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NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

Special Meeting

October 23, 2019

*John D. Sobieski*  
Town Clerk

Chairman Stanley Sobieski 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**

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

Commissioners Present

Commissioner Michael Camillo  
Commissioner Anthony Claffey  
Commissioner Michael Fox  
Commissioner Domenic Pane  
Chairman Stanley Sobieski  
Commissioner Robert Serra  
Commissioner Stephen Woods

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner John Bottalico-A  
Commissioner Hyman Braverman-A  
Commissioner Giangrave-A

Staff Present

Craig Minor, Town Planner

III. **PRESENTATION FOR POCD**

Glenn Chalder: Tonight I want to present the Commission with the next major component of the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Plan components are organized around three major themes. The first that we talked about at our last meeting was Conservation strategies, that included things like natural resources, open space, and tonight the element that I wanted to talk to the Commission about is development, and have four booklets for discussion tonight.

The first is Newington Town Center, the second is Opportunity Areas and Sites, the third is Economic Development and the fourth book is Residential Development. I hope the commission can get through all of these by seven o'clock, so I'm going to start right in.

Chairman Sobieski: I'd like to have five to ten minutes at the end if anyone from the general audience has any comments.

Glenn Chalder: Sure.

Glenn Chalder: The overall goal for Newington Town Center is to strengthen Newington Center as a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area with a strong "sense of place." I think Newington Center has all of the things needed to be a very compelling and strong town center, it's just not as organized at the present time as perhaps it could be or should be.

Page 2 talks about some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or challenges that face the center and thinking about ways to build on those strengths, overcoming the weaknesses, seize the opportunities and address some of the constraints. One of the key recommendations here is that it would make sense for Newington to start to think about the community based design process, or a study for the town center areas, using something like what is called a "charrette" which is a design based exercise collaborative, etc., and that would be something for us to think about.

On page four there are some suggestions here about possible use changes in the town center area. Some times when people see that they have to come to a Commission for a special permit, it may discourage them from proceeding. There might be some uses in the town center area that you would want to encourage by moving them from a special permit to a site plan, perhaps moving some things from a site plan to a special permit, might rebalance some of the uses in the town center for your consideration.

On page five we are considering about reducing the parking standards in the town center area. At the present time people have to ask for an exception for parking standards based on their design criteria, and they may or may not get it after they spend thousands of dollars in terms of designing. One of the things that we could think about to encourage and promote development in the town center area is to revisit that parking ratio and see if it needs to be reworked.

We can provide some incentives for dedication for municipal parking; maintain the design controls in the town center overlay district; and maintain the provision that allows for flexibility in area and dimensional standards.

On page six there are some possible guiding principles for the town center area which could guide growth and activity in the future. There is a map on page seven which shows the B-TC Zone which is the business town center area. There is approximately, between Main Street and East of Main Street and Southeast Cedar, I'd say there is about fifty to sixty acres which are in the town center district and then the area to the east of that, which we are calling town center east, is easily more acreage than that. There is quite a bit of area that is available if the Commission wanted to investigate certain development opportunities and how we could perhaps set the stage for perhaps additional things that could happen in the future.

On page eight are some suggested policy strategies, action steps, and one action step here is the possibility of a community defining process. The town, with the transit village possibility coming on line sometime in the next five years, or perhaps after that, depending on the time of DOT it's possible that the uses and activities in that area could actually compete with the town center. So if we don't focus on the town center, I'm worried that in fact we may weaken it over time. So I'd like to encourage possible recommendations in the plan to really look at the town center, how we can set the stage for it to thrive and grow stronger in the future. That I think is really sort of a key recommendation. There hasn't been a lot of development activity in the town center area, but I think it is well situated for that, so I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have, talk about the strategies that are in this booklet.

Commissioner Claffey: How did you reach, or how did you come about the page 8-2, the strengths, weaknesses challenge opportunities? Is there a standard, is it because the walk score is low?

Glenn Chalder: The walk score is actually pretty good. I mean, I think 80 and above is considered exceptional, and I think Newington actually does fairly well on the walk score. Park of that I think the walk score is partially based on the fact that we had a super market

there. So the score could drop a little bit because the question for the walk score is not only do you have sidewalks and things like that, but do you have things for people to walk to. I'm not sure the timing of when that walk score was published, but it may be a factor in the future.

