

NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

January 22, 2020

Special Meeting

Chairman Pane called the special meeting of the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Conference Room L100 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 David Lenares
- Commissioner Stanley Sobieski
- Commissioner Braverman-A
- Commissioner Thomas Gill-A
- Commissioner Bryan Haggerty-A

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Anthony Claffey

Staff Present

Craig Minor, Town Planner

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Review and Discuss First Draft POCD

Chairman Pane asked if any of the Commissioners had any comments/concerns about the Draft of the 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development. This is the first draft of the Plan containing the information provided in the booklets presented previously. It is still necessary to schedule a public informational meeting by March or April and then a public hearing meeting to adopt the Plan.

Commissioner Sobieski voiced some concern about the classification of streets on the map on page 79 since state funding depends on the classification of roads. He questioned the classification of Main Street, Stoddard Avenue which was shown as a collector, and Maple Hill Avenue which was shown as a local collector not a major collector.

Glenn Chalder indicated that the information on page 79 was information that he had received from the State of Connecticut.

Commissioner Woods said that if this was the latest information received from the State then the DOT map should be used for the report.

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Commissioner Woods also praised the report as a good document, good about explaining the big picture. He thought there should be focus on replacing the local grocery store and with Keeney closing some of their facility there must be some way to energize the center and the land and shops facing the municipal parking lot.

East side development of the land on Constance Leigh Drive is an important area to develop and contact should be made with Hartford Hospital, owner of that land, to see what plans they might have to develop the property.

Glenn Chalder said that not developing the town center was holding the town back and the concept of retail and housing should be considered to make the center more vibrant and more accessible to residents. He felt that with the train station which is being proposed for Cedar Street, it was important to develop the town center prior to any development near or around the station. It was important to start development of the town center first.

He indicated that the street layout in the center of town made it difficult for a smooth, walkable area, and the non-connectibility of the streets in the center did not lend to easy walking for people who might wish to do so.

Additional restaurants in the center should add to vitality but there should be caution since that can be too successful. Chairman Pane cautioned against too many restaurant indicating the problems that West Hartford is having with parking in Blue Back Square due to the large number of restaurants and their success. There may be the possibility that restaurants may be interested in the center if it was revitalized since the over population in Blue Back Square may drive some to relocate.

Craig Minor indicated that Keith Chapman, Town manager was interested in playing a role in the redevelopment of the center and recruitment of new businesses for the area.

Page 62, Natural Resources, should indicate trees and shrubs native to North America and to our zone. More than one type of buffer should be used, maintaining a maximum protective buffer between the residences and any nearby businesses.

Page 74, Community and Facility Strategies, Chairman Pane did not agree with Item 2 under Action Steps regarding the expansion of the library and felt that a master plan should be followed. He indicated that some towns review their CIP yearly to account for town improvement. After review, items 2 through 4 under Action Steps on page 74 were deleted.

From the public, Gail Budrejko felt the plan should show stronger interest in acquiring the remaining land on Cedar Mountain and that Item 3 under Policies was too weak to indicate the interest in maintaining Cedar Mountain that was prevalent in town. Item 3 was changed to Continue to preserve Cedar Mountain as open space. It should be made clear that a goal of the community was to acquire as much land as possible on Cedar Mountain and it was a focus area as desirable open space.

Commissioner Woods suggested adding trails, starting at the Young Farm, down to the schools, over to Churchill Park for residents to use. Portions of the trails can be completed yearly until a walkable trail for residents is completed in the future. During this time, money can be put aside each year for acquiring additional land on Cedar Mountain.

Commissioner Sobieski cautioned about designing trails near the Amtrack tracks without consulting with Amtrack. There had been a previous plan for walking trails but the liability issue when near the Amtrack property was a problem and Amtrack was not happy with that plan.

There was a trail system from Churchill Park to Maple Hill and Commissioner Sobieski questioned what happened to that. Gail Budrejko said that the trail was unwalkable, and had deteriorated.

Gail Budrejko said that redevelopment in the town center was important before development of the area around the train station. Two developments are not possible without cannibalizing one for the other. Main Street and Cedar Street with the high volume of traffic make walking in the center difficult for pedestrians and connectivity.

Chairman Pane felt that concentration should be on the town center. The train station area could be pie in the sky, and it is necessary to be careful with the remaining industrial land that the town has. The land around the station can be used as is and anything can be put there. Commissioner Woods felt that the state would be looking for some housing around the station to promote the commuter plan that they had.

Chairman Pane said there were three areas of development to consider, the National Welding site, the West Hill area, and the TVDD regulations. The Day Street area is ripe for development, the area around the Shephard Steel property. Commissioner Fox said that in order to do that some property might have to be taken by the town.

From the Public: Sharon Braverman suggested that Central Connecticut State University be contacted to see if they had any plans for student housing in the train station site. Glenn Chalder had not received any information from Central about any plans.

The changes to the draft will be made by Glenn and February 26<sup>th</sup> can be scheduled for the public input. Changes can still be made by the Commission at their February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was suggested that the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting could be scheduled for Meeting Room L101 with an overflow crowd in Room L100 if necessary. It was also suggested that the Senior Center could be used for that meeting.

There was discussion about Chapter 3, Community Input since the Commissioners felt that it represented only a small fraction on the community.

#### **IV. ADJOURN**

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Woods and seconded by Commissioner Sobieski. The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis,  
Recording Secretary