

Town of Constantia Zoning Commission

Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2023

Call to Order

Chairman Peck opened the meeting at 6:02pm

Attendees

Voting members in attendance included:

- Chairman James Peck
- Dave Antos
- Dan Poné
- Sandra Retajczyk
- Sandra Williams
- Joe Markham
- Terri John
- Jeff Rumble

Guests in attendance included: Frank Tomaino (Town Supervisor) and Amy Connolly (Secretary)

- Members not in attendance included: Sandra Tuori-Bell, Martin Godzwon, Randall West, and Brien Connolly.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous October 24, 2023 meeting was made by Dave Antos and seconded by Joe Markham. Motion passed unanimously.

General Information

Members discussed that this will be Mr. Poné's last Zoning Commission. He was elected to the Town Board and is therefore resigning his seat on the Zoning Commission.

Mr. Peck stated that the Town has purchased the former St. Bernadette's church which will provide much needed space. Mr. Peck has been advocating for an improved record keeping system for files related to Planning Board and Board of Appeals functions. He has been looking into information for a digital system that would allow for better access. Williamston software currently used by the Town and other municipalities will not meet the needs as was hoped. Mr. Peck found that state level grants exist for records inventory and storage, and may be applied for annually. Realistically, Mr. Peck believes digitization would not happen for about 2 years. It is currently not possible to access Town Planning and Code Enforcement records that are more than a couple of years old and existing physical storage is inadequate.

Zoning Discussion

Commission members submitted questions via email to Town of West Monroe Supervisor, Vern Sundet. The submitted questions and answers were discussed. Mr. Peck stated that he would like a large-scale map to work from, he would like to mark the existing businesses in town and other existing land uses that would fit into the four types of land use areas defined in the Town of West Monroe Zoning Law. Mr. Markham pointed out that there are several areas along the waterfront that have or could have dense development in future. It is likely that there will be complaints from the public after they feel affected. Discussion about the grandfathering of existing businesses in areas that will exclude current land uses. Discussion regarding

whether and how housing developments might be restricted. Access to municipal water and the future sewer are limited and may factor in these decisions.

Mr. Rumble asked why the Town is creating zoning. What is the goal? He feels that this needs to be defined before answering some of the questions posed. Is the goal to keep new people out, to attract new people, to increase or decrease property values, etc? He notes that there is a fine line between protecting property rights and restricting use. Figuring out what the goals are may be the best place to start.

Mr. Peck states that a good place to start is the existing Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Law. Information about the Town's goals can be found within and these adopted laws must be followed in the creation of Zoning. He reminded members that the Zoning Law will replace the Land Development Law once completed and adopted by the Town Board.

Discussion regarding maximum number of households for development and limiting density. Mr. Rumble states that these decisions have the potential to drive property values up or down. He believes that the process needs to be driven by the overall goal. Mr. Markham states that the Commission should be keeping the best interests of current residents in mind, the public could simply be asked. Mr. Rumble agrees that asking the public is a great place to start. Hotels along waterfront, as opposed to single family homes, given as an example of something likely not desired by residents. Members agree that the public should be engaged early in this process. Mr. Peck stated that he hoped to begin formally engaging the public in February. Members agree that the public should be actively engaged though more than the typically published legal notices. Town Website and Facebook should be utilized.

Mr. Peck states that the Tug Hill Commission has a map which shows soil conditions, designating arable land. Discussion regarding siting of potential solar and wind generation and what the existing Land Development Law already allows and restricts. Maps in the Comprehensive Plan include wetlands, population density, etc. Mr. Peck encouraged all members to attend the Tug Hill Commission's Local Government Conference as many of the education sessions apply to Planning and Zoning.

Further discussion of engaging public. Ms. Retajczyk asked how public input would be sought for the February meeting. Conversing at the meeting, a survey? The potential to use Google Forms for survey questions was suggested. Members discuss what questions they would want to have the public answer. It was noted that there will likely be a number of repetitive answers as well as some that have little information, context, or seriousness. Secretary Connolly noted that the responses would be part of the public record. Links to the Comprehensive Plan and LDL were suggested to be included with the questions. A deadline will be set to receive comments so that they can be reviewed prior to the meeting. Secretary Connolly to create the Google Forms survey once questions have been decided on. Members recognize the need to set a road map or schedule for the Commission.

Mr. Markham asks is there is a limit to the amount of water can be distributed and used in the community per OCWA? Supervisor Tomaino states that he can get the information tomorrow. Mr. Markham states that concern needs to be for the community's needs, not the wants of Micron or others.

Mr. Poné states that he believes that the point of Zoning is to protect certain types of uses from other types of uses. Mr. Peck- "Incompatible uses" Mr. Poné states that he feels it all comes down to the table of the 4 distinct uses which is seen in the Town of West Monroe Zoning Law.

Commission members decide that before the next meeting they need to come up with ideas for questions to ask of the public. Mr. Sundet is set to attend the Commission meeting in January. Mr. Markham states that the notice to the public will need to be drafted at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Joe Markham moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Sandra Williams. Members voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:03pm.

Amy Connolly

Secretary

Town of Constantia Zoning Commission

Date of Approval