

## NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

## Special Meeting

September 24, 2015

Chairman Cathleen Hall called the special meeting of the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium in the Newington Town Hall, 131 Cedar Street, Newington, CT.

Chairman Hall: Welcome to the special meeting of the Town Plan and Zoning Commission on Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and the agenda will center on TOD, and thank you for taking the time to come out this evening. There is a sign up sheet in the hallway for those who wish to speak. Once we have gone through the list, if we have time, I will also open the floor to those who would like to raise their hand and speak if there is something that you would like to say at that point, so there will be plenty of opportunity this evening to speak. We are going to go in order of those who signed in first.

**I. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES**Commissioners Present

Commissioner Frank Aieta  
Commissioner Carol Anest  
Commissioner Michael Camillo  
Chairman Cathleen Hall  
Commissioner Robert Serra Sr.  
Commissioner Stanley Sobieski  
Commissioner Anthony Claffey-A

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Brian Andrzejewski

Staff Present

Craig Minor, Town Planner

**II. OVERVIEW OF TOD** (Transit Oriented Development)

Chairman Hall: This evening our Town Planner will give us an overview of TOD which is "transit-oriented development".

Craig Minor: I was asked to produce a definition of "Transit-Oriented Development" so like everyone else, I Googled it. I found a lot of different definitions for TOD, and each one emphasized something different. Every special interest group has a different definition of what TOD is. The Home Builders Association emphasizes the construction of housing; the Department of Transportation emphasizes public transportation. It's like the blind men describing an elephant - it's whatever is important to you. But I found a definition that I thought was the best balance of all the different aspects of TOD, because it is up to Newington to decide what blend of those issues are most important to Newington. So I'll read it to everyone:

"TOD is a type of community development that is a mixture of housing, office, retail and/or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood and located within a half mile of quality public transportation."

So that is the definition of TOD. Tonight we will hear from you folks as to what you think TOD is, and what you want TOD to do for Newington. It can be whatever you want it to be. If we don't adopt TOD regulations Newington will get what the development community wants, which is not necessarily what complete community wants. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: Craig, will you also please explain the three handouts? I know people picked them up but they are not quite sure that they know what it is.

Craig Minor: Yes. The aerial photograph is the area where the station for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line will be, the Amtrak station, which is about to be established in a couple of years. Some people may have some comments or questions about Amtrak, so that is what that map is about. The other two maps are of the two CTFAstrak stations, in Newington Junction and Cedar Street Station down near the Stop and Shop plaza. I'm sorry that the legend is not on both. The GIS department, when they prepared the maps forgot to put the legend on the other one, but it's the same legend for both, describing what the different zones, the different types of zone in each neighborhood, Industrial Zone, Residential Zone, Retail Zone.

Chairman Hall: And the paper that has the legend on it is the Cedar Street station; the one that has the two semi circles is the Newington Junction which is up off of Willard Avenue, Day Street, that area.

Chairman Hall: We are going to request that people limit their time to three minutes. We do have a timer up here and we will try to give you a warning when you get to the end of the three minutes. If you try to compose your thoughts before you come up here, you will be amazed at how much you can pack into three minutes. And, if someone has said exactly what you would like to say, please just say "I agree with the previous speaker", or I agree with two speakers ago. That will help us get more people to speak this evening, and the more information and/or varied information we get the better it is going to be for all of us. If everybody says the same thing, that's fine too, but if you just say, "I agree with the speaker before me" that will allow us to have more people speak this evening.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON TOD**

Chairman Hall: The first person to sign in is Roy Zartarian. Come forward, state your name and address for the record please.

Roy Zartarian, 25 Stuart Street: Good evening. I will do my best to keep within the three minute limit. I wish to commend the Commission for the conscientiousness with which you find yourself with this monumental task of coming up with a new set of regulations for a completely new type development. I would also like to commend you for the transparency that you are bringing to this, especially for this public forum, compared to what we, the residents have to say. It is much appreciated. My main point, transit oriented development is a little concise. It seems to me the question comes down to, do we want or need the high density or student apartment projects that have been discussed and that will place a big burden on town services, or do we want the type of technical development that will ultimately benefit the town. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: The second person, Peter and Debbie Hoffman.

Peter Hoffman: We'll pass at this point.

Chairman Hall: I'll put a star next to your name and come back to you at the end of the session in case you want to add something at the end.

Richard Glater, 33 Reservoir Road: All I'd like to say is that twenty years ago I came into Newington and the Chamber of Commerce booklet said that it was a great town to live in, low taxes, low crime, great schools. It didn't say anything about you are going to take my house by eminent domain and put in high density buildings. We don't need high density buildings in residential section up in West Hill and onto Reservoir Road. That's all I have to say, thank you.

Chairman Hall: Edward Syez?

Edward Syez: I'll pass.

Chairman Hall: Again, I'll come back to you at the end. Larry Billman?

Larry Billman: I'll pass.

Chairman Hall: Gary Bolles:

Gary Bolles, 28 Burden Lane: Good evening. I would like to thank you for holding this meeting, you are doing the same thing that you did with the 2020 Plan and that is an excellent, excellent thing, so thank you so much. From my own perspective, I want to envision ten to fifteen percent low density housing and eighty-five to ninety percent business entities and what I would call town oriented development along the busway and in Newington. We know that we need a significantly large percentage of this adjacent busway land dedicated solely to businesses to bring in the needed tax revenue to justify building our grand list and thus stabilize our tax base. Business development is the best way to bring in tax revenue without costing the town thousands in dollars in required services. You have asked for our thoughts because you wanted to know what the citizens desired to see along the busway. My friends, that is a good thing. I have always held that any governing body needs to be absolutely supportive of what the public wants. No town government should be able to do as they please, by listening to and then ignoring the public's input. That is tantamount to Big Brother government saying, we know better than the public we serve. We witnessed this with the present Town Council majority, and their stubborn attitude to put that Parks and Rec building in the park. Just look what happened, turned out that the public knew better than the Council majority and we sure proved that on 9 September, 2014. Regarding the busway land use, I thank Commissioner Serra for telling it like it is with his words to the effect that we need to do what the public wants. Need I say more? Thank you.

