

**TOWN OF SALEM
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

PRESENT

Vernon Smith, Chair
John Gadbois, Vice Chairman
Margaret Caron, Secretary
Carl S. Fontneau
Diba Khan-Bureau
Thomas Reith
Walter Volberg
Jennifer Lindo, Alternate

ABSENT

Michael Flugrad, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

Town Planner Justin LaFountain

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: *none*

If preferred, public comment may be submitted in writing through the contact form at this link: <https://www.salemct.gov/user/127/contactor> via the white drop box in front of Town Hall, prior to 7pm.

4. PUBLIC HEARING: *none*

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

a. Meeting Minutes: June 15, 2021

M/S/C: Fontneau/Khan-Bureau, to approve the June 15, 2021 Planning & Zoning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: A photograph of Chairman Smith's diagram will be submitted to the Town Clerk's office and included with the minutes for the record. Voice vote, 5-0-2, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Commissioners Caron, Fontneau, Khan-Bureau, Smith, and Volberg. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Commissioners Gadbois and Reith.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

Chairman Smith confirmed that he would be the liaison to the Board of Education.

The Commissioners reviewed the maps created by SCCOG's (Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments) GIS Specialist and agreed on the following preferences/edits:

- Directional symbol as indicated on the Landcover Map
- Bolder, larger font style for the top headings
- Farmland Soils Map: placement of the streets above the soil classifications
- Non-italicized, bolder, larger font style for headings located below the maps
- Open Space Map: Percentages of Open Space lands that are permanently protected will be incorporated within the text of the document; land that is owned by the Town of Salem will not be included in the percentages
- Utilize larger font as often as possible in the map legends
- Critical Habitat Map: credit the DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection); list the endangered and/or threatened species either in the text of the document or on the map
- Regional Watersheds Map: include information of the surrounding towns; eliminate the categories in the legend that do not pertain to the town
- Map of Cemeteries: maintain consistency in thickness of roads
- Areas at Risk of Flooding Map: more distinction/contrast between colors; eliminate categories in the legend that do not pertain to the map

The maps are slated for completion by the end of September.

Commissioner Fontneau stated that the section regarding Transportation and Road Network does not yet have a liaison. In response to Commissioner Gadbois, Chapter 10 will be dedicated to Recreation.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. New Legislation Updates

Town Planner LaFountain reminded the Commissioners of the necessary changes that must be made to their current Zoning Regulations to align with the recently passed legislation and to consider whether they would like to make all of the changes at one time or over the course of the designated time period.

The State's new Cannabis Legislation, which is somewhat complicated, was also passed. Should towns do nothing and not address the sale of cannabis in their Regulations, such venues would be considered retail stores. Towns may also opt to prohibit or make special exception categories for such businesses. It was noted that

10% of the town's registered voters may request a referendum via a petition to vote to overturn the Commission's decision. Towns might also place a moratorium, stating that the particular regulation is on hold for a defined period, pending further research and/or investigation.

In an informal vote, Commissioner Caron was in favor of allowing the sale of cannabis, citing the town's other businesses, including the gun store, pawnshop, shooting range, package store, smoke shop, and massage parlor, and felt it would be discriminatory should it not be allowed. Commissioners Gadbois and Smith opposed allowing the sale of cannabis in town. Commissioners Fontneau, Khan-Bureau, Lindo, and Volberg were in favor of allowing the sale of cannabis, with special exceptions. Commissioner Reith was also opposed to allowing the sale of cannabis, but was open to allowing the sale of cannabis, with special exceptions.

Town Planner LaFountain stated that, per the legislation, no stores would open prior to 2022. He was unclear as to the lottery process to obtain a license, but stated that the approval process is very cumbersome and expensive. For such a business to establish itself within a town, the business must, first, obtain State approval, followed by approval from the town's Zoning Department/Commission, and final approval by the State. Based on their informal consensus and discussion, Town Planner LaFountain will create a draft regulation for the Commission to review and discuss.

Discussion ensued regarding the Affordable Housing Plan. Commissioner Fontneau questioned how the new regulation regarding accessory apartments is considered a way for towns to meet their affordable housing goals. In addition, the newly released index makes it more difficult for towns located in Eastern Connecticut to receive CHFA (Connecticut Housing Finance Authority) mortgages, which is where the majority of affordable housing goals are met. Town Planner LaFountain agreed, adding that the existing 10% figure is more of a goal, rather than a mandatory figure. The purpose of the Plan is to state ways in which the town aims to expand affordable housing. The Town currently has approximately 1.9% affordable housing.

8. ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT/INLAND WETLANDS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT – no report

9. TOWN PLANNER REPORT

Town Planner LaFountain reminded the Commission to review his memo regarding the new legislation updates and encouraged them to continue working on the POCD.

In response to Commissioner Fontneau, Town Planner LaFountain stated that the Town Attorney has not yet been consulted with regarding his belief that the regulation of certain types of signs is not akin to regulating the message.

10. CORRESPONDENCE: *none*

11. PUBLIC COMMENT: *none*

12. PLUS DELTAS: *none*

13. ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C: Khan-Bureau/Caron, to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem