners for review. In addition, both Mr. Anderson and Mr. De Laura went through Madison's existing sign regulations, line by line, and made suggestions for possible revisions, which the commissioners will also receive. Mr. Anderson asked the commissioners to collectively or individually take a field trip around town to formulate their thoughts and ideas about the aesthetics of what currently exists, regarding signs; he also plans to consult with the town attorney as to the direction the town can take with sign regulations. Once that is completed, it will help the commission to determine ACCA's role; ACCA is advisory to the Planning and Zoning Commission, Mr. Anderson stated. Furthermore, it is important to reach out to the Economic Development Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, local property and business owners, and residents, for their opinions, Mr. Anderson stated. Once all of that is complete, the Planning and Zoning Commission could start crafting its sign regulations to the way the town would want them to be approved, for instance, signs allowed as by right, signs which only need land use administrative approval, and signs that require Planning and Zoning Commission approval, according to Mr. Anderson, who then gave commissioners a handout of the work done thus far.

Regarding the housing diversity and affordability discussion, Mr. Anderson stated that he wants to adopt a regulation for the small house concept. Two contractors have expressed an interest in the small house concept, he stated. Mr. Anderson asked the Planning and Zoning Commission for permission to put together a draft regulation for these small houses, which the commission could review in October. Prior to that, it would be important to invite the senior commission to attend a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to talk about the needs for housing diversity and affordability, and that discussion would provide suggestions and feedback, according to Mr. Anderson. One important concept is that the houses be well done architecturally, he stated. By December, ideas could be discussed with developers, to see if they believe this is something the market could support, Mr. Anderson stated. Chairman Clark stated that these are single-family homes designed to be more affordable. Mr. Anderson stated one idea to consider would be allowing higher density on lots—for instance, on a lot where one house would usually be allowed, the Planning and Zoning Commission could allow two houses. Commissioner Matteson stated that the subcommittee also discussed creating single-family homes with square foot limits. Chairman Clark stated that he would be interested in feedback from developers regarding price range.

Adjournment

Commissioner Matteson made the motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.; it was seconded by Commissioner Chorney and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn passed, 6-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Clark, Vice Chairman Francine Larson, and Commissioners Hitchcock, Chorney, James Matteson, and Miller.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy, clerk