I. CALL TO ORDER
   • Chairman Zelek called the special meeting to order at 6:58 p.m. in Conference Room L100

II. ROLL CALL
   Jeffrey Zelek
   Andreas Sadil
   Kathleen Marie Clark
   John Casasanta
   Philip Block
   Alan Paskewich
   John Bachand

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS
     (each speaker limited to 2 minutes)
     • None

V. NEW BUSINESS
   A. Discussion With POCD (Plan Of Conservation And Development) Consultant
      • Glenn Chalder, I am with planning and consulting firm called Planimetrics out of Simsbury. I have been in existence for 25 years. I help communities develop plans of conservation and development; worked with Newington on their 2010 plan, so we are familiar with the community. You sometimes call it the 2020 plan, I go by the date it was adopted. We also help communities craft land use regulations, often comprehensive revisions and zoning regulations and we worked with Fuss & O'Neil on the LID regulations. I am excited to work with Newington again on their current POCD. The POCD is meant to be an advisory document that looks at the future of the community the conditions and trends that are effecting it today, trying to lay out policies and action steps to try and make it a better community. What are the challenges we face, what do want to accomplish and get that down on paper. If we don’t do this we end up in a reactionary situation. In calmer times it is wise to ponder these situations and put together action steps and strategies to help us get there. Under state statute a plan cannot be older than 10 years and if it is older than 10 years, then the town can be ineligible for discretionary grants until it is brought up to date. Our goal is to have this plan adopted by July of 2020. So I am working with the planning and zoning commission and we started off with a public meeting in August. The purpose of the meeting was to learn about the issues that people care about. About 75 people attended and we actually got some very good feedback. The process I am using with the commission is this: I will be putting together briefing booklets for them, which are hints of chapters in the plan and are meant to promote discussion and feedback. There are things in the booklet from me that they may look at say I don’t like that, get that out
or they may think something is a great idea, but not strong enough yet. The first set of booklets is going them to next Wednesday and we have scheduled the next three months for dealing with the topics. The plan will consist of five main topics. The first piece will be introduction, which contains three booklets including an overview the statutory requirements for a plan and why it helpful for a community to have a plan, the second booklet in the introductory phase we are calling conditions and trends, it is an overview of the demographics of Newington; it is a very different community than it was 10 years ago, so we want to put this into context so we can compare ourselves to other communities, and understand how we are changing and what type of community we will be on 20-30 years. The third booklet in that series will be a summary of the public meeting results; I tabulated all of the results of what people care about, important issues; I am going to share that with the commission because my hope is that it will guide the planning process; it is meant to be reflective of what people care about. That is the first element. The second major theme of the plan is what I call conservation strategies and there are three booklets in this series – first is natural resource protection, second is open space preservation and the third is community character. The are issues that the community is likely to want to protect or preserve. There will also be another booklet in that series, not sure if it rises to the level of its own chapter, but it is on concept and sustainability, which has not been in the plan before. So that is the purpose of the TPZ meeting on September 25th. This meeting is particularly timely so you can suggest things to me that I consider for inclusion in the booklet. In October we will be talking about development related issues – we are currently projecting that there will be four booklets in that series and one will be about the town center, which is the heart and soul of the community, but it is not the town center that is used to be. What are our goals and strategies for that? The next booklet will probably be transit notes, Newington Junction, Cedar Street and the new the train station is proposed. History has shown that some of the major transition points in communities is in response to transportation changes so we can try to take advantage of this opportunity. The next booklet in the series is business development – Berlin Turnpike; overall tax base, how do we strengthen our businesses in the community and the last is residential development – do we have the housing we need to meet our communities needs. The next chapter is called infrastructure – it deals with community facilities, vehicular transportation, pedestrian, bicycle, bus and rail fall under that as well as other transportation; also utility infrastructure - water, sewer, electricity, wired and wireless communications; do we have the infrastructure we need for the future. The last section of the plan will be about implementation. To go through this effort and not follow through on it is a planners nightmare. In the 2010 plan, there are a number of recommendations, but it doesn’t assign responsibility as to who is responsible. Our goal is to convince the commission that the plan will be better and stronger that there are responsibilities assigned. Some might be the conservation commission, some will be town council, some will be the highway department, it all depends on what the nature of the recommendation is. That is our goal and aspiration. The plan is the statutory responsibility of the planning and zoning commission. Through the fall we will be doing revisions with them and possibly have another public meeting in January. I have been conducting meetings with different people and departments, boards and commissions trying to get different perspectives on the community. Thank you for this opportunity to get together.

