



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
May 12, 2022, 6pm
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall
350 East Main Road
Middletown, RI 02842

Board members present:

Paul Croce, Chair
Bill Nash, Vice Chair
Michael Fenton, Secretary
Art Weber
B.J. Owen
John Ciummo
Joe Pierik

Ron Wolanski, Town Planner
Peter Regan, Town Solicitor

Mr. Croce called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

1. Discussion and recommendation to the Town Council on the “Middletown Center” development concept plan. Property also known as the West Main Main/Coddington development center, fronting on West Main Rd. and Coddington Highway, Assessor’s Plat 102, Lots 3,4,5,6,7.
 - a. Mr. Croce provided introductory remarks regarding the Planning Board’s review and the purpose of this meeting, which is for Planning Board deliberations. In addition to the information previously provided by the development team, there will be consideration of public input received during the April 21st public workshop and all written comments received. No additional public input will be received during this meeting. He noted that the Board had previously voted to find the concept plan to be generally consistent with the Middletown Comprehensive Community Plan. He opened the floor for Planning Board discussion.
 - b. Mr. Weber stated that the size of the proposed hotel should be reduced. Pottsy Field should be rededicated on another site in Middletown. The proposed new library building should be larger than indicated on the concept plan. The amount and type of affordable housing to be included in the development must be determined.
 - c. Mr. Croce referred to draft recommendations that he had prepared prior to the meeting for the Board’s consideration.
 - d. Ms. Owen stated that the project should focus on traffic impacts and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The size of the hotel should be reduced, and the library should be sized to meet the community’s needs.

- e. Mr. Ciummo stated that he supports the concept, provided that the size of the library is increased, and it is located in a more prominent location. Pottsy Field must be relocated and rededicated.
- f. Mr. Nash stated that he supports the concept plan. The size of the library and its potential uses should be decided in consultation with the Town. The hotel use is acceptable, but the location should be reconsidered.
- g. Mr. Fenton stated that the concept is acceptable. He noted the need for additional housing in the community. A solution is needed for relocating the uses currently occupying the former JFK school building.
- h. Mr. Pierik stated that he supports the concept subject to details being evaluated, including traffic impacts, and need to accommodate community uses.
- i. Ms. Owen suggested that the library could be moved to the Gaudet Middle School campus.
- j. Mr. Croce stated that the Board had received a lot of helpful public input. It appears that the developer team is willing to work with the Town to address concerns. He agreed that Pottsy Field should be relocated. He suggested that the Board review the draft recommendations he provided.
- k. The Board discussed each of the draft recommendations. Following discussion and modifications to the list, the following list of recommendations was considered for referral to the Town Council:
 - i. There is general concern about the traffic that will be added to West Main Road. A careful traffic study for this development should be submitted and reviewed by an independent expert. The study should address east-to-west pedestrian connectivity across West Main Road.
 - ii. There is not much support for the hotel among residents; however, if there must be a hotel in the Middletown Center development, it should not be the prominent structure of the development.
 - iii. The West Main-Coddington intersection, as the gateway to Middletown, should present the appearance of a Town Center.
 - iv. The new library should be designed to be a state-of-the-art facility that meets the needs of the residents of Middletown, with adequate space for community activities.
 - v. Open green space for community use should be provided, including possibly securing use of the Navy-owned open space to the west of the JFK school building.
 - vi. Preferably, more than 10% of residential units should qualify under the State's definition of affordable housing.
 - vii. Retail space providing services to local residents is seen as favorable.
 - viii. All current community activities and facilities that are displaced by this project, particularly Pottsy Field, should be accommodated either within this development or in an appropriate location elsewhere in the Town.

ix. The swimming pool and the bike lane on West Main and Coddington depicted in the concept submission do not seem to be popular or have high priority among residents.

I. **Motion** by Mr. Ciummo, seconded by Ms. Owen to approve and forward the Board's recommendations to the Town Council for consideration. **Vote:** 7-0-0.

Motion by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Ciummo to adjourn. Vote: 7-0-0

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Fenton, Secretary

DRAFT