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NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

February 26, 2020

Regular Meeting

  
Town Clerk

Chairman Pane called the regular meeting of the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium in the Newington Town Hall, 131 Cedar Street, Newington, Connecticut.

**I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**II. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Commissioners Present

Chairman Domenic Pane  
Commissioner Michael Fox  
Commissioner Garrett Havens  
Commissioner Stanley Sobieski  
Commissioner Stephen Woods  
Commissioner Thomas Gill-A

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Anthony Claffey  
Commissioner David Lenares  
Commissioner Braverman-A  
Commissioner Bryan Haggerty-A

Staff Present

Craig Minor, Town Planner

**III. WELCOMING REMARKS**

Chairman Pane: Welcome to the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. We're here to have a presentation of the draft of the POCD. I'm going to turn this over to Glenn for the presentation.

**IV. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT POCD**

Glenn Chalder: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission and Newington residents who are here tonight, my name is Glenn Chalder. I'm a land use consultant and I've had the pleasure of working with the Planning and Zoning Commission on preparing this Plan of Conservation and Development and also had a chance to work with the Commission ten years ago on preparing the current Newington Town Plan. I've enjoyed this opportunity and excited to help Newington address the issues in its future.

What I have done here for tonight's meeting is put together a power point which will allow me to go through the material very quickly, provide an overview of the Plan and then we can devote as much time as we want to public discussion. The overall program is to talk about what is the Plan of Conservation and Development, what is in Newington's Plan for the future and then get community input.

First thing I wanted to talk about is, what is a POCD? A Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document that is used by the Commission, by the municipality, by other town agencies to help address issues which are likely to come up in the future, mostly related to the physical development of the Community. The Plan is helpful because it outlines strategies about where the Community thinks it might want to go in the future and really start to address the question about what kind of community we want to be, what Newington wants to be.

Newington has a history of preparing plans over the years and these plans have all worked together to create the community that we know today and it is in that spirit that this Plan is being prepared to guide the types of activities that will happen in the future. The Newington POCD right now has six parts to it. There is an introduction to kind of identify and set up issues for discussion; there is a conclusion at the end that starts to wrap it up, and in the middle there are four sections of the plan. The first is Conservation Strategy, this we want to preserve or protect in Newington. There is a section on Sustainability strategies, how we can be a more sustainable community in the future, Development strategies, how we might want to guide growth or change in our community and then Infrastructure is about the services and facilities that we might want or need. I will go through and give you an overview of the Chapters.

In the Introduction section there are really two chapters. The conditions and trends which are affecting Newington overall. Newington's population is projected to continue to grow and increase and actually this is different from many other communities in Connecticut which are experiencing flat or declining population projections for the future. This is a good sign for us in terms of interest and growth in the Community.

At the same time, our age distribution is changing. As a result, many of us who have lived in Newington for years are getting older, but we are also attracting new and younger residents and the changing age population of the community can sometimes have significant influence in the Plan and effort in terms of what we might need in the future.

We have a strong economic base; housing growth has slowed for a couple of reasons. First of all, the economy has not been as robust as it has been in the past in terms of housing growth, and Newington is predominately developed, so there is not as much developable land available as there was in the past. Most of our land area is developed or committed so as a result the development of the future could be redevelopment of existing sites rather than new subdivisions on undeveloped property, etc. These are some of the trends that are affecting the community.

There was a public meeting back at the end of the summer to ask people their thoughts and ideas about issues that were important to them. This is not a large sample size, but these are some of the comments that came through from the meeting in terms of what people expressed. It kind of sets the stage for some of the issues that we are talking about as part of the plan.

Under Conservation strategies or related strategies, that would be the green box at the top, some of the comments that people had expressed were, Newington should preserve more open space; felt that Newington appears and feels like a small community and we should continue to nurture that type of feeling in our community; and also strive to become a more sustainable community in the future.

In terms of development strategies, people thought that Newington should maintain a strong tax base and fill up the empty spaces in the existing buildings; thought the town center's prime real estate should and can be improved; and the transit nodes, both the two fast track stations and the possible future DOT train station are both an opportunity and a challenge for Newington and something to be considered as part of the Plan.

In terms of infrastructure issues people thought that the Town should maintain the community facilities that we have; people recognize that Newington is affected by traffic flow on many of our roads, and this is an issue, and then finally people thought they would like to make sure the POCD for Newington continue to be updated in the future.