- Chairman Zelek asked if anyone was able to attend the public hearing.
- Commissioner Clark stated that she watched some of it online.
Chairman Zelek stated that he was there, as well as Commissioner Sadil. Chairman Zelek asked what some of the public's major concerns were.

Mr. Chalder stated that it was a different type of public meeting. We broke it up into different exercises. We had a good representation of different areas of town. Average age of people in attendance was 43 years old; trending older, but there is a wealth of knowledge there. We asked people to think about Newington and what made them proud – community facilities were things that people were very supportive of. Open space was another. We next asked people what they were sorry about and traffic was a big issue, community character - some the politics, social media divisiveness, criticism, sniping, people wished people would behave better. Lack of maintenance at some of the municipal facilities, the parks and the pools, people think they can do a better job. The next exercise was planning points, there were twelve boxes which people could put points in. Open space did the best with 620 point, twice as high as the next one. Conservation topics did well and there was concern about development topics. It is a good structure for the plan and it is something that the shareholders care about.

Chairman Zelek stated that accountability was one issue he heard about, did that make it in to your booklet?

Mr. Chalder stated that the scripting pad comments are all in there. Issues related to implementation are in the booklet. Early on in my meetings with the TPZ, they stated that they wanted this to focus on implementation. It is important to remember that it is an advisory document, it is just suggestions to make your community a better place. There will be two pieces – policies and action steps. If you have a responsibility you can follow through.

Chairman Zelek asked if there was a responsibility, especially of department heads, to read the plan once it is finished. My sense is that they don't.

Mr. Chalder stated that it is not a requirement.

Commissioner Block asked if there were any interest in having the department heads report back to the town manager stating that they read the plan.

Mr. Chalder stated that there is whole section of the plan based on implementation and we are going to try to layout the best practices and operating procedures to implement the plan.

E. Hinckley stated that if you start assigning, they are going to want to know about that and will read it because they are wanting to follow through.

Mr. Chalder stated that there is going to be a section of the plan about the operating budget and capital budget. Again, the communities that have done a successful job and are happy with their plans have implemented the policies and procedures. We will do the best we can. When we all work together. When the town people see that the plan is being implemented it is good for all. Optimistic.

Chairman Zelek asked if the members of the TPZ attend conferences or training sessions.

Mr. Chalder stated that even the CT Bar association offers free courses.

Chairman Zelek stated that he doesn't see any of the TPZ commissioners taking advantage of courses offered by UConn on land use or how to read maps or how to run a meeting. Do they keep track of the courses they take? The feeling around town is that the you want people who are in the best position.

Mr. Chalder stated that the challenge you end up with is how to you get them to do this. How do we measure that? Let me think about it.
• Commissioner Block stated that there are also budgetary issues and only so many people can attend something.
• Mr. Chalder stated that is true, but how many lawsuits does training cover? I can make that argument that a trained and educated commissioner is best for practices and procedures.
• Commissioner Clark stated that she attends about 6 conferences a year and most of them are free or really inexpensive and I have not been reimbursed for ages, but it is still worth being an educated member of this commission. I will also like to make the point that the political parties appoint liaisons to commission and sometimes they show up to every meeting and sometimes they never show up to the meetings. Does anybody supervise that? And if they are appointed by the town committee they should follow up on their participation. They have been elected by the public and it is part of their job.
• Commissioner Bachand stated that training should be statutory for TPZ, because like you said they are responsible for the final word on the 2030 plan.
• Mr. Chalder stated that the liaisons are an important thing that Newington has that other communities do not. So we can use the liaison to keep track of the fact there was a bar association meeting what did you learn and can you give us a quick update. There are tools and techniques that we can use and hope that self-training will be part of the culture. Hopefully the appointments get made for better reasons. Don't want to tell the council what to do. The problem with the plan is you can't tell people what to do, you need to figure out ways to implement it. Going to try to push that as far as I can.
• Chairman Zelek stated that instead of saying it is mandatory training they should say to consider training.
• Commissioner Bachand stated that is should be statutory if you are making those types of decisions.
• Mr. Chalder stated that the American Bar Association has free training sessions on the types of situations commissioners can find themselves in, especially if you have a contentious application. Even an affordable housing application, it is a whole different animal than what they are used to and you don't get to treat it the same way. They are telling you what you have to do. The message is a better trained commissioner does a better job.
• Chairman Zelek stated that he wants to get back to the conservation part of it. Is there a section on sustainability?
• Mr. Chalder stated that there is a non-profit organization in Connecticut called Sustainable CT and they developed a point scoring system for keeping track of sustainability initiatives. Communities participate by just being members or you can seek bronze, silver or gold certification. They have been around for a while and about 70 communities have received bronze certification, and every August is a new application process. My understanding is that Newington has started the application process and will be submitting that in August 2020. The booklet champions this. Sustainability also incudes economic sustainability. We are having bigger storms, and our draining systems were not built to handle those storms. The booklets are short, but can be expanded to include more information.
• Chairman Zelek asked if there was anything in the booklets regarding climate change.
• Mr. Chalder stated that some communities are pushing solar and what should Newington's approach be? There are other ways to push that. Hamden is pushing street trees; it makes a difference. Not only for CO2, but also home values.
• Chairman Zelek asked if there were anything in the booklet regarding open space.
Mr. Chalder stated that he wishes there was a plan in the 40’s and 50’s that addressed this issue. The big opportunity for Newington is Cedar Mountain and we should devote resources there. There are other pieces of land in town that could provide the foundation for an open space network. The red lines are ways to interconnect open spaces to create greenways conceptually. A green way could be an undeveloped area or trails and pathways. How can we create the greenways from what we have. My hope in Newington is to create the illusion of having more open space than we have.

