

**COVENTRY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER

By: Pollansky

Time: 7:04 p.m.

Place: Town Hall Annex & Zoom

		PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Bill Jobbagy, Chairperson		X
	Brian Murray	X	
	Darby Pollansky, Vice Chairperson	X	
	Carol Polsky, Secretary	X	
	Eric Thomas	X	
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Steve Reviczky	X	
	VACANT		
	VACANT		
STAFF:	Jana Roberson, AICP, Director of Planning & Development	X	
	Heidi Leech, Land Use Administrative Assistant	X	
	Natalia Yeschick, Recording Secretary (Zoom)	X	

Also in attendance: Town Manager Drumm, Robin Newton - Chairperson of Ad HOC Senior and Affordable Housing Alternatives Study Committee (via Zoom), Christine Pattee of 98 Brookline Road/Committee Member for Senior Affordable Housing, Dick Brand of 650 Wrights Mill Road/Committee Member for Senior Affordable Housing, William Jackson of Jackson Environmental, Carmen Giuliano (via Zoom)

2. ROLL CALL/SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Steve Reviczky sat for Jobbagy

3. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - None

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS -

a. **PZC-25-1 - Proposal to modify the language of Section 5.15.05 of the Coventry Zoning Regulations concerning Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's).**

Robin Newton, Chair of AdHOC Senior and Affordable Housing Alternatives Study Committee, submitted a memo recommending this change. Two other members from the committee were also present.

Newton - Part of our charge is to look through relevant town documents, such as the Zoning Regulations, POCD, and the Affordability Study and make recommendations. We knew of this issue with the accessory dwelling units and how it wasn't working out the way it was adopted which was in line with Public Act 21-29 at the time. The change was done verbatim with State statute. We identified what we thought the issue was with the regulation, so we proposed this change. Accessory dwelling units are a great opportunity to provide diversity in housing and more affordable renting opportunities, bridge a gap for multi-generational living, and for seniors who want to stay in place. They can live in smaller units and rent out their homes.

Christine Pattee of 98 Brookline Road and committee member for senior affordable housing – She suggested that the PZC and the Housing Committee make a joint request to the Town Council and do a presentation of all of the good things that come with ADUs such as how they work and what they will do for homeowners. She explained how the new regulations will work for her personally and expressed that these regulations would make more sense.

Dick Brand of 650 Wrights Mill Road and committee member for senior affordable housing. He asked for support on the zoning regulation change. He wants to soften the regulations to accommodate the needs of the housing shortage and try to invite people to build the ADU on their house. With the housing shortage, there are seniors who could live in an ADU or have a caretaker in an ADU. Convalescent care is \$18-\$20k a month so, if we're able to keep them home then it is a good thing. He asked for our support and hoped to invite developers to solicit some people to move forward on ADUs.

Roberson - Handed out with packets excerpt from the Housing Affordability Plan and an excerpt from the Plan of Conservation and Development. See p.59 of the POCD, recommendation 10 under housing which mentions accessory apartments as alternative living arrangement. The plan in general talks about housing diversity and how ADUs are an example of housing diversity. Neither document talks about square footage in much detail, but they do provide guidance. She feels the current language is difficult to enforce and is confusing. She feels the proposal is more of a clarification but would like to know what the intention was with the original language.

Pollansky explained that at the time it was thought that it could be clarified in the future.

Roberson – Her understanding of the statute was that it was intended to prohibit towns from requiring a square footage that was less than 30% of the primary unit. The proposed language would allow the accessory apartment to come much closer to the square footage of the main unit, but it has to be smaller and the accessory unit cannot exceed 1,000 sq. ft. The proposed language complies with this statute and would achieve goals found elsewhere in your policy documents.

Polsky - How does any of this have to do with how much septic can take?

Leech - It is in the regulations. Applicants have to show they can meet the well and septic requirements set by the public health code.

Roberson - It doesn't supersede the public health code. If a house is on septic and they're not putting in an addition and using their existing footprint, chances are the septic allocation wouldn't change. We have health code approval as a step in the process so it gets checked every time.

Pollansky – It is a B100 evaluation of the current system.

Thomas had a similar question for sanitary sewer system. What if an ADU application was made for residences that are on our sanitary sewer system?

