Vice-Chairman Michael Camillo called the special meeting of the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room L101 in the Newington Town Hall, 131 Cedar Street, Newington, Connecticut.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chairman Camillo: Two weeks ago we lost Frank Aieta. He was a big part of this town and he kept things moving, definitely will leave a hole in the town. I’d like to have a moment of silence. Thank you.

II. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Commissioners Present

Commissioner Michael Camillo
Commissioner Michael Fox
Commissioner Domenic Pane
Commissioner Stanley Sobieski
Commissioner Stephen Woods
Commissioner John Bottalico-A
Commissioner Hyman Braverman-A

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Anthony Claffey
Commissioner Giangrave-A

Staff Present

Craig Minor, Town Planner

A. Presentation by Glen Chalder, AICP and Discussion of “Briefing Booklets” on the following Topics: POCD Overview, Conditions and Trends; Community Input, Natural Resources, Open Space; Community Character, Sustainability/Resiliency.

Glenn Chalder: Thank you very much. It’s been a while since I have been before the Commission in a working session. We are in the process now of preparing the Plan of Conservation and Development for the 2020 year. The process that I would like to use with you is the booklets that you have that are meant to be the discussion of leading items we can talk about. I understand that we have an hour tonight, before your regular meeting, so I would like to walk you through the booklets and answer any questions that you may have about how these tie into the process. At this point in time I think it is fair to say that the Plan itself will probably have five components to it, the first of which is kind of an introduction which are booklets one through three that set the stage if you will for the plan issues that are coming. The next section of the Plan could be Conservation Strategies. It is a plan of conservation and development and tonight I think that will include booklets four, five, six and seven. That is the conservation strategy. In October I will deliver booklets to you on development strategies like the town center, opportunity areas in Newington, economic development itself, etc, and in November we will talk about infrastructure strategy,
transportation, community facilities and things like that, and then over the holidays I will be
crafting the first draft of the Plan based on your feedback on these booklets as we go forward
and planning on having a draft plan in January and then moving toward possible adoption by
June, I think that is our target. So, I think our protocol tonight given the time that is available,
I would like to go through these booklets. I think we are going to fly through booklets one,
two and three because I think that those are factual background and not policies. You can
stop me and I would like to spend as much time as we can on booklets four, five, six and
seven because there are possible strategies in there that you may agree or disagree with, or
you think are too weak or two strong, and we should take this opportunity to start to fix those
things. How does that sound for a strategy going forward?

Commissioner Pane: Just a question. You didn’t mention that the plan has section two or
six. You are planning to have every section that we have existing in the plan now?

Glenn Chalder: Essentially yes, I think there is a new chapter on the concept of sustainability
which is going to be a new chapter I am going to recommend for consideration and
discussion, but other than that, the chapters here essentially replicate or mimic the chapters
in the current plan, so we are updating, if you will the current document to reflect the issues
that we face today and anticipate over the next ten years.

Booklet number one is just an introduction if you will, I think if the Commissioners are
comfortable with the documents they can be put on the town’s web site, or are they there?

Craig Minor: No, I held off putting them on the web site until the Commission had a change
to look at them, but they will be up tomorrow or the next day.

Glenn Chalder: This is an introduction if you will, kind of gives an overview of the statutory
requirements, gives a brief overview of the schedule which I just summarized with you, and
summarized the vision statement of 2020, so I think it’s just an introduction. Any questions or
thoughts on the introduction?

Commissioner Pane: I have a question. At the bottom of the vision statement it says, part of
this POCD it is envisioned that the goal statements will be replaced by goal statements for
each of the policies. Is that a mistake, or…..

Glenn Chalder: I think it should be that this vision statement will be replaced by goal
statements going forward. Right now there are chapters in the plan which really don’t have
goal statements and we have the vision statement in the front. I think by the time that you get
to those chapters you kind of have forgotten the vision statement, so I think it would help the
visibility and friendliness of the plan to parse this out and put it relative to the chapters. We’ll
get there, our goal for natural resources is blank, and then parse this out.

Commissioner Pane: So you will have a vision statement and goal statements? You want to
change the vision statement to goal statement?