So this is the way that the Plan was set up, to respond to the issues that we heard from the Community. As I indicated before, there are four major sections, Conservation and Related Strategies in terms of protecting what is important; Sustainability Strategies in terms of becoming more sustainable; driving development and change as part of the development strategies; and the infrastructure strategies which as providing for services and facilities. I would like to go through and talk about what is in each of these to give you an overview of the Plan.

In the Conservation Strategies there are three chapters; natural resources, open space and community character. The Natural Resources chapter identifies with a map that shows the location of natural resources in Newington. The Plan strategies are focused on protecting water related resources and protecting other important nature resources as well. Every chapter of the plan has a page which contains what we call Policy and Action Steps. Some of the blue header, Policies are on-going activities of the Commission that they might review and discuss as new applications come before them, Commissioners reviewing whether it is consistent with the Plan, so these are somewhat passive and reactive as to good things for Newington to do and these are the policies and procedures if you will for the community and for the Commission.

In addition, each chapter has action steps within it, and these are actually pro-active steps that the Town can and hopefully will take to implement Plan recommendations. Each of these also identifies who is responsible for each of these policies and action steps and that is a way to help us move forward with implementation. So that is the summary of the natural resources section of the Plan.

In terms of Open Space, again, much of Newington is already developed but the plans continues the strong desire to preserve Cedar Mountain and it is identified in the Plan as being this area, and efforts to preserve that as open space. The Commission has also advocated for opportunities, perhaps create a trail greenway system within the community that could tie some of these open space areas in neighborhoods together and allow people to get around. Because of the rail right of way, the old 291 right of way, there are opportunities for corridors which might provide a framework for a trail greenway system and this is something the community can work on in the future.

The third chapter in the Community Conservation section is about community character. There is a map that identifies significant community resources. The Plan recommends retaining and enhancing the overall character in the community and again Cedar Mountain shows up here, preserving the historical resources, the map shows the location of historic resources and the community's scenic features, but also promoting community events that will enhance the community and the Plan recommends that those efforts and activities continue.

There is a whole section in the Plan on Sustainability Strategies. Given what we are leaning about climate change and other things, this is an area of growing interest to municipalities. There is actually an Organization called Sustainable CT which organizes efforts around the State for municipalities and gives them certification in their efforts to be more sustainable. So the Plan contains recommendations about being more sustainable in terms of energy, water, waste, managing storm water, addressing climate change, and also becoming more resilient.

If we are going to have impactful events in the future, how can we avoid or mitigate those activities and that is why sustainability is called out as a new section of the Newington plan so that we can start to move in this kind of direction as we move forward into the future.

The next major section of the Plan, Development Related Strategies has four chapters; Newington Town Center, Opportunities and Area Sites which exist in the community, and the two chapters on Economic Development and one on Residential Development.

In terms of the town center, the town center is a significant opportunity area for Newington to grow and maintain and enhance the vibrancy and character of this area. The Plan suggests that it might be a time to undertake a town center charette. A charette is a community driven design process where we look at our town center and ways that we could address issues and opportunities and actually transfer our thoughts into a map, a plan or graphics that would illustrate what we are looking for. Then we can use that to promote positive outcomes for the town center area. Then of course the third thing, as a result of that vision looking to modify the regulations as appropriate. There could be a number of opportunities to improve the town center, encourage new development, and the Plan promotes and encourages that. In this section of the Plan we have two case study boxes, one case study talks about the importance of mixed use. There are a number of locations in zoning where we talk about a residential zone and the uses are primarily limited to residential but in the town center these areas could thrive by mixed uses, where in fact we can have the same uses, or different uses on the same site, and this can promote the vibrancy and the character that we would be looking for. In addition, there are also some guiding principles in the Plan that the Commission can use when they are reviewing new development in the town center area in the future when the opportunities arise.

There is also a chapter in the Plan identifying some key opportunity and sites and these are areas in Newington where we recognize that market forces and land availability may create opportunities for new development or changes in development. We want to make sure that we have good programs and regulations in place to address these. Those areas are the Newington town center area which we just talked about, and it shows up again in this section of the Plan because it is an opportunity area for us.

The possibility of the future train station which is out here on Cedar Street, West Cedar Street and Newington Junction Fastrack Stations, the Berlin Turnpike is an opportunity for redevelopment as uses along there change. I also have identified another area which we are calling Town Center East and essentially the town center core area is the area right around Cedar Street and Main Street, Constitution Square, but town center east is the area between that and the mountain, the ridge. This is an area which again has some potential for additional uses in the future. The Plan identifies these opportunity areas, and suggests strategies for each of them which the Commission could use to guide future activities in these areas.