Roberson – It would not affect the sewer assessment. When the original zoning change was adopted in 2023, it was a hot topic among WPCA, because if there are more people, there's more flow but she recalled they could not charge additional charges.

Thomas wondered specifically if the WPCA has been privy to the proposal and if they wanted to comment on that. Drumm expressed concern for capacity with the amount of additional people using the system.

Leech - Septics are based on the number of bedrooms. It's already in our regulations, "Notwithstanding anything in section 5.14 to the contrary, all applicable building code requirements or other requirements pertaining to the use of a well or private sewer system shall apply to all accessory apartments." Our understanding was the WPCA was not allowed to charge any additional fees regardless, but they did designate that a duplex cannot have an ADU. That was largely advocated for by the WPCA.

Roberson - The statute specifically does not allow ADUs to be treated in any other right than a single-family dwelling. We can get comments and continue the hearing if needed.

Thomas did not want to hold up for that point.

Newton confirmed that PA 21-29 prohibits a separate sewer assessment on ADUs. WPCA is prohibited from assessing it separately from a single-family home.

Hearing was closed.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **PZC-25-1 - Proposal to modify the language of Section 5.15.05 of the Coventry Zoning Regulations concerning Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's).**

MOTION: Move to approve the modified language of Sec. 5.15.05 with the finding that it is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development 2020 and the Housing Affordability Plan 2022.

Motion by: Murray

Seconded by: Polsky

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Thomas, Murray, Pollansky, Polsky, Reviczky

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion unanimously approved.

- b. **PZC-24-12-mod – Request to modify the conditions of approved 3-lot Subdivision on 10 acres on the southside of Kings Road abutting the Hop River (Map 59, Lot 20) in the River/Aquifer Zone, Applicant: William Jackson, Owner: Juan Hernandez.**

Jackson - Here on behalf of the owner, Juan Hernandez, and project manager Carmen Giuliano.

Roberson - This is a proposal to modify conditions approved at the last meeting (January 27, 2025). One of our standard conditions is "All land within the subdivision that is within 25' of the central line of roads abutting the property shall be conveyed to the Town of Coventry in a form acceptable to the Town Attorney in accordance with chapter 12 section 5c of the subdivision regulations." This is to ensure that at least 25' from the center line is conveyed to the town at way you have a 50' ROW. Kings Road is a little bit

different. Roberson reviewed a memo from the Town Engineer, noting that it is Penney's opinion that "the above subject parcel should not have to comply with the requirement of ceding an additional 10' of frontage to the Town to comply with the subdivision regulations for a 50' ROW." Roberson noted the Subdivision Regulations give you the authority to require it but, you do not have to.

Pollansky - This is to modify to not require any of that.

Roberson - They are asking you to strike that entirely. Penney is in support of this.

Murray - Should it be changed from 25 to 15?

Roberson - What is shown on the plans is the agreed upon determined ROW from 2007. Everything in the plans complies with the official deeded ROW. It just isn't the town standard of 50ft. This is because of the way the property came into the Town's possession.

Thomas - Clarification, Is that a consistent 30' on both sides of the road for the entire length of the town road?

Giuliano - It was determined 15' is the average property line to the centerline of the road. Opposite side of the road they didn't do a take, however the edge of the road and some iron pins that were found are similar but is not as consistent as our side of the road. Infrastructure is 10' from the centerline of the road. From the land opposite side of us there is well over 25' to create a ROW. Or if they kept it at 13', there's no development within 15' of the property lines on the opposite side of the road. Not established, pins are variable. They can match our 15' without any impact on the land across from us.

Roberson - Confirming it's not a 30' ROW along the length.

Giuliano - 30' minimum but it could be more. At 30' there were some property pins located. Could easily be 30', but it is not established.

Roberson - Looking at sheet 3 of the subdivisions plans, these have not changed since the subdivision was approved. Along the entire frontage it's at least a 30' ROW and as you get closer to the cul de sac it gets wider.

Polsky - How was this discovered?

Giuliano - It's a standard request made by planning and zoning when they give us the notes for filing mylars. Noticed it and realised at that time that it couldn't be met because the ROW was already established by the town in 2007. Giuliano brought it to the attention of Town staff.

Thomas - Was anything built on this road after the 2007 Town takeover of the road before this three lot subdivision was put in?