Glenn Chalder: I think this vision statement touches on so many different elements that we
could take these sentences out and put them into the other parts of the plan where they
directly relate.

Commissioner Pane: I’m not in favor of that.

Glenn Chalder: With us working together, I’ll be making notes on my copy and what I hear
here, keep the vision statement, so we will work on that going forward.
Commissioner Pane: I think you are right on one aspect, we are missing some goal statements, we should probably add goal statements to wherever we are missing them, to meet our vision.

Glenn Chalder: I will draft that for the future. Anything else?

Vice-Chairman Camillo: Commissioner Fox?

Commissioner Fox: No.

Vice-Chairman Camillo: Commissioner Sobieski?

Commissioner Sobieski: No.

Vice-Chairman Camillo: Commissioner Woods?

Commissioner Woods: No

Glenn Chalder: Booklet number two is an overview of what is called conditions and trends relative to Newington. We have a fascinating history, really interesting if you think about it in the context of where we find ourselves today. There is demographic information, population projections, it’s interesting that the state population projection shows Newington continuing to grow, or actually accelerating in the future. This is actually a little bit different than what other communities are seeing and experiencing. Now a projection is not an actual outcome. It’s based on projecting recent trends. The fact is that our demographics are staring to change. There is an indication that growth is possibly in our future in a lot of different ways, and this is something to think about as part of the plan.

So there is some information in here about the changing nature of the community. I think the most significant trend overall for us, is not only is our population increasing, but the age composition of the community is changing. We were joking a little before the meeting about getting older, and in fact, the community is getting older. So some of the issues that have been concerns in the past in terms of school and parks, and recreation facilities, things like that are often oriented towards youth and in future things like senior centers or housing for active adults or elderly and other things like that, it’s important to keep in our mind that Newington in the future is probably going to be a little different than the Newington of the past and to be aware of that and consider that going forward.

Also there is some information here on economic conditions. Overall housing information, comparing us to adjacent communities, information on land use and zoning, again, for people who don’t deal with this on a regular basis, as the Commission does, and then fiscal conditions affecting the community. Most of this is to set the stage for the chapters that will follow.

Craig Minor: There is a chart on community diversity back in 2010. Are there any projections on what our diversity will be in 2020, projections on what our population will be?

Glenn Chalder: The state, the Connecticut State (inaudible) Center does not do that. So the 2020 census will be our next major snapshot on that as to what the data holds, and that will probably be issued I think in 2021 or so. Projections are one of the hardest things to do because what we do is, we take projections that occurred over recent times, and say if this continues, this is what is going to happen. It’s almost like a shotgun blast, because there can
be quite a bit of variety and demographic patterns. What is happening in the early 2000’s can definitely change by the economic situation, starting in about 2006. That changed migration and other facts. I have not seen projections related to diversity, but I can always take a look for it.

Any other thoughts or questions about diversity?

Commissioner Pane: On land use in Newington. The numbers appear to be different, for instance, residential land, we have, back in the previous plan we have 3,372 acres, and now all of a sudden we have 3,540 acres. I want to be able to compare to the last plan of development and it's hard to, I don't understand why, I can understand if we developed some more properties it should show, but what we start with should still be what we started with.

Glenn Chalder: There are 8,383 acres in town, so we know that. Based on the assessor’s record, we assign land use categories to the land use assessors record and we came up with these estimates of acreage and it’s shown on the map, so I think, the categories are here, I think....

Commissioner Pane: See, community facilities, institutional, it was 767 acres and all of a sudden we lost land?

Glenn Chalder: No, I think it is how the land is categorized.

Commissioner Pane: I understand but we already have something that was categorized here in this plan, don’t we want to use the same categories?

Glenn Chalder: No, for example, one of the things that we struggled with a little bit was the category of the land owned by Central over on the western side of the railroad tracks. The question is, ten years ago it was categorized as institutional. There is nothing over there. A piece of vacant land which is owned by a state agency. At this point in time it is likely to be undeveloped for quite some time in the future, until the campus plans evolve, so in this plan we had a choice of either categorizing it as vacant land, which would increase that category, but what we felt was that because it is managed by a state agency, we threw it into the managed space category. So these are the types of changes that reflect the evolution of our thinking in terms of the (inaudible) So the numbers are a perspective if you will of how the land uses in the community are changing and evolution of thought.

