

From The Courant

Simsbury OKs New Zoning Rules For The Hartford Property

by Savannah Mul | July 9, 2014

SIMSBURY — The zoning commission has passed new regulations Monday governing the The Hartford insurance company property on Hopmeadow Street that will require the land to be used for office, retail or residential space.

Gateway Planning, a consultant bought in to evaluate possible uses for the 173-acre property, recommended technology and health care support services or a combination of housing, retail and commercial uses.

The property was previously zoned for restricted industrial use. Hiram Peck, the town's director of community planning and development, said that the town needed to re-evaluate the zoning for the property and its role in future town development.

"If we don't have such regulations, we are subject to whatever anyone brings in," Peck said. "We don't want to react to things. This code says what we would like it to look like.

"Zoning can change and we worked with the zoning commission about what's the right thing to do."

The new zoning regulations for the site were put together based on charettes and public hearings about how best to regulate the future development on the property, he said.

Peck said the zoning change opens up opportunities for the town and encourages mixed-use development while protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

"We are all very excited about the potential use on the property and the future developers," Peck said. "The sight borders the Farmington River and has prime views of the Heublein tower."

Peck said the regulations were designed specifically for The Hartford property.

The Hartford said in February 2013 that it would move all current Simsbury employees to its locations in Hartford and Windsor, said Thomas Hambrick, a spokesman for insurance company.

Hambrick said employees are still in the process of moving out of Simsbury into the other locations.

The zoning regulations are available for review on the town's website, simsbury-ct.gov, under the listing Simsbury-Hartford Form Based Code.