There is also a chapter on Economic Development. The areas on this map that you see colored are the areas in Newington which are zoned for business or industrial development. Our goal in the Plan is to continue to promote economic development in these area, to re-use and re-develop sites. I mean, years ago we had the Fafnir facility, now being used for different uses or activities, but we have to continue to encourage economic development business within the community, but at the same time the Plan has a priority about protecting residential areas and the Plan suggests possible changes to our landscaping regulations making sure that even if the buffer width can't always be provided, that we could increase the number of trees for planting or putting fences or walls, or berms that continue to protect residential areas.

In the chapter of the plan in terms of residential development we are seeking to address the changing housing needs of the community. As people are different ages, they are also in different stages of their housing needs and desires. When they start out, perhaps they are living in an apartment, they buy their first house and then as they get older perhaps they are thinking of an opportunity in the future of places that they might want to live, and the Plan suggests that we continue to seek ways to address these types of housing needs. Housing that is affordable for people, housing for an aging population, and diverse housing types. As people live longer, our life spans are increasing, their need for different types of housing may be changing at the same time.

These opportunity sites that we identified earlier are also places that might provide an opportunity for us to address some of these changing housing needs in the future.

The next section of the Plan is the Infrastructure Related Strategy, and there are four chapters in here; Community Facilities, Vehicular Transportation, Pedestrian, Bicycle, Auto Transit Transportation and then Utility Infrastructure.

In terms of community facilities, the plan identifies the location of the community facilities in Newington, gives a list of them, suggests we address some of the identified needs in the future on community facilities and then also monitor possible future situations that may arise or occur as our age demographics change or other changes that occur in the community just with the passage of time.

In terms of vehicular transportation the plan recommends that we address safety and capacity issues in some of the problem areas that people are familiar with in town. A number of the roadways in town are in fact state highways so it is going to involve a partnership with the state on resolution of some of these issues, addressing congestion, etc., possibility of traffic calming, where people are trying to by-pass busy intersections by traveling through residential neighborhoods. The Plan also has recommendations related to pavement management. That is, if we let a road sit and don't maintain it, we get cracks and then eventually potholes, and then alligator surface on the roadway. It really deteriorates and costs quite a bit of money to rebuild it. The Plan suggests that if we were able to do just little bits of maintenance along the way we can refresh the road and keep it going without spending a lot of money, but if we don't, the roadway will fall off and eventually the rebuild will be very expensive. This could be an important economical fiscal strategy for the Town to think about for the future.

There is a section in the Plan about pedestrian bicycle and transit. The staff of the engineering department has been working on a pedestrian plan in terms of location of sidewalks, completing the missing links if you will on our sidewalk system and plan to support that effort and continue to promote overall pedestrian accessibility in the community. There is a discussion in the Plan, a recommendation for complete streets policy. Complete streets is really a phrase which is used, but for years the roadway was considered to be the sole place for the automobile. The complete street philosophy is where we can actually use the road right of way to address a lot of other types of transportation needs, including pedestrian, bicycles, etc., and this is something Newington should consider and encourage in the future. The Plan contains recommendations for bicycle usage, how we can provide safety and a combination for bicycle users and also transit services, both regular, these green areas here are areas that are within walking distance of existing bus routes in the community. We do have Dial-A-Ride, services for the elderly in the community, the Fastrack bus way, and then also the commuter rail is also discussed in the POCD.

In terms of utility infrastructure, Newington is very fortunate, we are part of the MDC system so our water service network and our sewer system network are quite extensive. This also supports the type of growth that we want in the community. The Plan recommends that we manage the water and sewer service. We continue to look at ways to upgrade our drainage system in the community. We have done quite a lot in the last ten years in terms of transitioning our drainage from focusing on primarily on a pipe system to a balance between pipes and infiltration of water.

The Plan recommends that you try to seek ways to improve internet speed because so many people are using internet devices, phones and computers, etc., and speed is just as important on the computer as it is on a roadway, and also to improve wireless services. This is a map showing wireless coverage, Newington is quite fortunate to have good coverage throughout the community but the nature of the cell phone system changes in the future, enhancing this system is something that can provide significant benefits for the community. Now days cell phones are operating on what they call 4G, moving from 3G to 4G service and you have perhaps heard about the future being 5G service. That will enable a lot of things to happen so continuing to improve wireless service within the community will allow us to do more with our phones in the community overall.