Giuliano - No, there is no building there, but the existing home that is adjacent has already been there and doesn't comply with 50' ROW.

MOTION: Move to modify the original motion to approve the subdivision made on January 27th, 2025 to strike Condition 1.b concerning the dedication of land along the right of way.

Original Motion (excerpt)

Motion to approve application **PZC-24-12** to create a 3-lot Subdivision on 10 acres on the south side of Kings Road in the R/A Zone in accordance with all final plans, documents and testimony, submitted with application and including the following conditions:

1. Prior to the endorsement by the Commission of the Final Subdivision Plan(s) for filing in the office of the Town Clerk:
 - a. The Eastern Highlands Health District approval, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission approval with conditions, and the Planning and Zoning Commission approval with conditions must be included on the final recorded subdivision plans. Draft final approved plans shall be submitted to town staff for review prior to printing on archival material. The final approved plans bearing the seal and signature of the appropriate professionals and signed by Commission Chairs shall be recorded in the office of the Town Clerk.
 - b. ~~All land within the subdivision that is within 25' of the centerline of roads abutting the property shall be conveyed to the Town of Coventry in a form acceptable to the Town Attorney in accordance with Chapter XII Section 5.c of the Subdivision Regulations.~~

Motion by: Polsky

Seconded by: Murray

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Thomas, Murray, Pollansky, Polsky, Reviczky

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion unanimously approved.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. PZC-25-2 – Proposed modification of the Zoning Map in the vicinity of 1409 Main Street to reclassify the entire 2.05-acre parcel as Village Gateway Zone.

Public hearing to be held on March 10, 2025 (waiting on confirmation).

The Applicant is attorney for the owner, A1Z7, LLC out of Shelton.

b. PZC-25-3 – Special Permit application for a new Single-Family Dwelling (tear down/rebuild) on an undersized/non-conforming lot at 90 Avery Shores in the LR Zone; Applicant/Owner: David Blakely.

Public hearing to be held on March 24, 2025.

c. 8-24 Referral - Capital Improvement Program Proposed Budget FY 25-26 with Town Manager Drumm

Drumm reviewed the draft Capital Improvement Plan. Primarily the items we are reviewing are things that have a larger impact and involve growth management, how they may impact our town, and maintenance and upkeep of the town such as roads and paving. He also reviewed General Fund projects.

There was discussion by Roberson regarding lake management. The Town was awarded \$75,000 from DEEP for aquatic invasive species. The Town's contribution to that is under the General Fund. Lake management includes water quality monitoring. Drumm saw a lot of support for this last year. We had savings set aside for this last year, that funding was used, so this year we will pay the full cost. Polsky asked that being that this is state owned, why do we have to pay for the water quality? Drumm responded the State owns so many waterways, they can't care for them all at the level they would like. We also have a stake in it, if we're willing to step up then the State will help us. Roberson responded the water quality monitoring we've been doing for a long time, and is invaluable, we don't want to lose the continuity and data. Thomas mentioned that a good 20% of the population is around the lake. Property evaluation percentage of the overall town budget is substantial. Our commission has an interest in growth management and preservation of different zones and uses of the town community because of the concentration.

Drumm discussed upcoming projects including road work, guard rails, Miller-Richardson Park Improvements, open space stewardship (for the open space fund), small bridges and culverts.

Drumm explained the difference between dedicated open space fund and stewardship

fund. The open space stewardship builds bridges and trails. Roberson asked for money to go to the dedicated open space fund. Thomas responded Drumm is referring to our Protective Spaces Stewardship Committee, which had a recent large purchase and used a LoCIP State grant the Town received in 2020, some of that money was used. Looking at the numbers, there is an open Space Stewardship for \$5,000 and he suggested it is possible that is matching money the town is thinking of putting in to augment the existing State LoCIP grant. Public Works was also tapping into the grant funds for hazardous tree removal and some other work, but hasn't heard from the Finance Director re: how it has been partitioned out.