Chairman Hall: David Ferry?

David Ferry, 11 River Camp: I guess, it's not so much a comment, but that I have a lot of questions that I feel like I may be the only person in here who doesn't fully understand it, the Newington Junction, all of the possibilities, even looking at the map, I'm not sure what areas are going to be appropriated for use at this point. My question is, what does all of this mean, whether it's retail or community housing or anything else. I'm not too sure where it's going to go. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: David Charmet:

David Charmet, 44 Francis Avenue: Good evening. I've seen a lot of different things happen on Francis Avenue over the last 39 years that I have been a resident on Francis Avenue. I've seen a lot of commercial development up and down Day Street, and it's come and gone, and it's not as busy as it used to be. Since the busway came in, the traffic on the street has been horrendous. We've had two stop signs put in and that doesn't seem to stop the traffic, and I can't imagine what it is going to be like with the Amtrak station coming in. We're right on the

main road there, and there is talk of a bikeway, and widening the street. To what, maybe another eleven feet? Sidewalks and the busway? I'm very concerned about this, the impact of all of this that is happening in Newington Junction. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: Maria Rebello?

Maria Rebello: Pass.

Chairman Hall: Camille Prentice?

Camille Prentice: Pass

Chairman Hall: Bill Prentice?

Bill Prentice, 61 Maple Hill Avenue: I see the housing up there, and I would agree with it if it was for elderly. Does the council know what it costs to put a child through the school system each year? I know that I pay a lot of taxes, but I don't pay for a third of what it costs for a child to go to school here, so the housing if it's senior housing and it's down near the Cedar Street end, down near the stores, and if we put more stores in there, I wouldn't have an issue with that, but the housing for families, I'm not against families, but when the school system is jammed as we are, I don't think we can afford to have any more housing where kids are in the school system.

Chairman Hall: Donna DiMauro?

Donna DiMauro: Pass

Chairman Hall: Rose Lyons?

Rose Lyons, 48 Elton Drive: I'm hoping that I, like those before me misinterpreted what that sign up sheet was, out in the hallways, I thought it was just to write my name and address to indicate that I had been here, but it threw me, and I think it threw some other people as well. The maps, while they are great, I have maps at home that I think are better than these, that show the streets that are impacted by this. Unless you know where your street is, it doesn't tell you much. This map, I don't even see the bus station here, but in any case, thank you for the information. I know that you know what we don't want, but I don't know that anybody is sure about what they do want. I would like to not have to go to Glastonbury or Farmington to go to my doctor's office, but I don't know if that is possible in any of these areas. I don't know what the zoning is in these areas, like you have maps at home that shows me what the zoning is, but I think it's kind of hard to say what you want if you don't know what can be there. I trust the people on this Commission will do what is in the best interest of the people in Newington, who have done it before and I hope that will do it again, and thank you very much.

Chairman Hall: Now, is there anyone who signed that second paper that was up on the table, if they would come forward, state your name and address for the record please.

John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill: I hope that more people will take the opportunity to speak up. The first thing is, I have said from the beginning, I don't like the whole idea of making transit oriented development the target of a moratorium. I think that is a mistake right from the beginning. The very first ingredient of transit oriented development is high density housing. It is in every definition that you will find, that is the very first ingredient. It's a regional plan that takes little into consideration for the town that may have high density housing and in our case that is exactly what is happening here. So, I love Gary's idea, town oriented

development, I think that should be what you take away from this. The handouts, not very informative unfortunately, Mr. Planner. The legend is terrible, I can't even figure it out for myself, so what I would like to see, I know we have more time to fix this, so what I would like to see is a little more information from the Planner as far as, I've been following this myself, and I'm not even sure what is allowed in those zones. I know a lot of it is zoned Industrial, so I don't know what level of housing, I think Industrial is the most loose zone, so in other words, more different things can go in there, but what level of housing can go into an Industrial zone, I'd like to know. I would like part of what you establish as a moratorium to prevent zones changes that allow high density. What I would like to see, what you wanted to hear is manufacturing. I doubt that is going to happen but that would be the best thing for this country, not just for this town. It may not fit into the Governor's plan for the busway, but I think the worst of everything is to take manufacturing out of the equation, and then put in anything else, especially more housing, so the situation would be, National Welding there, we took the money to demolish the building but we also are burdened now with the requirement that we can't do anything with that except transit oriented development, so that means, I believe I'm correct, correct me if I'm wrong, if a factory wanted to go back in there, we could not allow them unless they built buses or something, so we took an industrial property off of the rolls and again, correct me if I'm wrong, that's how I understood it. Thank you.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace: I understand you would like what we want, so I'm going to try to keep my comments to that matter, whether it be retail, industrial or housing, I want green space incorporated into any development design. That means sidewalks, grass, trees, and pedestrian friendly. There should be more green than pavement. I want development that doesn't significantly add more traffic to our streets and just because buildings are going to be along the busway doesn't mean people aren't going to have cars. I want any building, regardless of its use to be compatible with the character of our town. The buildings should not be vastly taller than our existing structures, so that means no zoning changes. I want any development to be in harmony with existing neighborhoods, rather than being a (inaudible.) Any development should be gradual and seamless in regards to building height and depth and compatible with the adjacent land use of residential neighborhoods, particularly at Newington Junction. If retail is considered, I want businesses that will compliment and not cannibalize the businesses already in town. Personally I think our center has been neglected in terms of economic development. I want the center to grow and thrive as a result of any TOD and not be sacrificed because of (inaudible) developer. I want the proposal to be grounded in reality, I don't want it based on dreams of successes in Washington D.C or Alexandria or Boston. That is very different demographics, very different economics, and very different population.

Now that Newington is key to CTfastrak, we are getting a lot of money and pressure. I agree that we have to cooperate with regional planning, but not at the expense of our community. So instead of development being housing, I would like to see it become a destination point, where people can take a CTfastrak, come into town, do their thing and then leave, rather than being a development of origin, people are living here, they take the bus and go out of town.