Conclusion is the last part of the Plan, people get really excited when I talk about the conclusion of the presentation, but there is an entire section in the Plan, a chapter about implementation strategies. Of course it recommends the policies in the Plan, who is responsible for doing, implementing these particular policies and also completing the action steps. By crossing off these items in the check boxes saying we have done this, we can make demonstrable progress in implementing the Plan and this chapter of the Plan talks about how we can do that.

So that is an overview of the Plan, and speaking for the Commission, we are excited to hear people's thoughts, if you will, about the Plan and we will refer to your feedback.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Pane: I'll open this up to public participation. If anyone has any questions or concerns or ideas, please come forward.

Carla Santora, Francis Avenue: I have a question where the opportunity sites are for the affordable housing.

Chairman Pane: Okay, we'll have Glenn answer that right now.

Glenn Chalder: I think the sites that are identified on here are the very same sites that were identified as opportunity areas in town. These are areas in the Town Center and the Town Center East, near the train station, the proposed train station, near the Cedar Street busway station, and the Newington Junction busway station. These are areas that because of transit availability to these areas and the availability of (inaudible) that these areas could possibly accommodate additional housing in the future in a walkable village type configuration and the Plan suggests that these are areas that might be appropriate for housing development in the future as opposed to areas elsewhere in the community which don't have those services.

Carla Santora: Okay, so I'd like to talk about the Newington Junction area. I heard that on the 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development we're looking for a zone change to a TOD. It would be the Willard Avenue area from West Hill North to Spring Street on the east side,

and as well develop Francis Avenue, a residential area by the train station, Cashway and the Amtrack property. I'd like to make everybody here aware that Cashway and the nursery are between the railroad property. As a resident of Francis Avenue, I'm very strongly opposed to the development that takes away any existing houses and reduces the Industrial property. Some of the houses on Willard Avenue are older and have beautiful architectural character about them, plus they may be historic. I also like to point out the increased traffic flow. We can't even handle the amount of traffic that we have right now, people don't stop at stop signs, they don't stop at red lights, and both the roads might have to be widened and the potential of trying to widen Francis Avenue, there is no room to do that. They took several feet years ago, there is nothing left. You have a bridge, you have property and there is no way that you could widen that road that I can see. If I'm right, the type of residential property that you are proposing causes a strain on town services and there is not a lot of return on taxes. Industrial and commercial brings in revenue with the least amount of draw on our town services.

I would like to know why you are pushing this area when you already have TOD areas at Myra Cohen Way, some on Fenn Road, as well as where the proposed train station is going to be, is TOD. That would actually total three, I'm not sure why we need a fourth one. Is this because someone owning property in this area, a like was posted on Facebook trying to get the state to approve the train station. Is this for their own gain, or what is best for the existing property owner and the residents of the neighborhood? Why would you want to destroy the character of the residential neighborhoods? This makes no sense. It definitely looks like a way for someone to make money. I'd like to know why you care more about the developers and the people who don't even live in our town than you do about the current residents of this area and those of us who have lived here for many years.

If that is the case and the TOD zone is needed, why don't the people supporting this look to make the TOD zone on their own streets and neighborhoods. Why is it always Newington Junction that we are arguing about? This area is not a full interchange, with Fastrack and railroad stations. Other locations in the Cedar Street area make more sense because of where the developers plan on putting the work force housing.

As for a comment made, one TOD zone for all areas, this Commission has said each area is separate and distinct. Please review your notes from when Frank Aieta was Chairman. This was discussed at length, and if I recall Mr. Chairman, you agreed with it, so what has changed?

Chairman Pane: Thank you. Anybody else?

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: I wish the (inaudible) had come up first before the presentation and then maybe we could have heard a little better. Granted, we are in the back of the room, but the speaker should be, the microphone should be used.

