

NEWINGTON TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

Special Meeting

November 25, 2019

Chairman Stanley Sobieski called the special meeting of the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 6:20 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 Fox
Chairman Stanley Sobieski
Commissioner Stephen Woods
Commissioner Hyman Braverman-A (6:40)

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Anthony Claffey
Commissioner Domenic Pane
Commissioner Robert Serra
Commissioner John Bottalico-A
Commissioner Giangrave-A

Staff Present

Craig Minor, Town Planner

Commissioner Woods: Mr. Chairman, for the record it probably should be noted that we do not have a quorum but there is no action that is to be taken, we are just going to have a presentation on the Plan of Development.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation by Glenn Chalder, AICP and Discussion of "Briefing Booklets" No. 12 through 18 on the following topics: Community Facilities (No. 12) Vehicular Transportation (No. 13); Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Transportation (No. 14); Utility Infrastructure (No. 15) and Implementation (No. 16.)

Glenn Chalder: Thank you very much. Tonight is an opportunity to continue our discussion of different topics in the Plan of Conservation and update. In prior months we talked about Conservation related issues and we wanted to protect and preserve Newington and last month we talked about development issues, how we would change, and tonight's meeting includes infrastructures strategies, infrastructures in the plan are services and facilities that the towns wants or needs to support its overall conservation and development goals, quality of life, etc., and also there is a booklet for discussion tonight on implementation. So the booklets tonight with regard to infrastructures, the latest strategies includes community facilities; Vehicular Transportation, Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit transportation; and also Utility Infrastructure.

Edmund O. Braverman
Town Clerk

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The first one I would like to start with is Booklet 12 which is the one on Community Facilities and the goal statement overall; continue to provide and maintain community facilities to meet local needs. We did an overall analysis of community facilities, on page 2 we sort of summarized what our findings were and the items and issues which were likely to require attention over the next ten to twenty years includes the overall concept of building maintenance and maintaining facilities so they don't depreciate over time. Library, additional investment in recreation facilities, and then the future expansion of existing community facility sites. If land was to become available adjacent to existing facilities, it's much more cost effective to buy that land and preserve it, in the event that you might want to expand that facility in the future. If you wait until we need to expand the facility, and then look for land, we are probably sunk. The issues that are perhaps important for the community to monitor over the next ten to twenty years include school and education. Our school system is undergoing changes and also with the demographics, there are changes going on in the community. Since schools are major community facilities, major fiscal impact on communities, monitoring those is important in understanding what will impact us in the future.

Public works in terms of capacity of the current facilities to meet our long term needs, public works situations may change in the future.

The Fire Department in Newington has a stellar volunteer fire department. It is becoming harder and harder for municipalities to maintain volunteer departments, so I think this is an issue for the community to be cognizant of, is what happens if we are unable to sustain that in the future. We don't want that to happen, so we want to support the fire department in any way that we can. At the same time, we need to expand and improve fire stations, so the question is, what is our long term approach going to be? If we have a paid department, we might have fewer stations which are bigger and accommodate more equipment rather than custom purchasing equipment for individual fire stations that we have, so it's just something to be thinking about over a longer period of time.

Your police station is cramped, but we're hoping that they get some relief here as the community center project continues.

The map on page 3 shows the community facilities in town and then the strategies, which on page 4 identify policies. These are strategies which are likely to continue over time, and likely to never be crossed off to ever be considered implemented, and then lower on the page, the red text are action steps for specific tasks which could be crossed off and marked as implemented. The action steps, which I think are kind of important to discuss here quickly is an infrastructure study committee to look at community facility needs town wide. Which ones are more immanent than others and how we sequence these in the future. Community facilities as we learned here with the town hall cost money, so making sure that we plan these out and tend to those situations can be very cost efficient for the town. I do think the library is a community facility need which has been recognized for some time and currently there are a lot of other things going on, but that is something that should be addressed in the future.

Park and Recreation master plan, again the facilities, some of the pools are getting to be in rough shape and harder and harder to maintain, but I think understanding those community facilities, park and recreation needs, in the context of all the community facilities and what their needs are is something that Newington may want to consider.

Then the fourth one is undertaking a study of fire facilities with a view to long term flexibility, here again, whether it is equipment or staffing what is going to happen, just to try to anticipate how those things may unfold.

So I think some of these are bigger ticket items, in terms of their implementations, and actually of their cost. I think Newington has a good array of community facilities, there are some issues in terms of maintenance and other things like that, but I think if we were to attack these strategies we would be in good shape for the future.