Maybe that means something like educational facilities, colleges, branches of local universities, maybe at the National Welding site there can be some kind of recreational destination. I don't know, Motocross, something along that line, I want to see it destination oriented and not point of origin. I think the quality of development should enhance the quality of life we have here, and I want us to take the time to think about it. If this land is truly valuable, the developers are not going to pick up their toys and go away. If it's truly valuable, it will grow in value, as time goes by, and let's take our time and think about it, carefully evaluate all of the options, including no build.

Cara Santore, 93 Francis Avenue: I just want to commend everyone who has been up here. The last speaker is a hard act to follow. I personally am opposed to the high density housing, I live on Francis Avenue and I agree with my neighbors. I have been there 29 years, traffic has been worse, even with the stop signs, and I thank God that we did get them, but it hasn't slowed down the people. Several years ago they did take some of our land when they widened the street, and I agree, I don't know what would be left for them to take. I think the high density housing, I agree has something to do with Washington and all it's going to do is drop our property values if they are not taking things by eminent domain. Everybody who lives in our surrounding neighborhood has noticed that crime has gone up, cars have been broken into. I'm home almost all day long and my neighbors and I have noticed that the people going up and down our street do not live there, and there are a lot of things going on that no one sees, and if we bring in this high density housing and other things that they want, I'm not really sure what else is going to come with it, because we can already see what is going on now that the bus has started there. So, I am not for any of this, and I agree that it should be thought through very carefully and do what is right for the citizens and not what is right for the politicians.

Terry Borjeson, 45 Glenview Drive: Soon not to be a politician. I just want to clarify a couple of points for people. I feel leadership is what you do. You go out and you understand and you look, and for four years we have looked at what we want to do in Newington and what we don't want to do in Newington. Of the forty places in the country, property values have gone up. Number two, Cedar Street, because we got the money to tear down National Welding, no significant contingency has been put on there. Anything can be built there that our Planning and Zoning Commission agrees can be built there. Number three, and I'm getting a lot of information on this stuff tonight, we did a study on Newington Junction that is available on the web site. There are over a hundred acres there that can be developed, mixed use, again, this is one of the reasons that Planning and Zoning is looking at this stuff. Frankly I wish they had looked at it two or three years ago when we knew this thing was coming so that we would have been ready for it instead of doing it now. Fourth, we did a housing needs survey and one of the two biggies was seniors. Seniors that want to stay in town and be close to mass transit so they can get into Hartford, they can get to stores. And the millennials. It's our kids that you know have \$100,000 in debt from student loans that can't afford to buy a house right now, but want to live in town, stay in the town that they grew up in. There is some misinformation about the transit corridor authority and what it is all about, which I have taken a lot of heat for, but there is going to be no eminent domain. There is going to be no land grabs. It's going to be what this Planning and Zoning decides that they want to do, and it's going to be a consensus of the town as to what we can do. I think people have been put in the position of being afraid, and two years from now, hear what I said tonight, and see who is right. I don't think there is anything to be afraid of. I think there is opportunity here that the town can utilize, but Planning and Zoning is going to be the boss. Thank you.

Holly Harlow, 11 Edwards St: I agree with Gail in the concept of transit oriented development being a destination rather than something that will attract lots of traffic. In my person opinion, I view that as an employer or employer being a business or a collection of businesses that will attract people who will come in on the busway, work, and go home, or a destination in the recreational field, the entertainment industry and those accompanying businesses that will build a tax base, won't tax traffic, won't increase services that require additional tax revenue, I like that idea of come in, enjoy yourself, eat, drink, be merry, go to work, go grocery shopping and then take the bus back to where you live. I also agree with one of the previous speakers regarding senior housing, I guess that I would, if there was housing involved like that to be housing for seniors. No high density housing, no big apartment buildings, that is not my definition of good community development. My concerns are about traffic on the street, my desire is to have businesses and employers and employees that will support who are partaking of the industries that are there.

Laurence Chaffey, 15 Reservoir Road: I grew up a good chunk of my life here, I came to the United States, and I've lived in Hartford and here in Newington for a good chunk of my life, I've traveled the world, I've lived in multiple countries and I've seen in many different countries development around transportation and transportation is intertwined seamlessly among old houses. My grandparents is 300 years old, older than our nation. So I have seen organic roads, and this is by no means organic in any way. Putting in a major artery, such as a highway or the CTfastrak through any residential area, we moved out of Hartford to be in a suburb. Now it's almost like an extension of the city of Hartford. Throughout the years I have started to see Newington develop into a thruway between New Britain and Hartford, especially the portion that I live in. Fenn Road is just horrific. Then anyone who lives in that area, I live within a half mile and I've seen many changes. Low income housing, or whatever you want to call it, is not going to attract what the Town of Newington needs. Businesses, possibly, again, I do agree we should have looked at this a lot earlier so we would have had more planning, there's just a lot of unknowns at this point. What I would like to see is definitely, absolutely no large buildings of any kind. It should have an organic feel to it. If any housing at all, we're saying yes, it's a hundred acres, and the proposed plan and some of the larger PDF's are available on line, some of the proposed plans are anywhere between twenty to thirty houses per acre, so if you do the tax calculation, that comes out to a pretty substantial amount. I own .33 acres, and to put eight to ten houses on that, that's pretty congested. It's going to be an extension of Hartford or New Britain and it's going to be essentially a highway between the two. I've already started to see in my neighborhood some people and other areas of New Britain have started to feed into it, the problems it causes and everything else. I own property in New Britain, I own property in other towns, I've been around the block a few times and in all of those other towns there are pockets of these troubled areas. This essentially, as we look at the map, where Fenn Road essentially cuts the town, that corner, and along Fenn Road border between New Britain and Hartford is going to become a problem area. I don't care how you slice it or dice it, it will bring more activities, attractions and problems with it. Thank you.