Roberson mentioned that the sewer study relates to the sewage treatment plant that is receiving Coventry wastewater. Sewer capacity is a big issue right now. Improving capacity is important to accommodating development that is consistent with our Town's plans and the State's plans of responsible growth. Drumm responded the plant was built to the lowest level of sewer treatment they could have constructed it in. The goal two years ago was either upgrade the plant or tie in to Willimantic's plant. A study showed the cost of upgrading versus tying into Willimantic's plan was virtually the same. There are grants available to upgrade our plant. Willimantic was not receptive to us tying in. The next step is to do an environmental study for a CEPA review. WPCA put a proposal in, they are interviewing a firm right now to do the study. We've budgeted \$100,000 to move forward on the study. Polsky asked what is the study looking to come out with? Drumm responded it is an independent study to determine the environmental impact of what happens if you upgrade the plant if we were permitted to discharge into the Willimantic River.

Polsky - What are we looking at for pricing?

Drumm - \$30 million to Windham vs. \$28 million to rebuild the plant. The CEPA review will determine which option we can move forward on. If the review says we can move forward with reconstructing the plant, it will then be in a design phase. We would need \$28 million for the design and construction of the plant. Assuming we get half of the funds in grants, there's \$14 million budgeted in a 5 year plan for bonding and we hopefully get help from the State Commission and \$14 Million in grants. There is a good likelihood that we'll receive federal funding. USDA has been very good for development.

Polsky asked if the \$100,000 is for the study. Roberson responded the study for CEPA which is the CT Environmental Policy Act. The consultants will present this study to the State for them to have information to make a decision under CEPA as to whether or not we get our own plant and what capacity vs. connecting to another plant. Polsky asked who would be making the decision to push to Windham. Drumm responded it would be the State based on the study.

Roberson mentioned the study is supposed to be presenting alternatives to a State agency who will make their own decision. We can make a good case that having our own sewage treatment plant and some additional capacity will help us achieve the State's growth management.

Thomas - If all of this played out in the community's favor, when might we have a point at which we could, as a commission, as we're updating our plan of conservation and development, look for growth areas that are appropriate, timing wise how might that line up? 3-5 years? Drumm confirmed Thomas was referring to sewage and responded yes, 3-5 years. Thomas stated we're already halfway through our POCD so in a couple years we may be talking about fine tuning this to help support whatever you may be looking for additional capacity or appropriate capacity. Roberson asked when the study is due. Thomas responded in the next 12+ months.

Drumm continued his presentation and discussed State & Federal Grants/Loans. Specifically discussed salt contamination that has affected 5 houses so far. We increased the funding to 77% paid of a \$2.5 Million project. Pollansky asked when the project would happen. Drumm responded we have already done preliminary engineering and permitting underway. The goal is to take it to construction this summer. Polsky asked if the neighbors knew. Drumm responded they do. Pollansky asked about the new houses being built. Drumm responded they are not eligible to tie onto some of the grant funds we were able to receive because of the disadvantage situation. Pollansky asked about what happens if they drill their wells and they get contaminated, Drumm confirmed if they drill the wells and they do end up contaminated, then yes, they will tie onto the water line. Polsky asked if it is fair to go to a referendum when people are affected on Plains Road. Drumm responded it must go to referendum because of the cost.

Additionally, Drumm discussed transportation grants that were received for road improvements and bridge grants. A new project this year is Flanders Road/Cider Mill Bridge that will be replaced from timber to concrete. Pollansky asked for details on Brigham Road Bridge, what about future development, has any consideration been taken into having to do this all over again should there be development in the future. Drumm mentioned it's the condition of the foundation that needs to be replaced. Pollansky asked if it's wide enough for traffic, Drumm responded that it is.

Drumm - Patriots Park is almost complete. Village Water Tower is underway, council has put funds towards preliminary engineering. We have \$1 Million already, we need additional funds but the question is where are we going to locate it? Thomas asked if the tower project location will restrict other kinds of community development, Drumm responded he is unsure. Polsky asked if CT Water has anything to do with it. Drumm stated we are working with CT Water.

Pollansky asked about the Hwy 44 Sewer Extension Project (from Bolton) and why it is listed under State & Federal Grants/Loans. Is it for the actual extension from Bolton?

Drumm responded it's still there because they haven't pushed it out and is a placeholder at this point, Bolton has been difficult to work with. We never knew they were going to charge us to pass through the system to treat sewage in Manchester.

Drumm briefly went over other projects such as funding sources, Board of Ed improvements, some big challenges for school systems are HVAC projects. The State of CT has required all schools improve their HVAC systems.