Commissioner Claffey: So where is that weighted, on where you got this?

Glenn Chalder: The walk score?

Commissioner Claffey: The whole.....

Glenn Chalder: I think, as part of my work I always try to evaluate in any sort of situation or policy for a commission, these issues. So I can bring them to the discussion, I used to be a Town Planner and as part of my professional background, I also worked for a real estate development company, so I really started to look at it from the perspective of how developers and other people might look at it to set the stage for discussion.

Commissioner Claffey: So if the weakness is parking, you have weakness of parking and then you have on the following pages you said we should loosen the parking requirements.

Glenn Chalder: Under the weaknesses, desolate and inconvenient. So the issue is people get to the parking lot and it almost seems like your destination is almost like a walk across a desolate space, so the concept of sense of place is some sort of visual activity, things going on that attract people. Think of the difference between Newington center and West Hartford center, the parking is in the center of the configuration, and it is interior to the (inaudible) and in other situation you get yourself out onto the street and there is a lot going on. I think if we could not have as much parking space available, if we could convert some of that space to building an activity, which would generate tax revenues, and more activity on the street, we could actually start to turn the corner and promote additional investment in the area, so I think finding that balance is part of our planning study.

Commissioner Woods: On the parking, we have ample parking, it's just not convenient parking.

Glenn Chalder: And I think that when you have too much, it almost, Craig and I went on a field trip today and we were driving around looking at the different areas, and I think that the parking lot configuration doesn't, seems like a big shopping center parking lot, it doesn't really help that businesses have kind of turned their back on the parking lot and they face the street, there are no back doors or anything else, so it's almost an industrial type area rather than an integrated area.

Commissioner Woods: It's a good thing you weren't here ten, fifteen years ago, I mean.....

Craig Minor: Well, he was.

Everyone talking at once.

Commissioner Woods: I don't know that I agree that there is too much. I spend a lot of time in and out of that parking lot, that parking lot has a lot of cars in it. It amazes me, and I'm not quite sure where all of those people are, but it's two thirds to three quarters full on a regular basis. I'll admit, if you are way down on the east side and you are looking to come up to Main Street, you probably aren't going to be a happy camper with that parking spot. I will definitely agree with you that the parking along Main Street....

Glenn Chalder: Visible parking is the most attractive parking for people. They will look for the most convenient spot and then keep moving down the food chain until they actually find the parking that they want. Even if we have two thirds to three quarters of the parking spaces occupied, we could convert the other space into buildings and activities. We actually have started to create other activity areas in the center, it's something to look at. I didn't have enough time to go through and do a complete parking inventory in terms of occupancy by hour of day, but it's something the Commission might think about.

Commissioner Woods: I believe that we are going to see some changes at Keeney in the very near future. I think it's probably going to be more of an office structure rather than a plant. I don't know if it is going to be closed initially, or immediately but I think in long term, that piece of property which is a substantial piece of property in the center of town, is definitely going to change from industrial to hopefully office.

Glenn Chalder: That site is a hopefully the key opportunity area right now it's almost a road block I suppose, but doesn't allow the parts of the down town to interact with each other. You have to go down Market Square and Lowry before you can circle back and if that parcel was to become available there are a number of ways that it could be developed which would just help the town center, so again, this is just another reason why a planning study is necessary so we would have this, so rather than just reacting to something that comes in, we would have thought ahead a little bit and we provide some structure to it and perhaps the zoning could be modified to facilitate what we want.

Commissioner Woods: So maybe we need to recognize that at the end of this 2030 Plan, maybe then the 2040 Plan there might actually be some firm direction as to how we are going with this.

Glenn Chalder: Setting the stage early in terms of downtown, if that becomes sort of a hot, happening place, then other areas of town will try opportunity sites that may not get the attention. This is a great opportunity...

Chairman Sobieski: Have you looked at Middletown. Middletown has a very similar area as we have where they have parking on 66. If I remember correctly, they did some enhancements and had back entrances to the businesses from the bigger parking lot, the municipal lot back there. Have you looked at anything like that, or thought of anything like that?

Glenn Chalder: I think that is exactly the type of thing that could come out of this type of planning study. I mean there are other communities that do very similar things. Fairfield, they actually built a municipal parking structure, you wouldn't want that at this point in time, but the back access, Darien is one, Ridgefield, there are quite a few of them.