Commissioner Pane: Okay, understood. Then the only other thing is, in the last plan we had the definitions down below the land uses so that people knew what dedicated open space was, managed open space, and it appears that you are going to take that out.

Glenn Chalder: No, I think that is a very good point, I have space here in the side bar, that’s a good observation, thank you. Anything else on booklet two?

Commissioner Woods: Yes, I find it very interesting that we are looking at probably over ten percent increase in population over the next twenty years.

Glenn Chalder: I think that is a reflection of what, I thought abut this, because you are getting Newington behaving differently than a number of other communities in Connecticut. I also think that the early suburban growth situation was different than other communities. People bought in Newington and they have lived here for quite some time, love and enjoy the community, but it’s time for people to move on or pass on and so new housing units come on
line, or some new residents might buy that housing unit, so that could have been a house occupied by one or two people ten years ago could now have a family of four. So, given the number of people who have lived in Newington for a long period of time, there could be a generational shift going on with new households, so we aren't going to build ten percent new housing units, we don't have the space for it, but it's quite possible, how many kids graduate from Newington High School this year?

Commissioner Sobieski: Around three hundred.

Glenn Chalder: Okay, so we are losing three thousand people per decade, subject to graduation from high school. So, with the other housing in town, we could have a two person household replaced by a three person household, almost unnoticeable. Now when that happens across thousands of housing units, it changes our population. So, it's just a way to, we look at it, we see houses, but we don't always see the people inside. So it could be a reinvigoration, a younger population as well.

Commissioner Woods: I guess I would agree with you if you look at the median age projection, we are actually the highest we have ever been, but I don't see many families with more than two kids. There are some, but there are not many. I'm having a hard time wrapping my arms around that, that big of an increase. That's a pretty large increase, ten percent.

Glenn Chalder: But I think, again, I deal with this on a regular basis and the major thing is the census information shown for a community like Newington, that sixty to seventy percent of the housing in Newington is occupied by one or two people. That is a staggering number.

Commissioner Woods: We can take this a lot further since sixty three percent or forty percent of our households are at the high age, page 2-6.

Glenn Chalder: Looking at that too, I think that is a great point, let me add in that information about household size in 2010 to show you how the count of households has changed. I think that information is important.

Commissioner Woods: I think what we have, some of the issues that I have seen, is we have two distinct housing sizes. In the south end of town, medium to a little bit larger houses, but when you move to the north end of town, there are housing units that are 1200 to 1300 square feet, the zoning allows that, but in this day and age, it used to be, when you and I were growing up, there could be four kids in one bedroom. That doesn't seem to happen now.

Glenn Chalder: If you think about this, we are working now on the development section, and because Newington was an early suburban, with street cars, long time ago street cars, but even suburban automobile.....

Commissioner Woods: I remember the tracks on Main Street.

Glenn Chalder: So the question for Newington going forward is, do our zoning regulations allow our housing stock to adapt to people's changing needs? One of the things due to the advent of HGTV and other things like that, people want open floor plans. They want to add a bedroom or a first floor family room, enlarge the bathroom suite, and our side yard and other regulations are actually limiting people's ability to do this. It's kind of hard to get a variance for that. Could we allow our housing units to adapt as people's needs change? We want to make sure that our housing stays desirable.
Commissioner Woods: I don't want to diminish the stock of smaller houses, you need those so that people can make that leap into housing. In one aspect, I see that as good, but then in another it holds us back a little bit.

Craig Minor: Glenn, some of the frustration of this commission, and folks in Newington is that we have lots of naturally occurring affordable housing but we don't get credit for it. You brought up the point, but is there any way that you can include that information in the plan, how much naturally occurring affordable housing that we have in Newington?

Glenn Chalder: Sure.

Craig Minor: Okay, good.

Glenn Chalder: Anything else on booklet two?

Booklet three...

Commissioner Bottalico: I have a question. People per household, you were saying we have three hundred or so kids graduating, do you have a count of how many kids go back home to live with their parents? That seems to be a big trend in this country.