Debbie Hoffman, 32 Francis Avenue: I'm totally in favor of transit oriented development. I think the Town is going to be losing out if they don't grasp building around this area. I work for a consulting firm, and we do transit oriented development all over Connecticut and different states. It has been very very successful. What I would like to see for Newington, I would like to see a presentation to the people of Newington that shows them all the different variety that you would have, what some of the housing looks like, what does the street look like, some of the businesses that are available, and I think if the people had more information, then they can put their input as to what they would like to see in this area. Do they want to see more businesses built around the CTfastrak or would they like a mixture? I really think that we need definitely more information about what this all looks like before we can tell you what we want, because you have to have some kind of visual of what has happened in other towns, and have studies available and what is successful and what did they like, and what didn't they like, and what worked in their towns, and then make some important and knowledgeable decisions about what would be great for this town. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: Anyone sign up on the second sheet that hasn't been heard?  
Edward Sycz?

Edward Sycz: Pass.

Chairman Hall: Wayne? I'm sorry, I can't read your last name.

Wayne \_\_\_\_\_: Pass

Chairman Hall: Maria Rebello?

Maria Rebello: Pass

Chairman Hall: Camille Prentice?

Camille Prentice: Pass

Chairman Hall: Okay, so if anyone who did not sign up, we will take the opportunity at this point to hear you.

Alicia Charmet, 56 Francis Avenue: I might be the only person in the room that actually uses the busway. I, when I have to go into Hartford for meetings I prefer it, I don't have to pay for parking, parking is a pain in the butt in Hartford, but I do walk down Francis Avenue and I do have to say it's not pedestrian friendly. I would like to see my street become more pedestrian friendly, I would actually like to see Francis Avenue closed off towards Day Street so we don't have the traffic and it would make it a more desirable area for anybody who wants to move to the area, to actually use the busway, to walk there, to make it more doable. The other thing that I would like you all to consider is that you should really take into careful consideration when redeveloping the brownfields on Day Street, take storm water runoff into consideration. Piper Brook runs right through there, then it's part of the Connecticut River watershed, it's impaired water, and it's something that you are going to have to focus on anyway when that permit comes through. So, start thinking about low impact development practices and green infrastructure, when considering development on Day Street. Thank you.

Patty Foley, 51 Crown Ridge: Good evening Commissioners. I live on the other side of the turnpike, where we can't get to this part of Newington unless you drive because there is no other way to do it. You can't cross the turnpike to get here. If you look at the organic nature, as the gentleman said earlier, it's extremely important that there is that to be successful. The cookie cutter approach saying, oh, we do X,Y and Z and that's it and boom, we're done, I think we need to be a lot more thoughtful, and this Commission has been thoughtful. We want success for our business district, we don't want to just put them up, put them in, and then have them fall apart. There is a great example in Milwaukee, that great developers wanted to come in, do a whole section of town, that had to do with TOD, I was just reading this the other day, they refused, and they were smart. A couple of years later it got developed and it got developed because it fit the nature of where they were. I think we really need to start paying attention. There is tremendous examples that are out there today when they are talking about transit development, because if you build a little area and it becomes really well, what happens to the Newington center area? What happens to another area, what happens to, come on, we are 13.7 square miles. Allowing the opportunity for things to happen in a somewhat controlled way, but not a cookie cutter way. I have lived in high density housing my entire adult life. The question on Facebook was how dense is the housing in Newington for those various communities that I have lived in. I mean, I live in a community now, it's about fifteen acres, and it has 75 homes. Do the math, folks. It's all about the math. This Commission presented to us, quite a while ago, the 2020 report and I think that means an absolute help at the beginning of this discussion of what is there, because there is, not only environmental issues, this town isn't walkable already. We need to deal with the ability, if we want to have these types of items, is to be able to get there, and have more than 30 spaces to park in. I've tried once to use the busway, because I got parking because on Sunday it was only a minute or so, but the next time I went to use it, there was no parking.

Lastly I really want to applaud you doing this, but you really need to start bringing us some ideas so we can have a better discussion. I know you want to be thoughtful. We have very little space and so these decisions are very important. I want to thank you Commissioners for having this talk tonight. Thank you.

Peter Arburr, 133 Tremont St: I've been listening tonight and so far we have a definition, and I've been involved in this over the years, and it's kind of hard to picture. A definition says a lot of things, and some thoughts for the next meeting. One, I think that we should have a map showing the area of the busway and the land that we are talking about and if it's possible, to sketch in some things to give a picture of possibilities. Then one of the biggest things, walkable neighborhoods and you should be able to walk over to the transit system. Well, look and see what the sidewalk facilities are in town. Just how are you going to tie in with these facilities and what sidewalks are going to have to be built? This would be a very expensive situation.

The other thing that I think that you should consider is creating I don't know if this is going to happen, but a separate zone. We heard tonight, Industrial, Residential, well, those are all covered by different zones. So I think somewhere you should have this have its own zone with its own criteria and if you are going to get into the particulars then you can go back into the zoning regulations where they are covered. Thank you.

Maureen Klett, 104 Harold Drive: I would speak to Mr. Borjeson's comments that we have nothing to be afraid of and if we don't have anything to be afraid of, we certainly have a lot of things that we should have a lot of concerns for. I'm going to go back to before Governor Malloy was elected, and I sat in the room, and I know that Carol Anest was in the same room when he was asked if he would support the busway because it was an issue that was near and dear to the hearts of the people in Newington. He was looking for support from the Democrats in this community, and he said it wouldn't. Four months later I was up in his office with a bunch of other people from various towns who were supporting the busway to argue that the busway was not in the best interest of the Town of Newington and lo and behold, the busway came anyway. During that process, through the process, there are many people in this room that sat through hearings where it was that transit oriented development was never even discussed, it was all about how people were going to come in their cars and get out and park and take the busway into Hartford, and they were going to come from Cheshire, and they were going to come from Southington, and they were going to park in our parking in Newington and take the busway into Newington, and then somewhere along the way, at a meeting at Central, and I know that I wasn't the only one in the room, there were other people there from Newington, Mr. Saunders dropped the, well, it really wasn't meant to be well, come and drive and get on the busway, it was meant to be, walk to the busway and if we don't have anything to be afraid of, then why was House Bill 6851 even discussed. If it wasn't for State Representative Gail Lavielle, who I believe is from the Westport area, who read thoroughly through a bill and found out what House Bill 6851, and if it wasn't for Carol Anest, sitting up on the stage right now, who was on your board, who heard it while watching it on public access TV and brought it to your attention, I know I picked it up on Facebook because I think it was Mr. Bachand who spoke to this after hearing Carol say something and brought it to the attention of the Council it would have gotten by us.