As far as Newington Junction, I sat through conversations about Newington Junction with the TPZ, I listened to a presentation of the Newington Junction study. There was supposed to be a charette, and at that meeting the consultant said it was the first report that he had ever completed without having a charette. I found that odd, but not surprising because the public was not invited to those meetings that were held, and it wasn't until I overheard a reporter being asked to the meeting on the results of this report that the public did get access to the meetings. I've stood in this room for the 2020 Plan, I stood here for Toll Brothers, and the same people that were here then are here now, people that are involved in the town, Town Councilors, Open Space people, Conservation people, a few residents and I'm happy to see that they are here and are speaking up for their neighborhoods, and I've said this at TPZ

meetings before and I'll say it again, we need to have a Plan that all the Commissions are on board with. We need to know that Open space, Conservation, TPZ, Economic Development, the Town Council all have the same vision. I sat in the room when Mayor Wright gave us the vision for Newington center. Build it, they will come, talk about it, nothing will get done was his mantra. There were thirteen studies then, and I think he was Mayor back in 2000 and I don't know, 9 or whatever. I've lost track of time, but just seems that we keep going through these studies and these talks and these informational sessions and unfortunately, like I said, we have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten eleven people, twelve people here tonight. Yet, I have to say it, but they are going to be on Facebook complaining about whatever you do. So, if you have something to say, speak, come and say something, otherwise, wait another ten years.

Chairman Pane: Thank you, anybody else wishing to speak?

Richard LePierre: With regards to pedestrian and bicycle traffic, you have three options. You have widen roadways, make the lanes narrower making traffic more difficult, or some combination of the two.

Chairman Pane: I'll have the Planner talk about that.

Glenn Chalder: The Plan indicates that more investigation be done on this particular issue. It doesn't identify any particular road or any particular solution. The state, the Department of Transportation on state highways has identified the roadways in town and their suitability for bicycle usage. Unfortunately that map is hidden behind the one that you see about transit and rail, but it's color coded and there are certain roads, and certain road segments that they recognize bicycle usage on this section of roadway is discouraged. This is something which is not really a great bicycle route, and then on the other hand, there are some state highways in town where the traffic and the width of the shoulder and the speed of traffic are areas that could accommodate bicycle traffic there. I think what the Plan advocates for is we open our minds to the concept of bicycle transportation and look at local roadways too. I agree that those are the choices that are available, you can either go off road, or you can go on road, and either carve out the shoulder or look to widen the roadway. I think that has to be done on a case by case basis. The only thing I think is different today then it was ten years ago is that the State has moved more towards the policy of narrower lane width. In the past it used to be 12 feet and higher. The State is investigating 11 foot travel lanes because it actually controls and manages traffic better. Wide lanes, people are not as careful as they are, and it is actually a traffic calming affect, and so there are certain roadways, by the narrowing of the lane width from 12 to 11 or 13 to 11 actually creates a shoulder that could accommodate bicycle use. I don't think we are going to solve that tonight, the Plan simply advocates us working on this over the next ten years so the people who want to bike will have a safe place to do so and won't impinge on vehicle traffic as well.

Chairman Pane: Any other public comment?

Carla Santora: I'd like to comment.

Chairman Pane: If you could wait we still have some people, and I would be happy to give you another change to speak up.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace: Having been at some of the other TPZ meeting where you discussed this, I think it is a good plan, a solid Plan. I appreciate the efforts and the possibility of commenting on it again.

My only concern is the strategies are wonderful but my concern is with the town center and the bike strategy. We have a highway running through the town. We're a small town, but Cedar Street is a highway, and it's not just at peak hours, it's all times of the day. Whenever you are looking at developing or revitalizing the town center people are not going to want to sit outside at an outdoor café when you can't hear because of the trucks going by, you have pollution, you have cars at all times of the day. When my nieces and nephew come, I have to hold their hands when they are on Cedar Street because I am afraid of even a car going off, or them running into traffic, so you have a highway along side Main Street which is very congested and there is no parking, so that really, the possibilities seem very creative, but until you get rid of the traffic on Cedar Street not only are you going to be limited in the town center but also Newington is not a bike community. I'm not talking about bike paths, I'm talking about just the ability to just ride your bike on the side of the road because of the traffic. Until the traffic calming occurs and is resolved, some of these wonderful strategies are not going to be able to be implemented. Thank you.

Chairman Pane: Thank you Gail. Anyone else wishing to speak that hasn't spoken?

Alan Paskevitch, 100 Cambria Avenue: Following up on Hartford's plan, 2030 where highways were intersecting from Newington to Hartford, with discussion with people there that we have this problem with (inaudible) and Hartford is working on a plan to try to get a better traffic plan. My plan is this, because we don't have any land along the highways and we need exchanges from Newington south and north. A plan needs to be proposed, and I proposed this to the legislature myself that we need a mono-rail, a mono-rail overhead through Hartford, north, south east and west because people in this community and Hartford county are not going to give up their cars. No one in this community is going to take a bus or a train getting out of their cars. We aren't getting tolls, we defeated tolls, so where is the revenue going to come from? Okay, bonding on an overhead mono-rail, that's where we need to go. It's an European concept, as been in for a long time and we need to do it now and not wait. Thank you.