Glenn Chalder: It's hard to isolate that. The census calculates information based on the householder, the primary person and their spouse, and they give you some ranges for the people in the household, so it's generally, they focus historically on people under the age of five, usually pre-school, under the age of eighteen, because that is school age. From documentation, you can figure out that there are people older than eighteen, but that could be an aunt, an uncle, a lot of different stuff. But is there a way to figure out a 24-30 year old, I don't know that I have seen that data in the census. That is interesting.

Booklet three is a summary of the public information meeting that we had at the end of August. There were signs all around town, we had about seventy residents who showed up and participated in the meeting, took part in a couple of different exercises. The first was to put a dot where they lived. We found that we had good geographic representation in Newington but felt the attendance in the room trended older. It was higher than the median age. So again, some of the information that we are going to receive from this could be from longer term residents and might not reflect younger school age parents, etc.,

On page two and three we identified what people thought were the major (inaudible) in Newington and these are important because these are the things that people are happy about, like to encourage, makes the community sticky for them, so what did particularly well were community facilities, things related to community character and open space and you can see from the location of the dots on the map where those things were. I have, I can give you the cards if you would like to read through the cards yourself, it's kind of interesting. I've summarized, but some people went into some detail. On page four and five we asked about things people were sorry about. Sorry means that things that irritate people and they say in a sense, I wish somebody would do something about this. What are those things? Number one turned out to be traffic, number two were issues related to the character, sometimes politics or lack of civility, the bottom line of communications, and then lack of business or vacancy that people haven't seen before in Newington and some other issues. Transit, pedestrian, lack of facilities for those. So these are a little bit more spread out. You see that I used the category, other. These are things that really didn't (inaudible) but they were important enough for somebody that they were on their cards.
We then, on pages three to six, we gave people planning points to place in boxes, and then we tabulated them, thank you Craig for doing that, how the plan points were allocated, and what those issues were. So the number one issue in town that people put planning points into was open space, much higher than the other ones as you can see from the graph at the top of page seven in this booklet. Other issues that were important to people were traffic circulation, the town center, community facilities, business development, etc., but clearly open space and traffic circulation were definitely the top two issues that people were concerned about.

We had a facilitated discussion for the remainder of the meeting and that discussion is summarized on pages eight through eleven. Any questions or comments?

Commissioner Sobieski: I was at the meeting and I thought it was very impressive presentation, and I did see very few young people there. Just as an observation, maybe you might want to reach out, do it on the weekend, after dinner you are getting your kids ready for school, or bed or whatever. It's only a thought, but I was just wondering, what is your feeling? Have any other towns that you have worked with done that?

Glenn Chalder: I think, people are busy, weekends can be sports, activities, family time, they get to spend together. Some communities they requested either a telephone or an on-line survey as part of the plan, our budget didn’t allow for that, so we decided to go with this meeting, but I think what we can do is get to the draft plan stage, we are planning on having a public meeting once the Commission has looked through the draft, prior to that. I’m comfortable sharing this with the Community and we should pick a time when we think it is going to get us the best possible participation. January, there isn't as much going on, we may get better attendance.

Commissioner Braverman: I don't want to diminish the open space requirement, but I don't think there was enough participation to get a real count and I think we need to get more participants in that count so it would give us a better reading.

Glenn Chalder: Again, we get seventy people to show up in a community of thousands of people, is it a representative sample? We don't know that. These people were good to show up, so I think it is an indication for us and I think, from my work with this Commission on the prior plan, there is no doubt that open space is an important issue to people in this community, so I would look at this as quality information, not quantity. You can’t say for example that X percent felt that, I think that you are talking about X percent of the meeting, but not necessarily X percent of the town.

Booklet four is the first policy section of the Plan. The policy illustrated, to protect the water quality in environmentally significant areas. The first two pages are an overview of some of the resources in town, and the map on page three is meant to show the location of the resources so people will know, flood plain, is there a flood plain in their neighborhood? Where are the steep slopes, etc., where are the habitat areas near them, or where are they in town? On page four, there is some possible strategies for the 2020 POCD. I think these are a blend of what's in the current plan, updated if you will for current issues, and issues that the town has taken care of that are no longer issues and have been dropped from the list, and then emerging issues that have been added to the list. So, if the Commission is comfortable as we continue to work on, and develop the plan, these would become the policies and action steps for the 2030 Plan.

