

Creation Of Floating Zone For Mixed-Use Village In North Stonington Approved

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North Stonington — The Planning and Zoning Commission on Thursday approved the creation of a floating zone for a mixed-use village district, with modifications to the text-amendment language, said Craig Grimord, the town's senior planner and zoning official, on Friday.

“We're very, very pleased to be able to go ahead,” said Alan Pesch of Milltown Commons LLC. “It's been a long time coming.”

Pesch first applied for the text amendment in December. He withdrew it and reapplied in May. Robert Hayward, under the company DanRob LLC, had previously proposed mixed-use development in the same area.

Milltown Commons owners include Pesch and brothers Robert and Richard “Skip” Hayward. The group is, by first amending the town's planning and zoning regulations, working to create a “Milltown Commons” village on 187 acres of land by the Route 2 rotary.

The New England Village Special Design District is a floating zone that would be implemented within a one-mile radius of the rotary and would require a minimum of 100 acres of land. The district will allow for a mixed blend of uses, from a variety of residential dwellings to commercial spaces and even hotels.

According to the June 13 application, the village district would promote “compact development in appropriate locations” and encourage pedestrian traffic because of the “close proximity to shops, services, offices, civic building and open space.”

Conceptual plans for the Milltown Commons village show two village areas, each centered around a village green. Proposed uses are apartments, single-family homes and multifamily units, a medical center, retail shops, grocery stores and hotels.

The next step in the process is for the developers to seek a zone change in order to land the village district zone on the 187 acres they seek to build out.

Mark Branse, a Glastonbury attorney representing Milltown Commons, said the application to land the zone in a specific location would include a master plan, which would detail much of what the town could expect to see in Pesch's Milltown Commons village.

The final stage would be the special-permit application, which would include site plans detailing such things as drainage requirements and building elevations. The special-permit application would adhere to design standards in the master plan.

Included in the master plan would be specifics on the number of buildings proposed for the village,

the square footage of all the buildings and their uses. The master plan would also include details on how many phases of development are expected for the project and what each phase will entail, Branse said.

Pesch said the master-plan step of the process, which is generally required of floating-zone applications, would give the community a chance to get involved in the design process. He said the group would hold workshops and gather public input to figure out what would best work for both the village and the town.

“It’s an interactive process,” Pesch said.

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