The Governor created this agency, and you will have to forgive me because I don't have my glasses on, and it is a quasi-public government state authority, governed by an eleven member board of directors that would seek to stimulate new (inaudible) and economic development with designated transit districts. He would pick the Chairperson and the Chairperson would pick the Executive Director. I think we have a lot to be concerned about, myself.

Wayne Alexander, 28 Burdon Lane: When we stand at the crossroads of any decision making, it's great to listen and I want to thank this Commission for creating this night for you to listen. Like Gary Bolles thanks you, I echo his sentiments. One of the things I listened to, I listened to Mr. Borjeson tonight, and he said that fear shouldn't drive the transit and he said that we should trust that our worse fears won't come true, and you know what, the thing that he is right about is that fear should not drive anything, however, an abundance of caution should. Trust, and I think that Mr. Reagan said this, trust but verify. When we step forward, we should do so with all of the information possible, and I think the majority of the people here tonight, they're telling you, we can't know what we want until we examined the options that haven't been thoroughly examined. I think that is what everybody is kind of like, we can't just take it on faith that all will be well. We have to have good planners, like all of you, who listen to the people, who have respect for the people. So great ideas will drive all future discussions, therefore maybe someone in this government right here could sponsor an ideas convention that could be organized with input from everywhere, not just the region, not just the Town, but everywhere. Let them bring all their best ideas, because you know, in the final analysis, it's Newington that is going to sift through all of this and say, okay, here we go! Newington's whole potential can be realized on this issue, and many others and I think that is what we all want. Thank you.

Joshua Shulman, 15 Longview Drive: Just thought I'd give a perspective from a different demographic age range, so personally, my personal view on what should go around the busway, I really haven't made up my mind, I go back and forth between what would be interesting to see there and what would maybe cause some problems. In terms of talking to some of my friends and acquaintances and the young professionals, mid-twenties, early thirties, the thing that drives where people want to live, in turn where people want to raise their families has a lot to do now days with entertainment value, and "what am I going to go there for?" Some of my friends and acquaintances have moved to Glastonbury, moved to West Hartford, because those are the areas that really drive their lives. You know, they are not as concerned about their kids, day care and all of that kind of stuff, but they are concerned about, when I get home, when I want to go to eat, where am going to go. I think Newington already offers a great deal of value. We are seeing amazing restaurants popping up, to name one, Roosters, fantastic, and I hope they stay there for a long time, and it would be interesting to see around the bus station people, people in the young professional range, some of those people you want to drive into the town to make it more desirable to come to, to increase property values, where people want to be there, and to expose them to the great schools that we have. Some type of entertainment venue, we don't really have that in Newington. Somewhere you can go and listen to some live music, somewhere people can go and see a show, get a drink or a dinner, all of that combined in one area, that's one thing that I think people in my age range would want to see, would want to drive them into town, probably to stay and become lifers like a lot of us are, really. I think you should take that approach into it and into consideration as well. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: Anyone else wishing to speak?

John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill: I think the gentleman from Reservoir Road said it the best, and that's really the way that I feel. Transit oriented development is the polar opposite of, you used the term organic, I would say market driven development, and really, it's a form of social engineering. It's deeply rooted in social engineering, it has nothing to do with free markets or being market driven. I would like to reiterate what Mr. Arburr said. I think he hinted at what I was getting at - we need more visuals and so we need some maps, we need to know what is actually allowed, what are we fearing. Maybe there is nothing to fear, maybe there is no where they could put high density housing here without a zone change, so let's see the visuals. I hope we are going have another meeting, I heard an indication that there was

going to be another meeting, I hope that is true so that people can digest what they have heard tonight.

I just want to read you one little thing. This is from the CRCOG referral, the letter that you got back from CRCOG and a lot of people here probably know nothing about CRCOG. CRCOG stands for Capital Regional Council of Governments. It's a quasi-government agency that we actually have to run everything by them. They give their recommendations, this is part of what I consider social engineering. CRCOG is also the organization that our good Councilor, which I'm not going to give him any more credit by mentioning his name, addressed to the Development Commission, said he represented CRCOG, and one million residents, as he addressed that State Development Commission inferring that he had the backing of one million residents of, within those CRCOG member towns. If that was a court of law, that would be near perjury I believe. I just want to read you this letter, this is the letter they gave back to the Town of Newington after we told them that we want to have a moratorium. So, it goes like this, "As the Commission considers zoning regulation changes for the areas around the stations we recommend CRCOG's recent publications the sustainable land use project model. The model regulations suggest that stations, the station areas, such as Newington's consider residential densities of between fifteen and thirty-five dwelling units per acre in the core areas one quarter mile around the station and 7½ to 15 dwelling units in the ring areas. The model regulations also provide, suggest development standards for residential mixed and non-residential use, for example in the core areas, building heights are recommended to be two to six stories in the ring area and one to four stories to all other areas." So that is what we are up against. This is a powerful agency, CRCOG, even though it's recommendations, it's something we have to go to them with every single thing that we do, and they have to, for all intents and purposes, approve it. If we go against them, I don't know what the ramifications are. I just want you to know what we are up against. Thank you.

Terry Borjeson, 45 Glenview Drive: There are a couple of things that I forgot, and some misinformation that I would like to clarify. West Hartford, Berlin, Meriden, New Britain, Windsor, Enfield, and North Haven have all jumped on board with this project. So I would suggest that you might want to look at what they are doing, because they are doing things that I think are important. CRCOG has no authority over this town whatsoever. It's a consortium of 38 towns, with all towns paying their money, and it's just a guiding force, it's not, they are not in charge of anything. We are in charge. So again, misinformation, trying to get you afraid, it's similar to what Maureen is doing. I mean its fear mongering at its finest. We're going to build high density low income housing, and "those people" are going to come to our town. I've heard "those people" so many times and it upsets me, it makes me ill almost because I don't believe that is how all of the people in Newington feel. I believe that there are some people in Newington that feel that way, and those are the ones that are expressing their views. So, I don't think that, I mean, we have 2500 volunteers in this town that work hard, care for their families, care for their neighbors, care for their town. Those are the people that I have represented, and I think they have not shown up here. I think there are a lot of people that are coming here out of fear and malingering. They don't represent the whole town, so I hope we have another hearing, and I hope more people come to give a balanced approach to what is going on here. Thank you.