Now a policy is a strategy or a direction of the Commission and so you might consider these when reviewing a special permit or a zone change. Does it help get us closer to where we would like to be as a community? The action steps could be specific things that this
Commission or staff or other agencies in town would undertake. Say, we should amend the zoning regulations to require native species rather than all invasive species, or you may not agree with that, but I think that these are things that we can say, three or four years from now, yes, of the X number of recommendations in the plan, we have implemented 60 percent. So, I think this layout of strategies or policies or action steps you will find to be very helpful. You can’t implement a policy without something to act upon. I think that helps people. Any thoughts on natural resource strategy or issues?

Commissioner Woods: Probably one of the biggest contributing factors in water quality is salt treatment during the winter months. Some communities and the state have gone to different materials, but it’s salt. Every major artery in this town is owned by the State of Connecticut. We have no control over that at all and everything that I am reading says that is impacting the wetlands. So while it would be a great goal, I don’t know how we achieve that, because of that factor.

Glenn Chalder: I think your point is that we might be economical in a number of words, or a paid of words, which isn’t precise. That’s a great observation, let me go back and take a look at this statement and how to make it more reflective of the vision statement. I was trying to be.....

Commissioner Woods: I’m not against it, but it has to be at least obtainable.

Glenn Chalder: Anything else jump out at you on page four?

Commissioner Pane: On the back, on policies, we have incorporated the low impact development so you are saying just continue implementing that. The only thing I would like to add on that low impact development since our town is, a lot of it is unable to do the LID, some sort of reference, as applicable, or something because of the clay content in certain areas, it’s just not manageable sometimes.

Glenn Chalder: That’s a good observation too, thank you.

Ready to go to Booklet five?

Booklet five is devoted to open space.....

Commissioner Pane: I’m sorry, one more thing under natural resources, could you check in with the Town Engineer because he may have some ideas because of the MS4 and the work that the MDC is doing for quality and stuff, and he may have some suggestions for us to have in this section.

Glenn Chalder: The Town Engineer was contacted for my research for this, and much of his material, some gets put here, but some of the other will be in the booklet on community infrastructure system which includes storm drainage, etc., so it’s split a little bit but his comments will be incorporated.

Commissioner Pane: Thank you.

Glenn Chalder: Booklet five has to do with open space. I think that the goal statement is to strive to establish a town wide open space network. I think the interesting thing in Newington is that if we had, in the 1940’s and 50’s an open space satisfied as part of your subdivision regulation, we could have built a meaningful open space network along the way, but we didn’t.
Craig Minor: Because we couldn’t, by law.

Glenn Chalder: We couldn’t by law, so we, not that we were picked on by anybody, it’s just the state of timing. On the other hand, the State did come along and create the I291 corridor. If you look at the map which is on page 2 or 3, we have this sort of curved linear 291 right of way that could provide an opportunity for us to find a way to get trails or other things on the ground. So some people, there are some written comments on the crowd sorry cards that talked about people who drive their kids to Farmington to go on the trail. We actually have an opportunity here. DEEP, the State says they are broke, I get it, but there are open space and other grants, so there is a possibility for Newington to make a purse out of a pig’s ear in terms of some situations. So if we were to start looking at this, I think, the I291, listen getting across the Berlin Turnpike is going to be a challenge, no question about it, but it’s right in front of DOT’s headquarters. There could be ways for us to make this a signature type of greenway system for Newington and in the State. Then there is also (inaudible) and places like that that could get close to other neighborhoods.

So I guess my advice to the Commission is to think about as part of the plan is, if we sit around and say, well we can’t have open space because most of our land is developed, you are right. Most of the land is already committed to something. If, on the other hand, you said, our goal is trying to find little ways to interconnect these pieces over time, bit by bit. This is actually what happened in the Farmington Valley Greenway Trail and it’s going to continue up to Northampton Mass. So, if we start now, or in the next ten years, over the next twenty or thirty years, we can make this happen. I think it would be a tremendous amenity for the town. Cedar Mountain, no question, is the biggest priority, but I also think we should make more of these other situations, so if there is any legacy, if you will, from this plan, and the plan before, I think to move in this direction could be something that should be evaluated for feasibility and implemented if possible.