Any questions or comments from the Commissioners?

Commissioner Woods: Do we just look at the globally, I like some of what you have done, but I think, I think our recommendation really should be, and I agree with a lot of the stuff that you have said, and I think there is some stuff that you didn't touch on that probably needs to be, but I would like to see the recommendation come in that a long term capitol improvement item gets put into place with dates. I think it is really important for the community have that, and again, just like the roads, like road, A,B,C,D are on the list, for this year, but they might get skipped because there are not as bad as they thought they were, and they jump down to G, and that is knocked off the list, but I think we ought to have that, at least as a growth items.

Glenn Chalder: I have seen some other communities that have very effectively planned out for debt retirement versus their capitol expenses over time, and figure out where the windows can be that they can slot projects in, so we don't end up with wild fluctuations of bonding or capitol spending.

Commissioner Woods: Okay, thank you.

Glenn Chalder: Booklet 13 is related to vehicular transportation with the overall goal to provide for safe and efficient vehicular transportation to meet community needs. Everybody pretty much gets around on the roadway system, so we need to make sure that it is configured to meet the needs of communities of the future, and I think there are some towns, some issues that we have in this regard, part of it is because of Newington's regional location. We get buffered, impacted from traffic from Hartford, New Britain, Wethersfield, Berlin, people are coming through Newington all sort of different ways, and so we play a much more regional role in the road system than other communities. As a result of our location, the roadway system that we have here, we think the issues that have been identified for future consideration partly relate again to the concept of capitol funding and pavement maintenance. The road deteriorates over time, it's kind of like a S shaped curve, and if you get to the point where you say, oh, the road's fine, the road's fine, the road's fine, then the road is not fine but you are not able to fund it, it's going down hill quickly and getting much more expensive almost as days go by. So the issue can be, a small investment up front, whether it is, as we were talking about earlier, cracked sealing or chipped sealing can actually save you quite a bit of money later. So the issue would be to understand that process to try to stay on top of it. We do that today in the sense that public works does it kind of by seat of the pants, and looks and says, we can skip that road for a year, but what is going to happen is that the seat of the pants situation works fine until you get to a point where the system starts to (inaudible) so a management system is helpful in the sense that you make the call, if we don't fund roads, this year, our pavement management score is going to go down by two points or three points and maybe you are at the point on the curve where is doesn't really matter and say, okay, that's a risk we will take, but in going so, you have gone past the flex point and it's almost like you can't catch back up. It gets very expensive. Again I think the issue is related to capitol spending and all I'm saying is, if you were to have a municipal balance sheet, now accounting for municipalities is basically on a cash basis, but if you looked at the assets, the community facilities buildings are worth quite a bit of money, but if you actually future it out on per foot of road, it could be our biggest asset in the municipality and we treat it almost as a throw away product. So I think the issue here is, at least in the

plan, we can't spend the money, but at least be aware of what these choices are going to result in, because there may be a situation in the future where it's going to be fairly dramatic.

I think in addition to that, there are some changes on the map on page 3, on the road classification system, and I'm going to ask you to go back and look at this and talk to Gary and others about the road classification system. The region has a road classification framework which they use for state and federal funding. That is great for us, we should try to get as many roads as high up on that schedule as we can. On the other hand, on a local level, they are only looking at roads in the regional functions, we need to think about how these roads function at the local level, so what I have tried to do here is compare this to the maps that are in the prior plan and say, okay, now in 2019 and 2020 the roads are probably functioning in this way, and there have been some changes, so we would like to get others to look at this and say, yes, that's a regional categorization of (inaudible) The strategy is continue to manage the road system as effectively as we can. Action step number one is re-establish the pavement management system in order to systematically track pavement conditions over time. Number two is just a kind of a regulatory comment, access management provisions are in your regulations right now, with a site plan submission requirement rather than an actual regulation so somebody could submit a statement with two words, access management, and that is actually not what you want. You want to have standards to reflect that, so.....

Complete installation of a roundabout at Fenn Road/Ella Grasso Boulevard; undertake intersections improvement on Cedar Street at the location of the proposed train station and that is in close proximity to Maple Hill and Alumni which was high lighted in the last plan, so that is going to require a little bit of thought as to how that works;

Number five is again a growing issue, to seek funding to renovate bridges is not what it has been in the past. This is becoming a bigger issue, it has more local impact. Those are your key recommendations.

Chairman Sobieski: Two things, number one, the roundabout is obviously under the control of the Department of Transportation, has nothing to do with the town at all.