Chairman Sobieski: There are quite a few of them along the shore line.

Glenn Chalder: Shared parking could ignite opportunities.

Chairman Sobieski: Any other questions?

Glenn Chalder: Booklet number nine is the opportunity sites, the 2020 Plan had identified some sites, the map of the current plan had a blend of conservation sites, development sites and really didn't focus on the development opportunities, so I wanted this booklet to try to focus in there and we took the opportunity to, on the conservation side, to put those in the conservation booklet.

Possible goal statement for your consideration here is, Maximize possibilities at "opportunity" areas and sites in order to promote appropriate reuse and development in ways which support the desired overall character and structure of Newington. The first on that we just talked about is the town center area, and pages two and three since the Commission has adopted the TVDD regulations, I think that challenge that I foresee in this situation is really we don't have a picture of what could happen there. We have seventy pages of regulations with fairly detailed graphs and standards and everything else and with no picture of what could happen there, so again I don't think we are in the driver's seat on this, and it might be possible there might be some regulation in there that the Commission might be displeased with. If we don't actually start to plan it out and think about it, I know DOT is working on this and we may be able to get some resources from them to help us undertake this. Transit orientated development is an area where the State has been active in the past, so I don't want you to think that I am planning study crazy, but I think that this site, with the regulations without a vision of what we are going to create, has the potential that the Commission might be dissatisfied with.

Do you want me to go through the whole thing, and circle back or stop at each one?

Commissioner Claffey: I have one question. A is the thing people think we should do, B is good, F is fail. I just want to make sure there is no.....

Glenn Chalder: There is no sense of priorities. As part of the plan, you should prioritize, I just felt that the town center is the largest need today because I think it has hasn't been tended to for a while, so the transit village I think will happen, but there are things that have to happen before that can take place. Based on my experience, the community would benefit from a study of this. I think we can leverage DOT by saying it's in our plan, and we want to do this, and can they fund us or help us? If all of us worked on this together, and I think that is a practical situation that (inaudible) the regulations do what we want them to do.

At the bottom of page three are the strategies and the community plan based process for an overall vision.

On page four West Cedar Street, a major portion of town, we have the Fastrack station, we have the National Welding site, there are a lot of opportunities in this particular area, but exactly how it will all tie together isn't exactly clear. I think it is important for us in the plan to identify this as being an important opportunity area, with suggested strategies with continuing to promote appropriate development in the National Welding site, work with DOT to address chronic parking shortages at that facility. I think we are at the transition between an automobile based approach and a transit based approached, but people are showing that they want to use the station, they want to use the transit, but they can't park there, so we force them back into their cars again, so even on a short term basis, if we can convert some of this property to a parking area that could then become building in the future, it might work out for us. I know that the state acquired property adjacent to the nearby Piper Brook and CCSU at one time was anticipating campus expansion in this area and I think understanding how that will all tie in with the Fastrack Station should also be considered. There is also a tremendous opportunity for greenway trails along Piper Brook corridor, so these are all things that the Commission could consider putting in a plan to guide the activities there and if something should happen you could say, this is something we.....

Commissioner Woods: I thought CCSU abandoned using the other side of the highway.

Glenn Chalder: I think it terms of active planning, I believe that they shelved it, but the State still owns it and I think it may resurrect itself, and again, that wouldn't be a bad opportunity.

Commissioner Sobieski: If I remember correctly, the State, CCSU wanted a tunnel under the Route 9 connector and the State, DOT said no.

Glenn Chalder: Opportunity area D, on page 9-5 is the Newington Junction area. This is a challenge because the transit station provides an opportunity for development and re-development. There are properties on Day Street, some of the surrounding area that might have the opportunity for redevelopment. Again, we don't have strong guidance at this point in time. The Commission had adopted a moratorium on multi-family development and I think that was in somewhat larger and bolder areas in terms of what was being anticipated but the Commission might want to consider establishing an overlay zone in this area or an alternative type of zone approach which might allow for redevelopment near the station as an interim process, piecemeal so that bit by bit, rather than a global redevelopment of the area close to the station. Because there are established residential neighborhoods nearby, the Commission should consider leaving language in the plan that discourages leap frogging. If you leapfrog from the back for the uses that are in between become sort of challenged and that might upset the stability but if we had a tool that could promote redevelopment and it could be on the Industrial side, the Day Street side, or it could be on the Willard side, this might be an opportunity again for us to promote economic development and other things in an area that is served by a transit station. I think it is an opportunity site for consideration.