Clark Castelle, 167 Connecticut Avenue: I have a bunch of random notes here, but transit oriented development actually has a long history. If you study the history of the suburbs of New York City, you will find that everywhere there is a subway stop, everywhere there is a trail station along the Long Island Railroad a town grew up so it can in fact be organic. I even think Newington began very much, you see the older residential neighborhoods in various areas of Newington, I think they were where, I'm not one hundred percent sure, but those are where the old Newington Trolley Stops used to be. Secondly I've had the good fortune of having Mr. Sobieski of the Commission take me on a couple of tours of Newington Junction

to show me that it is thoroughly (inaudible) Quite complicated, we are known to have a lot of industrial locations, still there, some of them apparently prospering. I read many years ago, about a type of (inaudible) space out there, a concept that is no longer used, that would even allow for industrial facilities to remain in a mixed development as long as they met the requirements of every other occupancy in terms of noise level, height, that sort of thing. Finally what I want to say is, we can't forget, there is going to be an Amtrak station there. We have a major development on our hands. I would support their idea of blocking off Francis Avenue. I don't know what we are going to do about the four or five houses that are on Day Street, they are going to get clobbered with traffic. I'd like to protect the people on Francis Avenue. I hope the committee understands what they have to do. Thank you.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: Having followed this a long time, when it was the busway and the CTfastrak, and now they are calling it whatever they want to call it to get somebody to ride it, I think maybe if you explained the process, I don't now whether you plan on doing this or not, but I understand, and my understanding is that you are trying to get input from the public as to what they would like to see. You know what they don't want to see, you'd like to know what they would like to see and unless you really know, or are in the business like this woman who is a consultant, you really don't know what the options are. There was a study done on Newington Junction. Those meetings were held and there was a presentation made, and I believe that the study is on the web site, along with the housing needs study. In my opinion, when an applicant comes before you, they should not be using our studies, especially the housing needs study. I saw how many people were involved in that, yes it was done by CCSU students and things like that, but when I saw Amara come before you for their application, and citing that the seniors in this town wanted more housing, and that the housing that they were looking for was high end housing, that's not the way I read that housing needs study. It was people like myself that have lived in Newington all our lives that were looking for places to live. Granted, they probably don't exist any more, that are within my price range, but I think that you stood your ground with Amara, you got the answers that you wanted to get, I took offense at the applicant's attorney jamming it down your throat, I took offense at the intimidation that I took to be, with certain people showing up at meetings that never show up before, and here we stand, six months later and I don't think a shovel is in the ground for that up on the mountain. What I don't want to see is you being forced into something that you don't feel comfortable with and even though I could be wrong, I think that once you do make your regulations, or do your zoning, there's always a chance that it can be changed if they can prove to you that there needs to be a change. So, I trust in you, as Commissioners to do what is best, and thank you for all of the input and effort you have done with this project. Thank you.

Joyce Boncal, 18 Kinnear Avenue: My concern is at the Fenn Road/Cedar Street four acre land there. Right now almost any time of day there is a backup of traffic along Fenn Road and Cedar Street. During rush hour it's a tremendous backup. I mean it could be a half mile to a mile backup. The dangerous situation is coming off of Route 9. Often times that exit is backed up onto Route 9. Now if there is going to be an expansion of that four acre site, with buildings going up there, I recommend that whatever it be, its not the high density, for example, retail. You need something I think that is going to be low density, perhaps small office space, or what about the possibility of a little mini-park, walking trails, jogging trails. There are a lot of people who work in that Stop and Shop Plaza, and work along Fenn Road, you certainly can't jog along Fenn Road. A lot of people come to the Stop and Shop Plaza for lunch, for dinner, to the restaurants there. If there was a picnic area there, that would be nice. A jogging trails, a walking trail, with some perhaps office space, but not retail. If it is retail, something is going to have to be done about the traffic. Not only on Cedar Street, but for safety reasons, the backup that is on the exit, that goes onto Route 9, that is a disaster waiting to happen. So, that has to be considered seriously when we think about the, what kind of buildings are going to be there. Thank you.

Roy Zartarian, 25 Stuart St: Let me say at the outset, I'm a fan of mass transit. I like to go to New York City once in a while just to get some subway air, and I'm in favor of the busway. That said, you have heard here tonight though, surrounding the whole issue of mass transit, the issue of transit oriented development and we have covered a lot of concerns, mainly because we don't know what is going to come out of this. People have expressed their concerns about traffic, people have expressed concerns about safety, and they are concerned about property values.

At the beginning of this process we saw what happened in all of these towns, Blue Back Square which isn't really a transit oriented development, Newington is not Georgetown, Newington is not West Hartford. So you will have your work cut out for you and I ask you, as part of that work to keep the public informed, either on the (inaudible) or public forums like this and help to alleviate the concerns many people have simply because it's a big unknown. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: Anyone else? Seeing none, we have some letters that have been written and sent to us. I'm going to start with Carol, she has a couple and I have two.

Commissioner Anest: The first one is from Brian Groves, 127 Chestnut Road:

"Carol, I will not be able to attend the TPZ meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup>, but I would like to present the following if you could read this aloud for me.

