

PLANNING & ZONING
COMMISSION
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TOWN HALL ANNEX
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**WILTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
WILTON CENTER AREA MASTER PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES*
MAY 17, 2023 SPECIAL MEETING
(CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM)**

PRESENT: Chair Rick Tomasetti, Barbara Geddis, Rick Stow, Sam Gardner, Chris Pagliaro

Also present was Town Planner Michael Wrinn. Absent was Melissa-Jean Rotini

REGULAR MEETING

A. CALL TO ORDER at 7:05 PM. By Chair Tomasetti

B. SEATING OF MEMBERS – All members present were seated by Chair Tomasetti.

C. WORK SESSION: Review of Wilton Center Area Form Base Code

Meeting began with review of Form Base Code document which was put up on Mr. Gardner's screen.

Ms. Geddis' reviewed the River Walk section including the promotion of public access, what should be included (improvement plans to the sites), what the clear pathway should be (10'), and what the appropriate site materials ought to be as a goal. She confirmed that public access is defined as along the river and not an easement. Mr. Wrinn stated that Inland Wetlands will need to be involved in much of the decision making for along the river issues. Mr. Tomasetti suggested that Inland Wetlands may want to add a section to their regulations that addresses the River Walk to provide clarity for future commissions and applications.

Civic Spaces. Section 2.1 defines them as publicly accessible open spaces permanently dedicated to public use which can be publicly or privately owned. Scale discussion. Civic spaces must be required on all sites of all sizes (those who elect to do the overlay). Ms. Geddis confirmed 25' as one dimension. Mr. Gardner suggested there be dimensional direction for properties of five acres or more. Mr. Wrinn asked about how many times a civic space can be broken up into smaller units. Smart codes suggest that spaces are one piece, versus being broken up. Mr. Gardner wants specificity regarding how the space can be broken up. Mr. Wrinn then asked about indoor civic spaces. Is indoor public space necessarily the civic space? It's the public aspect of the indoor space (lobby, entrance, galleria, the arcade).

Mr. Tomasetti then voiced his concern about outdoor spaces. What's the primary objective on the small sites? He expressed concern about the 10%. Sites that have street access are, in a way, providing a public benefit. If the building becomes more of an internal streetscape, that adds public space even though it

may not be an internal courtyard. Other sites that don't front on Danbury Road, such as the site of the former Portofino restaurant, may struggle to find a space on the site other than an entryway under the bridge. Does it make sense on those sites that are not intended for retail...if you front on Godfrey or Hubbard are we saying that those sites should have this type of public amenity? A small park?

If we have buildings on Center Street, Old Ridgefield Road, River Road, is it a good result to have building...space...building...space? Should it be developed to have big side yards, which could disjoint the streetscape. It could work if everyone had it. A good pattern could be if we have street frontage but have alleyways that aren't 25' wide leading back to the river. Examples are the sites south of the village which front the river. Also, there is a need to get a handle on vehicular access to sites east of Center Street; should retain access points to 126 and 142 Old Ridgefield Road.

Large sites. One half acre minimum for sites over five acres. Is this size too big for the Wilton community? Input from the consultant will be helpful. 5+ acres with multiple buildings will likely have more than one civic space to reach the one-half acre minimum.

Sustainable and Green Design. Ms. Geddis stated that this section needs to be revised with more up to date language.

Walkability, Streets & Vehicular Circulation. Mr. Gardner went through the portion of the document that he wrote, with comments. After he finished, Mr. Tomasetti commented that a lot of what Mr. Gardner, Ms. Geddis, and he wrote is already in the regulations that are being proposed by the consultant, in terms of streetscapes, where to put the cars, etc. Relating to on-street parking, Mr. Wrinn mentioned that after discussions with DPW and Fire/Police, this would be extremely difficult, likely putting the burden on each developer. Mr. Gardner suggested that it would be best to remove the subject of parking from this section and create its own.

Mr. Tomasetti ask if an owner/developer has their open space and wants to consider it to be part of a plaza in front of their building...where does it start from? The edge of the curb or at their property line? Misalignment between the transition from Old Ridgefield Road to Center Street makes things difficult in the short term. Ms. Geddis brought up the difficulty of walking from the bridge to River Road, keying on private entry crosswalks which are difficult to navigate. Mr. Tomasetti then commented that this (cross walks across private driveways) is something that should be in the document.

Mr. Tomasetti stated that his deliverable is clean-up the purpose, form, and scale sections. Mr. Gardner will clean-up section 4, separating Walkability and Streets/Vehicular Circulation and Parking.

Respectfully submitted by Rich Callahan – Recording Secretary

***MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN REVIEWED BY THIS COMMISSION AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVISION IN FUTURE MINUTES. FULL AUDIO RECORDING OF MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT: <https://www.wiltonct.org/node/86/minutes-agendas>**