Glenn Chalder: Yes, thank you.

Chairman Sobieski: The second thing, I'm looking at your map here, Alumni Road is not open all of the way. That will never be opened unless the Alumni/Maple Hill Avenue area is either realigned or more signals put in, which would then give you a big time backup.

Glenn Chalder: The challenge that I had was how to characterize this in the plan, I do think with the growth of traffic on Cedar Street, and particularly the train station, there are going to be greater interest in alternate routes.

Chairman Sobieski: It could be, that was a safety issue that the STC at that time required, that either the signals or the street alignment get done or it won't be open. It would be open for emergency uses and stuff like that. The other thing I'm kind of interested in here is, when I look at 176 I see it all the way down to Stoddard Avenue. That is the classification for minor arterial yet you took it straight down into West Hartford, going straight ahead over local roads. Why not take it down into Hartford Avenue where the state maintenance ends. I'm just asking a question.

Glenn Chalder: That is a good point.

Chairman Sobieski: Last question, did you look at the DOT's classification for towns in this area?

Glenn Chalder: I did look at the regional classifications, but again, I thought that was for state regional circulation purposes and didn't really reflect necessarily what was happening at the local level which is why I decided to go with this.

Chairman Sobieski: One of the things that I used to do when new roads came into the system and we looked at them, is to determine what class they would be in. You might want to, just check it out, you know, I think the ADT volumes are higher going down Hartford Avenue to Stoddard than they are going straight ahead.

Glenn Chalder: Okay, I will take a look at that. What I suggest we do here also, on this map we have this white space on the bottom, in the corner of the page. What I would like to do is put the regional road classification, state and regional class there so now we have a visual comparison between the two.

Chairman Sobieski: You may be able to get that map from Planning.
Thank you.

Commissioner Woods: Newington is somewhat unique with its road systems because every major artery is state owned and out of our control as far as redesign and use. I guess we have a little to say about Cedar, but we really don't to have any say about what they feel needs to be done. Some of that I agree with, I think some of it, we probably as a community could work a little harder, as an example, 291 didn't go through, Cedar Street became 291 and I think Cedar Street takes about 40,000 cars per day which is insane. Maybe if we had put up a fight twenty-five years ago and said, no, we aren't going to have four lanes, obviously going west it doesn't matter because you get to 9, but going east, you don't see four lanes going through Wethersfield do we? Traffic is a problem, but no where near to the degree that we have. I think somehow we need to recognize that for an overall plan, that all of our major arteries are state owned and state controlled, including Fenn Road where this new roundabout is in discussion mode. To the best of my knowledge it doesn't exist as a project. That it is in the planning stages, and it is at least five years away.

The other thing is pavement. I think our highway department does an excellent job and even if I misunderstood what you were saying I think we give them all the work that they can possibly do. Are you saying even with that, we aren't keeping up? Is that what I am hearing, or.....

Glenn Chalder: The concern that is being expressed is our ability to keep up. The funding is not one hundred percent of what our need is. It's eighty or ninety percent or less. They are doing the best job that they can with the resources they have, but I think all of us are responsible, they are public servants. They want to excel at their job, and the issue is, they are concerned about what happens if we tip over this point.

Commissioner Woods: Craig, can you visit that, because I know three or four years ago we were actually able to put more money into roads and the highway department said, they appreciated it, but they couldn't do it. They were maxed out. What they could do with the funds that were given them, so we gave them more funds, they had money but.....

Glenn Chalder: That is really a different issue. Part of the problem is staffing in public works. They weren't waving the surrender flag, we said we will give you more money to do the roads, and they said, look, unless you give us more people, we can't do more, so don't

bother. That actually related corollary issues so I think getting to the bottom of this is important for the town longer term, but the important thing is that the road system could be continuing to deteriorate, and we don't see it because it takes a long time, but once it goes, it goes quickly.

Commissioner Woods: Again, I don't agree. I think the issue is that, and the town is very good with what they do with the highway department, they want to do some of the reconstruction, and that is where I think are the problems. They don't want to sub it out, so they can only do so much. We're not going to grow the department because we are not in the business of building roads, so there is an ancillary business to the highway department. They do a fantastic job, and I think what they are afraid of is that if we start subbing it all out, they will lose all of it, and they won't get to build any roads. I guess it ties back in, but a little bit different political machine.