"To the Newington TPZ: I am unable to attend tonight's meeting but I have some items for your consideration. With the State of Connecticut's intended plans for Newington Junction and Cedar Street stations, these concerns are logical and would require careful consideration:

- a) The "drawn plans" for land to be appropriated for the establishment of a passenger railroad station at Newington Junction should be reviewed by the TPZ before considering any development activity in regards to Newington Junction.
- b) Newington Volunteer Fire Department Company #3 is not going to have the personnel, facilities and equipment to handle the "scope" of high-density housing at Newington Junction or Cedar Street locations. The town would ultimately have to provide full time, paid, firefighting capability.
- c) The schools local to both Newington Junction and Cedar Street would require expansion to accommodate increased enrollment should the high density housing be for families with children. (I am assuming there are no demographics available for the age groups of these new residents to allow the TPZ to plan in advance.)
- d) Any development beyond the Newington Junction zone's current state will require serious improvements to the intersection at Willard and Francis Avenues. The intersection is perched atop the grade rising from Stoddard Avenue to the bridge crossing the railroad and busway.
- e) Pedestrian traffic at the intersection at Willard and Francis Avenues includes a number of school children walking between home and Martin Kellogg Middle School and their safety will need to be assured as part of this development, considering the pedestrian fatalities of late. \*Please note that snow and ice is not plowed from the sidewalk from the intersection to the bottom of the hill towards Stoddard Avenue. (The Town of Newington referred me to the State of Connecticut when I inquired about this item in 2011.)

The Hartford Courant is reporting that a \$900,000 study will be performed for the development along the CTfastrak corridor. There's a lot of enthusiasm on the part of Governor Malloy and his staff for this development. However, in the end of all things, the Town of Newington will be fiscally responsible for the safety of its citizens long afterwards. Please take these items into consideration.

Regards,

Brian Groves"

Carol Anest: [reading from a letter]

"Michael J. Fox  
1901 Main Street

Madam Chair, members and staff, my apologies for not attending tonight, but I have a standing commitment every Thursday night at this time. I have asked Commissioner Anest to read my thoughts into the minutes because I feel very strongly about developing the properties surrounding our two CTfastrak transit stations. We have a beautiful town here, but we definitely do need smart development in order to grow our industrial/commercial grand list, thereby lessening the tax burden on our residents. As usual, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission is approaching the problem in a thoughtful and judicious manner.

Both CTfastrak stations are in the midst of a commercial or industrial building zones and could benefit by development that would enhance the neighborhoods while increasing the grand list. For both stations I envision small mom and pop retail or food service establishments, maybe an ATM and possibly professional offices on a second floor. In this way, those that use the busway stations can grab a quick coffee or sandwich on the way to work or shopping or, maybe a dinner to go on the way home. This would be an ideal opportunity for "one stop shopping". Maybe the town can put a satellite tax collector's office with an automated payment facility.

Along Fenn Road there are many possibilities for development without going to building of more than two stories. There is plenty of room for some green space around the perimeter of the station and along Fenn Road, We could, in essence, expand Stop and Shop Plaza which could include banks, retail, food service, and what I would consider on of the most ideal additions, research and development facilities to include medical research, maybe a Jackson Laboratories satellite.

Surrounding towns seem to be seeking developers for their Transit Oriented Development sites, but in doing so, are not being smart about it. While these towns will most likely be seeing high rise apartment building and other service gobbling entities, we should be very astute in developing our TOD areas. I think you, our Plan and Zoning experts need to enact regulations that will foster development conducive to the well being of our community. To that end I think the moratorium was a good idea, but you need to get to work on planning the type of TOD we need and once that is done, developers should be knocking down the doors to be a part of Newington. Thank you and good luck."

Chairman Hall: Now there is a letter from Dagny Williams Bronson addressed to Mr. Minor and Mr. Brecher, Mr. Minor being the Town Planner and Mr. Brecher being the Economic Development Director.

"Dear Mr. Minor and Mr. Brecher,

I am unable to attend tonight's hearing on TOD due to a last minute family illness. I read the TOD information on your website am excited about the opportunities that Newington has at its new stations and ask you to please pass along the following comments to the TPZ commission tonight.

The TOD zoning around the two Newington stations should complement the surrounding zoning. Leave the high density development to New Britain. Cedar Street should have mixed use zoning that fits the needs of Newington residents and CCSU students, but does not compete with Newington Center. No building should be more than 4 stories. In addition, Newington Junction should have mixed use zoning that is lower density due to the residential nature of the area.

Consider a parking garage at Cedar Street station that will bring many commuters into the area that will buy coffee, groceries and dinner in Newington before and after work.

Newington absolutely needs to have sidewalks from Maple Hill/Old Farms/Alumni Roads to the Cedar Street station. With good sidewalks, walking paths and bike paths, many residents of Newington could be a ½ mile walk or ride from the station. Sidewalks should be a priority and disconnected from the larger Alumni road discussion. Paths should be considered through wetland areas.

Utilize the survey data obtained by New England's Sustainable Knowledge Corridor (SKC) Consortium and the Capital Region Council of Governments (CROCG) this spring. This data could contain information from a different demographic in Newington. In addition reach out for information in different ways than a traditional town hearing to ensure all generations of the town are heard. The millennials that are more likely to embrace mixed use TOD zoning are used to different communication methods.

Thank you in advance,

Dagny Bronson"

Chairman Hall: The second letter is from Bob Randich, also sent to the Town Planner, Craig Minor.

"Craig, I am unable to attend Thursday's public hearing as I will be out of town. I would appreciate it if the following could be read into the record on my behalf.

I served as a Newington Town Councilor from 1987 to 2001. During that time, councilors from both parties strongly supported the "Growth and Progress" edict contained within the town seal as we endeavored to create a business environment where the Grand List would prosper and the tax burden on residents was lessened to the greatest extent possible. We also conserved property when appropriate opportunities were presented, such as the Young Farm. The construction of CTFAstrak is the greatest investment in Newington's infrastructure since the construction of the railroad which abuts it. With economic growth in the region lagging during the past several years, the town is well placed to secure more than its fair share of growth if it creates the environment required to foster it. While I would like to see new businesses flock to a transit oriented district,

reality is that businesses will only locate to an area where there are a sufficient number of people present to support them and it is difficult to foresee much changing in these areas if the current uses are maintained as is. While I understand the concerns some have expressed about the costs for the town if congregate housing is allowed in these districts, I believe such logic to be faulty as congregate housing located near mass transit stations are most likely to attract young couples saving for a down payment for a house and retired persons who no longer wish to have the responsibilities of home ownership yet wish to be able to access the cities on either terminus of the mass transit line. While the young couples will likely have children, I believe that once the children become school age, they will likely look for a home and to the extent they consider Newington, they will enhance the value of our existing single family homes. I live well within the quarter mile radius of one of the stations and do not believe my neighborhood is in any danger from potential development around the stations. However, in an effort to allay fears that existing neighborhoods will be adversely affected from development in the vicinity of the stations, the Commission may wish to consider excluding existing neighborhoods from the districts and that the districts consist of the currently existing commercial and industrial zoned areas. With appropriate mixes of commercial and residential zoned use, I believe both districts would thrive and provide hundreds of millions of dollars of new grand list growth. The alternative appears to be to continue to preserve the status quo, which in some areas is becoming a museum-like homage to an industrial era long past. We can and should do a lot better than this, particularly with the possibilities created by the construction of mass transit stations.