Commissioner Claffey: Question, or you might be getting to it. What are your thoughts on opportunity sites and how they differ from the opportunity areas?

Glenn Chalder: Yes, I am getting pretty much to that, just hang on. On page six, we are talking about the Berlin Turnpike. I went to a conference recently and they were talking about the changing nature of retail and what that means. Newington has excelled over the years in terms of the retail focus of the Berlin Turnpike and the retailers that have started operations in the entire state of Connecticut and even New England by starting off here on the Berlin Turnpike. The most recent seminar that I went to suggested that twenty-five percent of all of the regional malls in the country will be closed by 2025. So that means that all retailers are struggling a little bit, and we have a lot of them on the Berlin Turnpike, so how do we support them and try to help them to try to adapt to whatever changing needs or situations may be. Craig and I were talking and at one point in time we were recalling with Leachmere used to be on the Berlin Turnpike, and that was a major retailer, and people would say, wow, I want to go to Leachmere and I have to go to the Berlin Turnpike to do that. Certain things don't exist any more and we may start getting fitness studios and gyms and other things which are different users and don't necessary exist in a way that benefits all of these on the Berlin Turnpike, so I think it's an opportunity for us to think about and work on in the future.

Also on page six is the town center east area. I separated town center east from the town center for your consideration for a very important reason. I think we study both areas together, town center east is bigger, it's got more activities, more possibilities and that discussion overwhelms the town center. So the town center is somewhat ignored because of the opportunities at town center east. So, if I had the ability to sequence, I would suggest that we need to kind of get a handle on what we think should happen in the town center area, thinking about town center east area as well, but once we sort of narrowed that down, then think ahead to what could happen in the town center east. The two of them together are such a major regional development opportunity for us that it is something I think that we should focus on in the future, but also, not together.

Commissioner Woods: By east, you mean the hospital property?

Glenn Chalder: I do, but I it also extends north of East Cedar Street to the.....

Commissioner Woods: That is all hospital property.

Glenn Chalder: I do know that Hartford Insurance Group vacated a 600,000 square foot facility in Simsbury, and it cost the town a quarter of a million dollars to undertake a plan to study for that, and now it is under construction. So it is possible. We all share interest in this area. Hartford Hospital has an asset which may not be used to its full potential and the town center area. I think again, we can perhaps find a way to find common ground to move ahead on this and it may take five years, but I think that your Commission should say this is something that we would like to do, that may convince them, such as Western Boulevard in Glastonbury or the (inaudible) in West Hartford, they are a little closer to the highway than we are, but that could be a concept for the western gateway.

Commissioner Pane: Their taxes were lower, that's why they were driven over there.

Glenn Chalder: And also the convenience to the highways. I do think our taxes are better than Glastonbury's, so we may have that ability, see they have the southeast Connecticut area, but we have Hartford Hospital too, so there could be all sorts of special facilities. Even in Canton, there is a lot of specialization that goes on these days, so I think it is an opportunity.

That brings us to the map which is on page 7 and I used the red circles to highlight the major or key opportunity areas, and the size of the circle is simply a quarter mile and a half mile radius and these are considered to be general walking distances. I want to highlight those and within those are some of the key opportunity sites such as the town center, the B-BT Zoning District, the transit village area which has been identified so far, areas at Newington Junction, and at Cedar and Fenn. The Town Center east and Berlin Turnpike are areas which I think, the strategies for these areas will continue to evolve over time. The plan should focus on these as being areas for consideration and areas to think about. Then the other sites, the opportunity sites which are identified in the 2020 Plan, and Craig and I sat down with Andy Brecher and talked through some of these different sites to get a handle on which ones we felt really did have some opportunities that could be attractive and that the town could assist with. So we are identified in here, and should somebody propose a development activity for consideration in this area, we can point out that it is in the plan and recommended as an opportunity site, and hopefully that will start to promote a discussion.