Glenn Chalder: Understood, and I think that my observation for the community, etc, is not to be telling people how to do their job, my advice really overall would be that we have a pavement management system where we have sort of an impartial data base that said, we are holding steady, our roads are getting better, or roads are getting worse, no matter how much money we are throwing at them, they are still falling behind. That is information right now that we do not have. We're doing it by the seat of the pants, rather than a more data base driven. That would be my number one recommendation to the town is, how many people in public works, whether they sub it out, I appreciate their expertise, the issue is, as management, we don't really have a sense of the road conditions, so if it bites us in the rear end later it will be unfortunate.

Commissioner Woods: I understood that we did have a good handle on the roads, you are getting information that I

Glenn Chalder: I think this is the value of putting a plan together because now we are going to start this discussion, I think one of the next steps that I am going to recommend to the Commission is that we share these booklets and a draft plan more widely and we get input and if public works says, Glenn you didn't understand what we were telling you, we need to fix it, I'm all over that.

Commissioner Woods: Okay.

Chairman Sobieski: I've seen them reconstruct road in town, they do a very good job. They actually mill it down to the sub-pavement. The problem is most of these road are on clay, they are not on a good base. But again, what this town has done, and I have visited all 169 towns when I was working, and the issue is this town is going a great job with the resources that they have. They had, I think it was (inaudible) this year that came in and did the paving. They had the paving box and they had the rollers and trucks, and they are doing a good job. Again, you also have to look at the road volume of traffic that you have, for instance on Deepwood or Dalewood or Dogwood, there is no where near what you are getting on Camp Avenue, Stoddard Avenue because those are through roads. Those would require a little more attention. I think the pavement surface rating that you are talking about the PSR, there was a program out there I think the state invested in and actually asked the towns if they wanted to use it, and also I think CCROG asked the towns, I don't know if they took them up on that or not.

Glenn Chalder: Let's go on to Booklet 14; provide for safe and efficient pedestrian, bicycle and transit systems to meet community needs. Newington is very fortunate to have about fifty-four miles of sidewalks in the community, so that is a pretty impressive number.

If we walked it would take us quite a while to get through the entire system. The interesting thing is that there are gaps in the existing system. So what we have is the situation that the system is not perhaps as complete as we might want it or like it to be. The map on page 3 shows in black the current sidewalks in the community, both public and private property for example. In red, it shows some areas where there could be gaps that could be filled and I realize now seeing this we could have done a better job of coloring these in, but the public works engineering was working with IT showing where the schools are and other types of pedestrian drivers in the community. I think it is an opportunity for us as the plan suggests and recommends to continue to move in that direction.

On the top of page two there is also a discussion of what is called "complete streets" Complete streets is a phrase that has been thrown around a lot these days, but essentially it is a way of thinking where it is considered to be a place for cars, so anything else on the road right of way was an intrusion or imposition. So the concept of complete streets is, you know what, the right of way is wide enough to do a lot of stuff in, not just vehicles, and so we could accommodate transit, bicycles and pedestrians and other things like that, and complete streets is really a philosophy to try to approach the use of the right of way in that way. Newington has been moving in that direction and looking at Maple Hill and Robbins Avenue, they are complete streets initiatives and many cities around the state have adopted a policy, and the policy is not anything that is super committed, but it says, when undertaking road improvements, we will consider the need for other uses. So that would be sort of the direction that the community might want to consider.

I think bicycle use in the community is a bit of a challenge because our major roads, our roads which carry quite a bit of traffic, the paved surface has been consumed by travel lanes, cars are moving at a pretty good clip, so you can see in the very bottom right corner of the page 3 of the map that most of the state highways are considered less suitable for bicycle use simply because of the speed, or the width of the shoulder is not really great for bicycle usage. So I think it is something that we can aspire to do a better job of, in the future, but it is what it is.

Transit services, we have the commuter rail system, the train station that is being proposed. The Commission adopted the transit village regulations. We have the bus way, we have the bus routes throughout the community which provide service north, south, east and west and we also have dial-a-ride services for people, so Newington is actually blessed with a pretty good transit system overall.