Robert Randich  
43 Brook St  
Newington"

#### **IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS ON TOD**

Commissioner Serra: First of all I want to thank everybody for coming out tonight, for your comments. I wish there were more people here, but to those of you who did come, thank you so much. Those of you watching who could not be here tonight, thank you. As you know this is to get your input. We want to do what is right for Newington and what is right for each one of you. It is a tough decision that we face up here. I promise you, as far as I'm concerned and this Commission, when we did this moratorium we did it so that we can get your views on what is best for the Town, and do the right thing here. Nothing is going to be pushed through, nothing is going to be, excuse the expression, "fast tracked". This is going to be what we need it to be and what is best for the Town. That is my concern and I believe we all feel that way. The other Commissioners will express their concerns. Again, I want to thank you all for coming out and when we have the next meeting, get your friends, get your neighbors, we need your input to get this done right. Thank you.

Commissioner Sobieski: I would also like to thank everybody who came out. Commissioner Serra said, and I wholeheartedly agree with what he said, that we want to do what is right for the Town of Newington. We want to hear what your input is. It's not something that is going to be fast tracked, or pushed through. We want to hear what you want. We would like to have more people come out. We want to know what you want. This is your town. You have the say here, not the State, not CRCOG, you. What you want, you have to bring to us and tell us. Thank you.

Commissioner Aieta: I hope that at the next meeting we will have more visuals for you. Hopefully some ideas that have come from this Commission, as to what we perceive TOD to look like. These areas, Cedar Street and the Junction, are two different distinctive types of areas. The one at Newington Junction is a heavily residential area now. It's pretty well built

up. I'd personally like to look at the traffic and the availability of people to walk to the station, and not to provide high density housing in that area. If you go back to the 2020 Plan that we spent a lot of time on, you will see that we tried to uphold our industrial, commercial base and not turn those areas into housing. I would be looking, particularly in the Junction area, to try to maintain commercial areas, and maybe even a change in zone to allow more commercial uses there. We have zones other than Industrial that provide for a planned design, the PD Zone, where we could have more variety than just commercial and industrial land uses, for office uses. The other, on Fenn Road, is more commercial, office, and I would like to see the medical facilities that we have seen spring up in Farmington and around UConn Health Center, see if we could get some of that to come to Newington.

I think we have to provide the public with more to work with, what can be done in these areas and give them an idea of what we are looking at. We are not looking at the housing in Newington Junction, we are looking at the plan that has buildings that can be reused, knocked down, put into larger pieces, we are not looking to go in and raze the residential area. It's not in my mind, and the people who live around the Busway, I hope at the next meeting that we have the public give us ideas, some things that could possibly happen in that area. We'll be working on that.

Commissioner Anest: I would like to thank everyone for coming out this evening. I'm glad that we ended up doing this in the auditorium. I agree with Frank one hundred percent. We're here to listen to what you have to say, and then during our discussions we are going to talk about everything that has been presented this evening. I hope each of you follow along at our meetings, and what we do. It will be on our website, but do try to keep up with where we are going, so at the next public meeting that we have, we will have visuals, but you will also have some background of how we came to where we are.

So I hope to see everybody come out, follow us, come to our regular TPZ meetings, where we are going to be discussing this. I think it's very, very important to have as much public input as possible. This is your town, not our town, but everybody's town and I want to do what is right for this Town and right for future generations.

Commissioner Claffey: I just want to thank everyone from coming out, and want you to understand that the whole group up here, we all come from different avenues, and one of my biggest fears is the transportation side of this, the transportation and the amount of traffic that it will generate in the smaller neighborhoods of our town. I think what I heard is that one of the top three priorities, from what the public is saying, is that traffic will be a problem for the town. Second, to get ideas from other towns that have TOD that are going through what we are going through, to bring different ideas that we may not see, sometimes different ideas from towns that might (inaudible.) That shows us concrete evidence of what you would like to see. Thank you.

Chairman Hall: I'm going to echo the others in thanking you for coming out. This is the kind of meeting that I like, because I learned something from it. What I learned tonight is that there is a great deal of confusion and lack of understanding of what TOD is, because it is a new concept. I think what we have to do is work a little bit harder at getting the word out as to what TOD is, to give you some examples of what can happen with TOD. The reason we had this meeting was to get a feeling from the citizens as to what they thought TOD was, and what they envisioned TOD to be in this town. You have been very, very honest in coming forward and saying, "We can't really imagine what we need here. We don't really have a good idea of what it is we are talking about." That's very, very important for us because it gives us something to work with, to help build up the idea of TOD in a manner that people can understand. So I think we have a lot of work ahead of us. We need you to continue working with us. This will not be the last meeting that we have. Even though we had a forum

such as this, please don't use that as the only time to contact us, to give us ideas. We all have e-mail, we all have telephone numbers, you can find us, and we would be very happy to hear, and next time we would like to see more people here. I think when people read in the newspaper about this meeting they had no clue, so they thought, "I'm not going to that meeting - I don't have anything to add, I don't know what to do." So we have quite a bit of work ahead of us. I thank you for coming tonight and for being the pioneers for this meeting, and helping us to do our job as well.

We have another meeting at 8:00 p.m. It's our regular meeting. If you haven't had enough of us, come on down. It's going to be in L101 on the lower level.

**V. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis,  
Recording Secretary