Chairman Zelek asked what about preserving smaller open spaces like a residential lot.

Mr. Chalder stated that you have to buy it. All open space is valuable in its own way. The open space committee has given me some ideas on what they would like.

Commissioner Block stated that one of the issues with donating land in Newington is that most of the residential lots are just large enough and they don’t have the ability to donate a piece of it.

Mr. Chalder stated that this is one of the hardest parts of the plan. Some communities state that this is what we hope to accomplish; or other communities no, they don’t want to get involved.

Commissioner Block suggested that for desired properties, the taxes be abated and upon death, the land will become property of the town.

Mr. Chalder stated that requires work from the top on down. The issue in towns is affordable housings and people are staying in their homes longer. You don’t have to pay taxes, it becomes a lien on your property and some people like that or not. First is to set a goal and objective for a green way plan. Any good plan needs three parts. It needs a vision of what we hope to accomplish; it needs the tools available to put it in to fruition and it needs the organization that is going to go ahead and do it. If you missing one of those three things, it is going to fall apart. The POCD is good on the vision side.

Chairman Zelek stated that we had a violation recently in where a sign was affixed to a tree in a conservation easement and our town manager basically told us to back off and that we didn’t have any enforcement capabilities. What do other towns do in that situation?

Mr. Chalder stated that he doesn’t usually get involved in stuff like this. Don’t have a lot of direct experience. Sorry.

Commissioner Bachand asked if the plan will be the same size as the current one?

Mr. Chalder stated that it should be no longer that it is now. It will be clear, concise and focused.

Commissioner Bachand stated it was a statutory requirement. Are they all called POCD’s?

Mr. Chalder stated that the state has a plan called Conservation and Development Policies Plan, but it is not an effective document. The section of the statute that deals with this is Section 8-23.

Commissioner Bachand stated that it is non-binding.

Mr. Chalder stated that it is an advisory document which can be a strength and a weakness.

Commissioner Bachand asked if any towns put more teeth into their plans?