I used letter codes on this map to suggest, based on our conversations to show the appropriate developments potentially, so for example at Cedarcrest, site number four, is shown as OPR, which could be office, public or private institution, or residential at that site. So, if somebody came along and proposed one of those, the Commission might treat it or consider it more favorably. Obviously Cedarcrest isn't a site for industry, but if someone showed up with an industry, the Commission could say, in the plan we are not suggesting that industry would be appropriate again, for the character of the neighborhood, etc. Try to use these letter codes to help the Commission in the future, have some sense of direction. So as an advisor, I don't tie your hands, but you could use it to encourage or discourage some types of activities.

On page eight is the strategy, and again, maximize opportunities and the possibilities of opportunity sites and have some additional studies at these sites.  
Questions, comments?

Commissioner Claffey: It seems like some of the sites are specifically, looking at the last thing, 9-8, the overlay zone, consider establishing an overlay zone which will enable mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, transit oriented, but can a mixed use also be in other areas that don't

have, I mean, I have seen it, so I just want to make sure it is around.

Glenn Chalder: The map on seven has town center, future train station, Cedar Street fastrack and Newington Junction.

Commissioner Claffey: So to get back to your opportunity where you are having, you used mixed use, if you had opportunities on say, site seven, which has an abutment of residential, your mixed use is not just designated by your M in your plan, because mixed use can be business and residential together or it could be Industrial and residential. You have that over in D, Francis Street, and Day Street. You have industrial and residential currently, and I guess I'm confused about why we are trying to roll everything into the TOD when it's, already our town has those opportunity sites and already have the properties and designations, I guess I'm talking myself thru this.

Glenn Chalder: There is very strong interest these days in mixed use development, I think Newington is very strategically located. We have these incredible opportunities at the town center, the transit village and two Fastrack stations. There are other towns that don't have any of these opportunities, so we could focus in on those and really do an awful lot for mixed use development. We have the opportunity, there are many types of residential development that provide tax revenues to a community. Years ago, housing meant school kids and that offset our budget balance. Now days with the aging demographic I'm not sure if any of you have kids in the school system, but you might be alone, so what we end up with is everybody else in this room is economic development. We are providing more in tax revenue than we are assuming in services. So, we can capitalize on that. The question is a sense is where? So if we just put housing or other activities where they are not going to be successful, that is essentially going to hold us back a little bit. I think the concern that I have in some areas is that they way that the business market is also changing, and cutting back on the square footage of retail, isolated sites are not going to be successful in the future, a site that is already a mixed use area with a developing population. I was trying to cherry pick sites that I thought could be effective.

Commissioner Claffey: Gotcha, okay. I want to make sure what you are defining, mixed use is not, people in the past have been using the word mixed use as residentially based, which it is not. What I am looking at here with your codes just for the purpose of our discussion.

Glenn Chalder: I think we should put in the definition of mixed use, in this booklet. It gives us a framework moving forward and it could be mixed use which is residential floor area or business floor area, or it could be a different type of ratio. I think the real issue here is the quality and nature that evolves. Let me see if I can find a definition that allows this discussion to proceed.

Craig Minor: When I was in planning school, mixed use meant two otherwise normally, what you wouldn't think of as compatible uses, like retail and manufacturing or residential and retail, but I think now when people say mixed use, I think they always mean residential and something else, say residential and retail, residential and office space, residential and, not manufacturing, but I don't think you are wrong to assume that if Glenn is suggesting mixed use in an area, he means residential and something else.

Commissioner Claffey: I just want to make sure we don't, you know, we currently have industrial and residential in town. The structures aren't together, they are literally across the street from an industrial lot. That is what I wanted to make sure we were trying to define some of these terms. I totally agree with what both of you are saying, I know there are

people in town that when they hear mixed use they think 80 units per acre coming down the pike....

Craig Minor: Right and what I thought you were saying when you talk mixed use in the same breath as TOD, but not necessarily by any means.

Commissioner Claffey: You were thinking right on it.

Commissioner Camillo: I was thinking mixed use would be retail and commercial, retail on the first floor, street level, commercial on the second floor.

Glenn Chalder: Some people would call that Business (inaudible) but I think what I would like to do is, as Craig points out the discussion on this is has changed over the years, and so actually the discussion these days is really about a mixed use building which is often commercial and business or retail with housing above, like Blue Back Square or (inaudible) Town Center, which you do have examples of it in Newington town center as well. We have mixed use sites such as some of the things they have been building lately in Simsbury which is one or two commercial buildings with housing in the back, but they are not in the same building, but that is a whole different feeling to it than a mixed use building. Then we have a mixed use neighborhood which is where you have the uses across the street from each other, and these are the old industrial complexes so I think so we have almost a glossary here, allow me to find some stuff that will advance our direction on this issue.