Chairman Pane: Thank you very much.

Neil Page, 211 Eddy Lane formerly from Broadview Street: I do want to say I reviewed the entire plan and overall I think it is a job very well done. Obviously there are a few tweaks that need to be made, but I think that everybody did a good job, addresses a lot of our issues. One of the things that I did have concerns with was, over the next ten years we have to give a lot of consideration as to where our grand list growth is going to come from. Obviously there are going to be a lot of discussions, the Town Council, the Board of Education on expenses and needs and how they are going to fund them. Really, where they are going to come from will be from existing property owners and tax payers absent changes to the zoning map.

The zoning map is going to drive grand list growth and the density you allow on the map will allow additional wealth to come in and shift that tax burden from the tax payers who obviously have to pay to maintain the services that we currently have. With that being said, we are really in a transitional stage as far as the building goes. The retail is really at an end, people that are looking for things are not going to be hopping in a car looking for a large retail store to go to. We can't rely on them any longer as the core of our economic development strategy. We really have to look at being able to provide certain areas that have services and experiences and that is what people are looking for when they go out and actually spend money. We do have a lot of opportunity that other towns do not have, specifically we do have that opportunity to explore transit oriented development which we have talked about for ten years now, haven't really seen much happen in that regard. Most of the development that we

have had is not what I would call transit oriented development and the density still isn't there. I know there was a lot of discussion and some change over from the middle of last year around the train station possibility. I've seen a lot of comments where people are saying, well, we should only look at one and not the other, I think you have to explore everything. I'm not saying we throw a pot of spaghetti against the wall and see what sticks, but I think you really have to take a close look at all of these opportunities because we have them, and if we don't look at them they are never going to be developed and we are never going to utilize their benefit in an appropriate way.

Relative to the bicycle transit pedestrian plan, I would like to see more inter-connection between those three plans. I know they focus on state highways because that has been what has been published by the State of Connecticut. There are routes in there that are really accessible, Maple Hill, Church Street, easy roads to walk and bike on. They aren't on the map, they could be. I really think you need to explore overlaying those three maps, look at the transit map, look at your pedestrian infrastructure, look at the existing, maybe we have a level of service for bikability and walkability and interconnect them, especially where the transit lane are. We should be trying to stitch together the plan, how I am going to be able to get from point A in this community to point B without getting in a car. That should all be thought out and I think the bullet dots are there but it's not all tied together yet. Maybe that is a subsequent action step, maybe that action step would be forming a committee that would actually help stitch together a plan for those connections and help to implement that.

There is a comment in the plan about providing additional parking in the Cedar Street Fastrack station, I completely understand that, I go by there multiple times a day and I see the cars over parked, but I really have to tell you, that, my observations, my personal observations are those cars are from people that are not in this town. Those are cars that could have parked in New Britain at the parking garage. I really don't think, if we have land near a transit facility, we should not be building parking for other people coming from out of town to park at the transit station. We should be building development there so that people either live or work there, getting on or off the bus, or on or off the train making Newington a destination, not a place where you can drive in and drive out as fast as possible. We really need to start thinking bigger than a parking lot for the station and any other transit station that we have.

I looked at the housing plan, I saw that there is a strong push to maybe make that affordable housing and affordable housing for all, central building projects. I'm not really opposed to that but I just would like to tell you that my perspective is a little bit different. I work out in the Farmington Valley, I will tell you that I am pretty proud of Newington because I think it is a place where anybody with a variety of incomes can come and find a home. I think we have a great diversity in our housing stock and inventory. We have a lot of housing options for people with a variety of budgets to get into. I don't think it should necessarily be mandatory but I certain have no opposition to affordable housing being provided.

I think those are most of my comments. Thank you very much.

Chairman Pane: Thank you. Anybody else? Did you want to speak again?

## **VI. REMARKS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Woods: I think it is good that we had this meeting tonight and I think you will see that we are staying in touch with (inaudible.) Please keep in mind that there is nothing definite, it is identifying areas in town that we feel can be either developed or should be developed. That is not to say that they are going to be.