Craig Minor: We probably should leave it in there, but the current plan says the same thing, and the open space committee actually walked most of the 291 corridor a couple of years ago, and there were fragmities and nothing of interest, and nothing for a planner to come up with to justify spending the money there, but it should still be part of our open space plan.

Glenn Chalder: A trail with fragmities still connects things. It’s an opportunity for people in Newington who have been crying out for a trail, so if an opportunity is right in front of our face, we probably ought not to ignore it. As part of my work, I looked at Google Earth maps of Newington and this right of way jumps off the aerial photograph at you. You can’t miss it.

Vice-Chairman Camillo: It goes through Rocky Hill, Wethersfield into Rocky Hill.

Glenn Chalder: If this was something that we were able to do, to get grants from the State, I don’t think we will be able to connect over to the Farmington Greenway, but we would have our own greenway, and I think a community with smaller lots are looking for a way to get around and recreate.

Commissioner Sobieski: A lot of the 291 property is still farming status, that they never built on, so there is the possibility I would think that you could put in on the fringes of the right of way as they did in Glastonbury along Route 2.

Glenn Chalder: There were also quite a number of comments that came in, in terms of the Fastrack right of way.
Commissioner Sobieski: The Fastrack right of way is basically from New Britain to Newington Junction for bikes.

Glenn Chalder: I think there are opportunities for other places, I think the issue for us going forward is to look at opportunities. Plainville now, the right of way, the rail right of way is still in use, but in the meantime, because of the demand for the connection, they are looking at ways to do it. So it will take time. The first connection in Farmington Valley happened over twenty years ago.

Commissioner Sobieski: That was along the old canal line, and that was done with grant money. What I'm saying is that there are some other grants, if I remember, from before I retired, they were talking about something along Route 2 down to Glastonbury and Marlborough and then I thought, as a matter of fact, they did the bridge over and put a bike lane in there from Wethersfield to Glastonbury.

Glenn Chalder: Policies and action steps are on page four. They emphasize again Cedar Mountain, the opportunities for open space linkages and trying to establish a way to preserve open space.

Craig Minor: I sort of disagree with 6b, discourage the use of conservation easements. Obviously requiring open space that the public has access to would be ideal, but if that is not a possibility, I don’t think we should throw out the second best which is to get conservation easements on land that the public will not be able to walk on, but at least it is preserved as open space in perpetuity even if the public can’t enjoy it.

Glenn Chalder: I think the word discourage should be changed. The chart on the first page really shows public and private and land that is dedicated land. Is open space something to look at, see, and be appreciative of, or is it something to touch and feel? What does it do? I agree, I think discourage, I didn’t want to use conservation easements, only as a last resort. Acquire land, or get fee in lieu of, that we can use in a place where we really want it and then have a conservation easement to protect the natural resources. That is a positive, so let me find better words here, rather than discourage.

Commissioner Pane: I think the trail system, as you said, is really important to the community. I think that the community would wrap their hands around it faster if we could start some trails and have something started and then continue from there. There is also a definition on the front page here about open space which is from the open space committee. How does that work? It almost seems that they are including all land, people who have rights to build on their own pieces of property. How does that work?

Craig Minor: Let me speak to that. The open space committee spent a long time, well over a year working on a definition that worked for them. The open space committee was given a charge by the Town Council to do certain things, so this definition wasn’t meant to be an all encompassing definition. It was a working definition for that committee working on a specific charge. It is the open space committee’s definition, it was never meant to be, like I said, an all encompassing definition of open space.

Commissioner Woods: So it might fit into some of the open space land in Newington, identified as open space, it doesn’t mean……

Glenn Chalder: I appreciate you bring this up, I think the issue here is, I think there can be another definition of open space, so I think the open space committee, or commission…..
Craig Minor: This was an excellent definition for the committee, but it was for their purposes, it wasn’t meant to be a definition for other entity purposes.