Commissioner Camillo: You mentioned the future train station. In other towns and other areas the state builds the train station. After it is built and is running, do they turn it over to the towns and let the town be responsible for it?

Glenn Chalder: I don't believe so. I can't say I know the exact details, but I think that DOT....

Commissioner Camillo: Like Windsor. They were putting up the money to build their own.

Glenn Chalder: I know of some situations in Fairfield County, they, the platforms, the tracks, and everything else, even the parking the state controls. Outside of that, it's the town, so DOT, they are a provider of a service and they want that service to be successful.

Commissioner Camillo: Does the state police that also?

Commissioner Woods: It's a combination of both, local and state police and Amtrack if it's an Amtrack station, Amtrack has their own security.

Chairman Sobieski: The station in West Haven is like that, it's a brand new station with parking, I think they have daily and weekly parking passes there.

Glenn Chalder: Metro, which is the third train station in Fairfield, now it is a public/private partnership. The state built the station, the town built the parking lot, and a private developer is doing the developing, so, but that was a pretty big area and neither one could use all of it, so they all got together and decided, I think DOT built the bridge over the tracks....

Commissioner Camillo: Andy Brecher presented something like that, that's why I'm asking.

Glenn Chalder: We'll let you know a couple of years from now.

Commissioner Pane: In the 2020 Plan, we had twenty-five opportunity sites. I think some time in the future we need to go over those and see how those match up with your seven and see if there are any additional ones that we missed here that were in the 2020 that, there is no way we completed....I know some of them are opportunity sites that talk about open space but that's okay.

Glenn Chalder: I agree, I think that would be a good idea. Craig and Andy and I did get together and go through the list and the way that we whittled the list down is that other than open space and conservation that got put into that booklet, some of the sites have had development plans approved by this Commission, so there really wasn't much left to decide in terms of what is going to happen in the future. There were some sites in the southeast corner of town that were possible development sites and there were open space opportunities so we didn't get into the residential activities, it was mostly commercial issues.

Booklet ten is a short one but it's an important one. Your possible goal statement; promote appropriate economic development to meet community needs. The plan identifies some basic policies to promote economic development. Again, Craig, Andy and I got together on these details. The map on 10-3 identifies the areas that are open for development, the town center, business/commercial development, planned development, etc., even the redevelopment district, so these are the areas that are available to us to promote economic development. The policies and the action steps are listed ways to consider doing that. There were in the 2020 plan some sites which are zoned industrial but have retail activities on them, and that is a situation that actually challenges the (inaudible) to update the property. For example, we are recommending that you, with Craig's assistance to go through and review the zoning districts. The challenges of the change of use could create a problem because if you change the use you want the space occupied. So if we can remove a regulatory burden it might be, it might promote economic development. We also noted that there are dimensional standards that the Commission might want to review, the landscaping, buffering requirements, I had a conversation with Craig about the buffering separating issues. The issue is this, if you have a lot of land separation between you and the abutting residential use for example, you could leave a lot of space and not have to plant many trees. But if your building use expands, now you want to occupy that space, we will allow you to make the buffer not as deep, but you have to plant more trees, and as you get narrower and narrower you are getting into berming and fencing and stone walls and other stuff but the bottom line is, to keep the separation, you don't have the one size fits all buffer. So again, something that we could consider, the Commission could consider.

Chairman Sobieski: Any questions?

Glenn Chalder: Booklet eleven is the residential zone; promote a variety of housing types to meet changing needs while retaining Newington's character. That is similar to what you have done in the past. I think we have diverse neighborhoods in Newington, different areas have been created that shows the age of the housing stock in different times and in different neighborhoods. So this is a diverse housing stock and the issues of the future are going to be related to housing that is more affordable, and housing for an age composition in the community. We have quite a number of housing units that are naturally occurring for affordable housing, and unfortunately we don't get credit for that under 8-30g in that situation. We can get an exemption for a moratorium through two ways, I'm sure you are familiar with this. Get enough units that are above ten percent, or get an application for a (inaudible). Did the application go in yet Craig?