Thomas asked if there are any significant short term plans for expansion or modification of DPW. Drumm responded they put in for an Materials Management Infrastructure grant they have not yet heard back on. For food waste and composting that could happen if it comes through. We would be mixing food waste with leaves.

It was determined that the Commission will identify the sections by the next meeting and finalize comments at the March meeting. We will put our priorities in order and present 8-24 recommendations. Polsky asked how we will decide, if the items we're voting on will be given to us or if we are reviewing the Capital Improvement Plan reviewed tonight, in the past we were given a short list of what to vote on. Roberson would rather we review the Capital Improvement Plan provided. Thomas mentioned he can make notes. Reviczky mentioned the Capital Improvement Plan is comprehensive and we have to be strategic in how it meets our mission. We should look at how it relates to the work we do as a commission.

d. 8-24 Referral – Wolf Property Proposal – Potential donation of land abutting Thornton Brook Preserve.

Jasmine Wolf came to the Town with a proposal to donate acreage to the Town of Coventry. The land she would like to donate to the town is adjacent to Thornton Brook Preserve. The land is about 47 acres and is already under a Joshua's Trust Easement that prohibits further development. It also allows for forestry and trail building. Part of the proposal is modifying the lot line so she would not be donating all of her land. Only 42.2 acres would be donated and the easement would stay. It is in a part of town that has been identified as a priority for conservation. One piece was acquired with an open space grant, the other piece was part of a conservation.

One piece has an easement on it. It's up to Town council to choose to accept it, but it is an 8-24 referral.

Polsky - Thornton Brook Preserve is how many acres?

Roberson – It is around 60 acres between two different parcels.

Thomas - From this commission's perspective, it is consistent with the Plan of Conservation Developments recommendations. Staff noted it already being an adjacent single large parcel with a common frontage along the ridgeline to our existing town park. No potential concerns I can see from the planning and zoning perspective.

MOTION: Move to recommend the acquisition of the Wolf Property as town land with the following comments:

It is consistent with the POCD. It is a single large parcel with a long, shared boundary with Thornton Brook; it should remain as open space. This is a wonderful thing for Jasmine and Jim, and an honor to the Town. The Town should consider recognizing their contribution in a manner consistent with the owners wishes.

Motion by: Murray

Seconded by: Polsky

Discussion: None

Voting:

For: Thomas, Murray, Pollansky, Polsky, Reviczky

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion unanimously approved.

MOTION: Move to amend motion 6d. The PZC recommends the use of the open space fund to cover survey and all additional reasonable costs.

Motion by: Polsky

Seconded by: Murray

Discussion: Pollansky wanted to discuss the property donation and noted that because the land is being donated, the owner should not have to incur costs.

Voting:

For: Thomas, Murray, Pollansky, Polsky, Reviczky

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion unanimously approved.

7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES - January 27, 2025, Regular Meeting

MOTION: *I move to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2025, meeting.*

Motion by: Murray

Seconded by: Thomas

Discussion:

Thomas suggested the minutes should be easier to read should anyone not be in attendance at the meeting, as of right now it is unclear who spoke about what. It should be more clear who was speaking whether it was the applicant, or staff.

Roberson suggested no action be taken on the minutes this meeting, and would like to see Thomas' notes.

Thomas suggested offering another version of the minutes other than a PDF to make notes on the side. In response, Pollansky mentioned that usually any corrections are discussed verbally and it goes into the next minutes as an amendment to the previous minutes, however we are unsure of the legalities.

Yeschick mentioned happy to complete minutes and make any updates the commission needs, whatever is easiest for them. Only fear is providing too much detail.

Thomas would like for us to be able to look back on minutes and know who said what for reference should we need to go back and clarify anything, however also wants to refrain from making a 20-page document.

Pollansky suggested we may be able to eliminate the minutes being too lengthy by adjusting the conditions down.

Roberson mentioned staff gets a chance to review minutes before they are officially posted. It is possible for these minutes or the next set of minutes to include the commission in the process, but not make it ongoing. Roberson would like to see Thomas' notes.

Pollansky suggested we postpone this to the next meeting.

Voting:

For: None

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion withdrawn, will be discussed at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned by Pollansky at 9:52pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Natalia Yeschick

Natalia Yeschick, Recording Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission at the next Commission meeting. Please see the next Commission meeting minutes for approval or changes.