This is just a kind of road map, (inaudible) and then it all has to come back to us. Just because it is in here doesn't mean, affordable housing, high rise apartment complex, shopping plaza, it doesn't mean that it is going to be developed. We identified in this plan an area where a developer wants to come in, we have to make sure that, especially if this is a residential area, that our residents are protected. That is our job, and we take that very seriously. We do need this kind of a road map to help us, not only in respect to developers and I think that the Chairman has talked about this also, the only way we are going to continue to grow our grand list, and we need to grow our grand list somewhere around three to five percent to keep up with the tax increases. Unless there is somewhere here that knows how to beat the system and stop the inflationary that is build into MDC, our union contracts, benefits, then we could slow down but we're looking at a two to three percent increase every year, and if there is no where to go, I think we have relied very heavily in the last twenty-five years or so on the Berlin Turnpike and on retail that has been really really strong. Thirty-five to forty years ago, industrial, machine shops, the problem with the State of Connecticut is that all of the machine shops there is no property tax on items inside of the building. So we have a building, with no personal property taxes paid at all. So we switched to retail, and retail is not going to be there. We are going to need to redesign the Berlin Turnpike in the next ten, twenty, thirty years. The big box stores are leaving, there is no doubt in my mind. If you look at our grand list, those and apartments and Eversource are the leading the list.

Chairman Pane: Commissioner Woods is absolutely correct. This is a guide, this is a process that is still in the works. We are going to continue to make adjustments and we are going to continue to invite the public to our meetings. This is for all Boards and Commissions to use. We invited all the Boards and Commissions to this meeting. We will continue to invite them to our next meeting. We do need to think out of the box a little bit and think how we are going to grow the grand list with redevelopment and so hopefully we can use some of the things that are in this. We can improve our town center possibly and other areas. I don't think anybody has made up their mind on the train station or Francis Avenue or Cedar Street, I think everybody just want to improve the areas. If I don't see a train station at Francis Avenue I still would like to see something improved over in that area so that the residents could be proud of the area, and I don't think you are with some of the businesses in the Industrial area there. When there is residential very close to Industrial properties, it is very important to have a good buffer zone with trees and some extra land so that the residential property is protected. That is one of the things that I am most concerned about, making sure that our residential property is protected from blight and from the expansion of either retail or industrial. I'm also very concerned about giving up too much of our Industrial property. There are still a lot of small businesses that would probably like to have their own property, maybe small industrial parks for smaller businesses might be something we could look into.

Commissioner Sobieski: Glenn, you did a great job with all of the moving parts here, as far as the (inaudible) and as far as the Francis Avenue area, I know that the piece between those two properties is owned by Amtrack and I can't see them giving that up. As far as the residencies go, I agree one hundred percent with Commissioner Pane that they need to be protected with buffers and not have any residents suffer any (inaudible.) Thank you.

Chairman Pane: Any other comments from the Commissioners? Our Town Planner?

Craig Minor: Before you adjourn, a little housekeeping to do.

Chairman Pane: Glenn, do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Glenn Chalder: Just for the Commission in terms of the next steps in the process, following tonight's meeting we have agreed that we are going to take the minutes and the notes from

the meetings, we are going to organize these for the Commission relative to the chapters in the Plan. I believe the next meeting with the Commission on the POCD is two weeks out, and is March 11<sup>th</sup>, and I think at that point in time we will work with the Commission, make tweaks if you will, to respond to these comments and other concerns of the Commission and then move ahead. Just so the community is aware, we are under statutory guidelines to try to adopt the Plan before July, so we will be moving purposely forward and I will see you on March 11<sup>th</sup> and I will get you this material as far in advance of the meeting as we can to help guide our discussion. So that's our goal. Thank you very much.

Chairman Pane: Thank you. We'll go to the Town Planner for his concerns.

Craig Minor: The March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, do you want me to schedule 6:00 o'clock and have the regular meeting after or do you want to have it at 7:00 o'clock, your regular time. There is one public hearing on an accessory apartment which should be resolved fairly quickly so I would suggest that we start at 7:00 o'clock, but obviously it's the Commission's decision.

Chairman Pane: If it is a small, not much on the schedule, we can start at 7:00. We'll start with the POCD on the schedule and then we will go into our regular meeting.

Craig Minor: Okay, thank you.

Chairman Pane: Is there anything else?

## **VII. ADJOURN**

Commissioner Sobieski moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Woods. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis,  
Recording Secretary