Craig Minor: The council is waiting until the election so that the new council can make the decision.

Glenn Chalder: We think we have enough housing and points to get there, so we can start that process. That will give us a four year moratorium, and actually it will reset the clock so now, if we want another moratorium after that four years, we will either have to have affordable housing in its place or (inaudible) So on page 2,3, and 4 we talk about housing affordability and housing equivalent points and you are familiar with most of this, so this will help educate the townspeople as well. On page 5 we talk about housing for an aging population and we allow for different types of facilities and we should continue to do so. I think the biggest challenge that we will likely have in the future is that people may not have anticipated that they will live as long as they will so their assets may become challenged. We already listed the Housing Authority complexes and we need housing and we need it now, and the wait list is over a year. You don't want to overbuild a number of units, but I think with that housing it could be a very difficult and challenging situation.

On page six, just overall housing diversification, we talked about the child that is home from college, isn't quite ready for housing yet, living at home and he certainly implored us to have some housing alternatives. The map which is on page 7 identifies the different residential zoning districts in town color coded so you get a sense of where the residential densities are. Again, the opportunity areas near the train station, the town center and Fastrack. On page eight, so policies for your consideration, and again some possible action steps. One of the action steps, or number one is consider adopting an inclusionary zoning requirement to require an affordable housing component of every new housing development. Some communities require that any new residential zone make some provisions for affordable housing as part of it. If a market rate housing complex gets built, and there is no affordable housing provided we are falling behind on meeting our ten percent. Some communities say that it has to be at least ten percent, that keeps us at status quo, some communities have actually gone beyond that. So we are now starting to play catch up. Newington is fairly built out so we don't have a lot of land area left, but starting to think about how we could actually use the statutory requirement in our favor is something that we could consider.

Action step number two, there is a requirement in the statutes that requires municipalities in the state to prepare an official affordable housing plan and this is supposed to be done by 2022. Craig has already been thinking about this, and the plan advocates that we move ahead.

Possibility of reviewing the accessory apartment provisions in the zoning regulations. Some communities around the state are finding that to be effective in terms of providing for housing options or alternatives. I had a situation in another community where an elderly lady who sat on the Planning and Zoning Commission wanted to move into the accessory apartment and rent the rest of her house to a younger couple who would maintain her lawn and driveway etc. She didn't want to leave the house that she had lived in for years, but she couldn't maintain it on her own.

Questions or thoughts on the residential?

Commissioner Claffey: The Newington Housing Authority, are they like, are they involved in this discussion too, because, do they have any land left to use, or how do we help them? I went by two of the elderly housing areas and they are packed, like there isn't a parking space available.

Craig Minor: I asked them a couple of years ago about writing a grant, and Glenn, I think you spoke to the Director.

Commissioner Claffey: How are they doing with, if we were to start changing things, are they in the talks too, or.....

Craig Minor: They also have to consider the disabled, so that is a niche that they are addressing.

Commissioner Woods: They don't have any land to expand on.

Commissioner Claffey: I'm asking more on a discussion of that because is, because of age in place, you have people from different communities. I just don't know what it is in this town.

Commissioner Woods: They are a separate agency, they really have nothing to do with the town of Newington other than the name.

Glenn Chalder: AARP has studied that eighty percent of all elderly households want to age in place, they are used to the housing, they don't want to downsize so it's the twenty percent that cannot age in place that becomes the big issue. At the same time, we have smaller elderly populations, we have housing developments that are dedicated to elderly over the years which now are incorporated with the disabled, which can be younger people with a whole different set of issues. At the same time the elderly population is growing so there will be needs in the future, but also the federal funding that used to be available hasn't dried up, but it's not as available as it used to be. My conversations with both the interfaith housing group in town and the Housing Authority are that they would welcome opportunities to meet the needs that they see in the community, but the path forward isn't as clear. So if the plan can support those kinds of activities, and see how it starts to play out.

Chairman Sobieski: Any other questions from the Commission? I'll open it up to the general public.