Glenn Chalder: As policy makers, this Commission has struggled a little bit. Some people think that open space is something that you might look at, others think that open space is something that you should feel, but it could be that somebody owns a piece of land which is undeveloped, so it could be defined as open space, and it’s not. It’s developable property. So in a community, undeveloped land defined as open space, they are always losing open space over time when it is developed. For communities that define open space as land preserved in a meaningful way, they are going to try to grow that over time, so I would like, if it is okay with you, to craft a new definition that works I think better for the plan and keep this in here but move it over to a sidebar on page 2.

I also think that the action steps right now seem somewhat (inaudible). If the Commission wants to be a little bit bolder on this, you could actually, action step number one could be, craft and build a trail site. I mean, that is a challenge, that is throwing the gauntlet down and saying, let’s not talk about this, let’s do this. Remember when the open space goal was let’s start building trail segments. I think that is a signature move.

Commissioner Pane: For instance you could just pick a spot and start, say Young’s Farm and run it over towards Wallace. There are all kinds of trails in there, matter of fact, didn’t the cross country just, cross country has a track there or something. Is it just dirt, or......

Commissioner Bottalico: It’s just dirt.

Commissioner Pane: In West Hartford, at the MDC property, they have lots of trails over there and they have, a lot of them are unpaved, but quite a few of them, there are a couple of big loops there that are paved so that they can drive around, and it’s a really nice area to be able to get out there and walk around and if this community could do something like that, I think they could be very proud of it, and it would be a nice thing for people to get out of the daily routine and get into the open area and have a nice walk.

Commissioner Braverman: Years ago, between Main and New Britain Avenue there was a little exercise trail, fitness type of trail, no longer being used, but it could be a start of something again. Rethink that process, go through Churchill Park as well.

Commissioner Woods: Do we still have the trail over behind St. Mary’s school? I know that was used.

Glenn Chalder: I know that the town engineer is working on a sidewalk plan of pedestrians, so we have already got a GIS that is starting that shows this kind of stuff, so my hope is to integrate that later in the plan and tie that into this, I think then this whole thing starts to pick up momentum and go, so......

Commissioner Pane: We should work with open space too, and decide what kind of specifications you want for the trail? Is it going to be dirt? Some areas are going to be dirt, other areas are going to be paved, per ADA and come up with a mixture of both or something, but I definitely would like to hear from them on that.

Commissioner Bottalico: There is also a trail from Clem Lemire to Churchill Park which used to be nice, but I don’t think it’s maintained any more.
Glenn Chalder: On some trails, it's hard to get enough activity, but once you get pieces, and you can walk a mile, it just mushrooms. I have a quick, funny story to tell, so I used to be the Town Planner in Avon some years ago, and the rail trail was coming though Avon and this neighborhood got all bent out of shape and basically got mad at the town and required that stockade fencing be put up so you know, robbers and others could not affect their property. So the Council finally gave in and fenced the trail. Now, the leader of this came back to the Council a couple of years later and asked for a gate in the fence, and the reason was that he was in the process of selling his property and the buyers made that a condition of the purchase. So he had to go back, kind of hat in hand. So perceptions sometimes are not reality. This becomes such an amenity that people in other towns will drive to the trail to walk which is kind of crazy, but it shows you....

Vice-Chairman Camillo: The same thing happened in Cheshire, that trail is such a success that now if a home goes up for sale, it's right there.

Glenn Chalder: I think if we take the lead on this, getting this started, plant the seed to get it going, I think that is a big step forward.

Anything else on Booklet five?

Booklet six is community character, and this is always something, character is something different to everybody. Everybody has a certain perception of what they really like about Newington or what attracts them here. What we are trying to do here with the plan is kind of capture the elements of this so that people know, the map, which is on page 3, shows the location of some of the historic resources in the districts, the steep slopes on Cedar Mountain, the scenic views, some of the open space area, etc., in town to identify these and to recognize these as being important in addition to the community events that are run in town that people have so much affection for. So this chapter is attempting to recognize that these are not things that you should take for granted, should continue to promote these, and elements and other elements, whatever they may be, and on page four there are strategies and action steps for this. Questions on Booklet six?

Commissioner Pane: On number nine, shouldn't it say the Deming Young Farm House, instead of the whole property?

Glenn Chalder: Yes.