Mr. Chalder stated that towns are looking to make their plan stickier. The value of the plan comes from being proactive and how to approach things that may occur in the future.
• Commissioner Bachand stated that the plan is called the 2030 plan, that is the maximum, you can’t go further than 10 years.
• Mr. Chalder stated that he encourages communities to take a longer view.
• Commissioner Paskewich asked if it was the town planners’ responsibility to interact and encompass the plan itself.
• Mr. Chalder stated that he would be the ambassador for the plan, the statutory responsibility rests with the commission. He is an employee of the town that staffs the commission and would hopefully be cognizant of the plan and promote its recommendations. It needs to be a team approach. The community want these things.
• Commissioner Paskewich asked Mr. Chalder if he was going to be working on this with the planner as well.
• Mr. Chalder stated that he meets with him quite often; emails him daily. The town has a regulation for the ridgeline set back area, it is worded very poorly and we are trying to figure out a way to map it. Trying to work through issues so once the plan is adopted Craig is the ambassador and can see it through. I plan on working on this until its adoption and target date of June 9, 2020.
• Commissioner Clark stated that Newington over the past few years has shown an abysmal protection of their trees as part of the construction you see all around us. Both residents and us have felt that it was totally unnecessary to cut down trees without adequate warning. Do you have any ideas how we as a commission can wave the banner and make it be a part of the plan. Don’t expect the town manager or TPZ to care one wht about that.
• Mr. Chalder stated that the conservation commission in Avon got very little funding from the town and they decided to start a Street Tree Planting Program, but they realized by planting them in the street right of way, they were going to cause problems with the sidewalks, etc. So they bought saplings, seedling in bulk and come down to town hall and pick them up and buy them cheep. The only caveat was that you had to plant it within ten feet of the street line. The challenge you have is that the conservation type stuff get pushed aside because you have to take care of inland wetland stuff. Eversource has a great list of trees on their website that are power line friendly. Trees help drainage, soak up water, are good for air quality. There are many ways to sell it. We bought the trees in bulk and went from there.
• Commissioner Paskewich stated that we are seeing a lot of land devastated by developers on the weekends and they are not litigating after. We make guidelines for specific trees, but they have a very laxed position on it.
• Commissioner Clark stated that when we get planting lists they always have invasive species on them and I have to ask them to remove them.
• Mr. Chalder stated that you need a regulation in the TPZ with the recommended trees. It doesn’t stop someone from a garden store and buying an invasive.
• Commissioner Bachand stated that regarding the trees we have a blank canvass. Think before you cut.
• Mr. Chalder stated that New Canaan passed a regulation that if you clear cut your property and came in for a zoning application, you needed to calculate into your drainage system the removal of the trees. Cannot stop anyone from cutting down trees on their property.
• Chairman Zelek asked Mr. Chalder if he was familiar with the fuel spill we had in town.
• Mr. Chalder stated that he heard about it, it came up in some of the surveys. It was a sorry and sad point for people. The fuel spill was an accident.
• Chairman Zelek stated that it was an accident but it was also due to poor maintenance.
• Mr. Chalder stated that he would like to think that an accident is an accident.
• Commissioner Sadil asked what is the next sept.
• Mr. Chalder stated that his client is the TPZ. They get to discuss the books first. Our goal is to get through the booklets and put together a plan. Urge you to stay informed and keep track of the timeline. The booklets will be emailed to the TPZ as well as provided to them in paper form.
• Commissioner Clark stated that they are public documents, how do we access them?
• Mr. Chalder stated that some communities post the booklets online as soon as they get them; some wait until they have reviewed them first and then they put them online. They are my client and will let them know your concern.
• Chairman Zelek asked if they see anything that needs to be changed should they contact him?
• Mr. Chalder stated that he will not be in the position to make changes, you will need to talk with TPZ. I try to work in an open and transparent way. The first set of booklets are of discussion with the commission. The draft plan will most likely be available at the beginning of the year.
• E. Hinckley stated that he asked for the draft version of the plan be sent to the commission for review when done. Didn’t know about booklets at that point.
• Mr. Chalder stated that he uses the booklets first then provide the plan after discussion.
• Commissioner Bachand asked if he was using the old plan as template or starting from scratch.
• Mr. Chalder stated that when he helped with the previous plan there was a limited budget; this time the budget is more robust and he will working more with the implementation of the plan.
• Commissioner Bachand asked if was intended to be in print version.
• Mr. Chalder stated that he would like to believe it is. It is a dynamic document that can get tweaked and updated. The statutory requirements is a 65 day waiting period for CROG and the council to provide comments
• Chairman Zelek asked if anyone had any more conservation related questions.
• Mr. Chalder stated that to recap, natural resource conservation is in the plan, it builds on what is in here and LID stormwater, water resources, land resources, floral, fauna, Cedar Mountain is a priority for residents and a greenway system. Community character is another priority, special places, Eddy Farm and sustainability are all part of the plan. I will deliver the booklets to the town, and how they get distributed I don’t know. My protocol is to deliver them one week before the meeting. I suggest you have a working session regarding the booklets and make comments and get back to the TPZ with suggestions. I am sure that they would appreciate constructive comments.
• E. Hinckley stated that if you have comments or suggestions I can put them in memo form and send them to TPZ.
• Mr. Chalder stated provided a schedule to timelines and dates (will be emailed to E. Hinckley for distribution). Mr. Chalder stated the best time for input are at the public information meetings and the public hearing. Comments early are always better than late. Monitor the booklets as they go and talk about them and make notes as necessary. Thank you for this opportunity.
VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS  
(each speaker limited to 2 minutes)  
• None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Commissioner Block. Seconded by Commissioner Bachand. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Gibbon  
Recording Secretary