#### **IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace: Just a couple of thoughts on the town center. When we were talking about the parking being a catalyst, it's interesting that we spent a million dollars on Constitution Square and the hype that it was supposed to revitalize Newington center, I keep cautioning people about pre hype and it doesn't necessary materialize. We would have to do some pretty serious studies about, and Newington is unique in its demographic, and we can't necessarily look at what was done in D.C. or Virginia or Avon or whatever. We also talked about destination, and Newington Bike was a destination place. I went in there all the time, there was always, whenever I went in there, there were crowds. Now that it has become somewhat specialized, and quite frankly has gone beyond the income capacity of many of the residents of Newington, Trek, it's a great brand, but specialized, and we can't take for granted that they are going to always be there.

On page two, Commissioner Woods alluded to a meeting, and I understand what is meant by a challenge, but Keeney has been a good corporate neighbor, they have been involved with the town, they keep their property immaculate. There are many people in town that don't even know that it is an industrial area or an industrial facility. I don't like to see it labeled as a problem, and if they are not going out of business, and I hope that they are not, I would hope that we wouldn't try, I hope we don't view them as an impediment, trying to get rid of them because they are hindering development in the town center because frankly, I don't think they are. They are a good addition.

Parking, I understand it's difficult to find parking on Main Street and it is dangerous and then, the other thing that I didn't see is a discussion of having a space for the community, a park or a gazebo, people who are using the restaurants, who are hanging out, to just sit and maybe listen to a concert or whatever. I don't see any of that in the discussion of the town center. I think that has to be included.

Just a general comment on the opportunity areas and sites. We are a small town, 13 square miles, we're not spread out like Farmington or Avon. We are 13 square miles, so if we have seven, eight, nine opportunity sites, and we have them all basically trying to develop the same plan or principles, such as a restaurant, and we could have this, this, and that. That's fine, but if there is a one size fits all for a small community, they will cannibalize each other, they would not compliment each other. When we are talking about opportunity sites I really do think there needs to be a comprehensive plan that says, okay, this site should be this. It just seems to me that we are going to be going after all these different sites doing the same thing in a very small community of thirteen square miles and I don't think they are all going to be able to survive. Thank you.

Chairman Sobieski: Anyone else?

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: Both Gail Budrejko and I have been to many meetings, Economic Development, TPZ meetings, various meetings through out the past ten years and what she has just said to you is my observation as well. I have sat through building committee meetings for Market Square Redevelopment with Constitution Square and the words of Jeff Wright ring in my years, "build it, they will come, talk about it, nothing will get done." There were thirteen studies done on the center of town, has anybody looked at those thirteen studies? I know things have changed, has anybody looked at Jeff Wright's vision. I still have pages of it in my Myra Cohen memorial room.

The Hartford Hospital property, the last I knew from the town Economic Development Director was that they weren't interested in development, or building, or whatever. Has that changed? As far as the affordable housing, I looked at that when Dakota was before you and I could be mistaken but I thought some changes were made in housing count, affordable housing based on some town that wanted something new put into the statute. What about our state legislators, can they look at Newington and see how we need to get our list? We don't have any where else to build. I'm one of those in the position where I am staying in my home as long as I can. I have looked at housing in Newington, I don't want to leave Newington, but Berlin, Rocky Hill, those areas have a lot of options for seniors. The only spot I can see that can be developed for more senior housing would be right across from the New Meadow Senior Housing, and we know that nobody is going to put anything on that open space. They pushed the new building into the wood area, they hardly have any parking there, because they said seniors don't drive. Well, this senior doesn't like to drive at night and I probably shouldn't be out tonight, but I wanted to come and see the handouts. Unfortunately I didn't get one, I got here a little bit late. Two years ago I was here listening to the discussion about Toll Brothers and Cedarcrest. I have yet to hear any updates from anybody as to what the state's plans are for that area. It would be nice to get everybody together that is involved in this. The Housing Authority, I know that they are not a town department, Economic Development, Conservation. I know that you guys are probably going to talk, but sitting listening to all the different discussions, what may be the Town Council's vision isn't TPZ's vision, isn't Economic Development's vision, and quite honestly may not be the resident's vision either. I appreciate you bringing this up to the public. I wish it had been broadcast, but I'm not going to say anything because I know that they need volunteers and I'm not up to volunteering for that, but I do appreciate the time that you take.

Chairman Sobieski: Thank you Rose. Anyone else?

**V. ADJOURN**

Commissioner Camillo moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Woods. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis,  
Recording Secretary