Commissioner Pane: And then I forgot to ask you, on the previous Section five, I left something off. On the, Church Street, the Young Farm there, it's not listed as managed open space.

Glenn Chalder: Thank you.

Craig Minor: You didn’t include it, but I think the Town Center deserves a bullet. The town center is such a part of our character that I made a note that it should have it's own bullet.

Glenn Chalder: It’s own section? We're going to be dealing with the town center at our next meeting, but I agree. I think that, let's add that here. Anything else on booklet six?

Booklet seven is a new element for your consideration as part of the plan. It's really a reflection of how the world has changed over the last ten or twenty years and this is a concept of sustainability and resiliency. I think as Mr. Pane pointed out, the clay soil that we have here creates a challenge for us in terms of rain fall event, and our ability to cope with water becoming more frequent and more intense storms, so we need to be resilient in terms
of being able to address that. Start thinking about sustained ability, both in the environmental sustainability and the economic sustainability. I was thinking on the way over here that the Town of Newington may be the largest electric consumer within the town boundary. With all of the use of activities, they pale in comparison with the amount of square footage that the town has and so we have the potential to be a leader in these sorts of areas. Another question is, how do you measure this? So there is a program out there called SustainableCT and it is a non-profit organization that many communities in Connecticut have now participated in, and it gives recognition for doing sustainable things. So the elements of their program are identified here on pages two and three, and Andrew, who works for Craig, is working now to get the town on board with this in terms of participating in these activities and as the town participates and gets credit for activities, they receive designation and bronze or silver or gold. I think at least a quarter of the towns in Connecticut have received bronze certification. They are now working on the next level which is silver. So, it would seem to me that the Plan recommend that Newington be perceived, or seen, or an active sustainable community and a program such as this could allow us to demonstrate to the community and to others that we are a bronze or a silver or a gold, but I think we should start on this journey and have our plan recognize the concepts of sustainability and resilience will be a step in that direction.

On page four we have the policies and actions. Any thoughts on booklet seven? So any questions about the process?

Commissioner Woods: In booklet four, under action items, amend the zoning regulations to require the use of native species listed on the Connecticut Native Tree and Shrub List as part of any TPZ approval, I think it's too restrictive. I don't think we should make it mandatory. I think it would be a mistake.

Glenn Chalder: You could add consider, or amend, and add the phrase, where applicable, so it's just a subtle change in wording, but I think it would reflect the Commission's feeling.

Commissioner Woods: It just tends to be a little too limited, and the choice of plants, for certain things the Commission might want to do, it might be, even though the list is broad, it's not as broad as it should be or could be.

Glenn Chalder: So, consider, or where appropriate?

Commissioner Woods: Well, first of all, this is being done already. Almost every landscape shop around, whenever they can use native plants, they are. But, native plants is a pretty broad definition. Native could be to North America, so they could live in the zone, live in the country, it's pretty much native. If you just want native plants, you are going to be very disappointed in what goes into your yard or your business. There are very, very limited plants that people like. There are a lot of plants, but nobody wants them.

Commissioner Pane: Couldn't you just say, not invasive?

Commissioner Woods: Why would anyone put in an invasive? They see something in a magazine or a catalogue, those are the things that can happen.

Glenn Chalder: I think the point here is we would want to encourage the use of native and discourage the use of invasive, so let me figure out a way to reword this.

Commissioner Woods: Just like the low impact development, I think it's a great goal but again, it doesn't mean that we don't do anything, but it may not have the impact that you
would like it to have, but at least we are trying to manage some of that the way that we should and realizing that we can't have it all.

Glenn Chalder: I want to thank the commission for the feedback that I have gotten here tonight. It has been very helpful to me getting ready to do the first draft, so thank you very much. Next meeting is October 23rd, and I think the topic up for discussion next month is, first of all, town center, the second one is opportunity sites, and I have worked with Craig and Andy Brecher as to where those are, and some of the issues, they may have special policy issues that we are going to want to talk about, and then the general concepts of business, economic development, Berlin Turnpike, economic growth, and then residential housing, the issue that Craig brought up, the natural occurring affordable housing. So that is what is up next month, so that's all I have. Thank you.

III. ADJOURN

The meeting was concluded at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norine Addis,
Recording Secretary