On page 4 are the policies and strategies and the action steps are review the zoning regulations and subdivision regulations to ensure sidewalk installation is required as part of new development (or redevelopment.) As I went through the regulations I thought there were some gaps in that. I just felt it made sense to keep it consistent, and a requirement community wide. The engineering department has prepared a map which identifies grass and sidewalk network and I think developing a priority system to address those and fund those, to what is the highest priority? Connections, where could it be and how can we move in that direction without developing a complete town wide street policy and then the other issue is that we are in this funny position in regards to the busway. Parking is clearly at a premium at the busway station. To (inaudible) parking for a transit system is really a little weird. It could be a temporary thing where people actually need parking to be able to get used to using transit and then eventually over time it will start to make changes, but right now we have a shortage of transit so we almost cut off our supply of users, so working with DOT to see if we can figure something out as an interim solution or something for parking at the stations. Again, I think Newington is blessed with an excellent transit framework and how we can take advantage of that train station, bus station, bus route, so those are the recommendations in Booklet 14.

Questions from the Commissioners?

Newington TPZ Commission
Special Meeting

November 25, 2019
Page 8

Commissioner Woods: This one is a little more difficult. I believe that we need it, with 54 miles of sidewalk which I guess is fantastic in that aspect, but unfortunately the Town of Newington has always seen the sidewalks as the town's responsibility for maintaining them, installing them and repairing them, and of course do a very poor job assuming I think that we have \$25,000, we don't spend a lot of money compared to 54 miles of sidewalk, you can't even begin to keep up with essential repairs, never mind maintenance. I think that we now have a bike/ walking path along the bus route and we need to find ways to tie that in so that there is further access east and west, north and south. We have those areas, so we have to do it, and we have to maintain it. Public transportation and suburbia, those two words don't bring everybody together, but they are going to. This is all brand new for us, so if you are going to get, there are two bus stops on a mass transit system that can get you just about anywhere in the world from a starting point. We just need to learn how to use them, and I think it's going to take some time and I guess talking to the planners at DOT, they knew, the average person, if you live in Newington, you are not going to get on that bus and go to Hartford because you can drive there faster. It takes longer to drive to the bus station than it does to drive to Hartford, so they get that, but again, I think with some additional housing that is springing up all around these stations is a good use of it, and again, affordable housing so that working families can stay in our town, but I think we are going to redesign what public transportation is over the next twenty, twenty-five years. It has to be totally different. Thousands of people are within steps of getting onto mass transit, but we can make it a little bit better where maybe we can get ten or fifteen percent of the people who commute to Hartford to commute on a bus or a train.

Commissioner Braverman: Can I add to what you have been saying? I've been reading some articles on transportation infrastructure as well. Where little shuttle busses will be rented, like Uber, with any of those categories, and they will just travel between bus stops and they will make their route from Main Street all the way to a bus stop and so on, for whatever fee there is. That technology and that process is in the works already.

Commissioner Woods: Boston is using that now.

Commissioner Braverman: Yes.

Glenn Chalder: Windsor Locks is investigating an autonomous vehicle that will take you from the train station to the airport, so the issue is, you just call it, or tell it you are on the train and it will be there for you, and you are saying to yourself, that's crazy, we don't have autonomous vehicles in Connecticut but they are working on it. California has it.

Chairman Sobieski: They have been using it in California, you call it up, it takes you to where you are going and brings you back.

Glenn Chalder: What is crazy about this is that our concept always, in transportation, always gets caught up with parking. Because if you are not using your car, you have to park it somewhere. An article in the Wall Street Journal some years ago said that for every car in America there are seven parking spaces, which is crazy. How many times do you drive by some of the stores on the Berlin Turnpike and there is nobody there. You have a space, it's just waiting for you. I think the issue could be, with autonomous vehicles I think parking lots may no longer be necessary and could be converted to open space or do something else with it, or parks, or other stuff. So, we are at the cusp of the transition here, and how it plays out.....

Commissioner Woods: So could we just star this as an important piece that really needs to be looked at over the next ten years. Incorporating new ways of doing it.

Glenn Chalder: I think these future possibilities should be explored, and considered because I also think that things like pedestrian bicycle, we talked in our open space discussion about the possibility of getting started on a pathway someplace, that will be visible to people and help you get started

Commissioner Woods: Wethersfield is doing that right now. Western Boulevard, now they are connecting A to B to C to D, you can actually move through it.

Commissioner Braverman: Can I just add, you may want to include the term scooters as well because they are single drive vehicles, single drive, some of them could be motorized, and they are, you pay for the use. Take them one place, drop them off at another.

Chairman Sobieski: Like the green bikes in Hartford.

Commissioner Woods: They have them now, Salt Lake City has the scooters, and actually there is no docking station, you just drop it. You zip it with your phone and you leave it where ever you leave it. I guess they come around at night and pick them up, I don't know.

Craig Minor: That might be coming to Newington, we may be in a test project that CCROG is organizing for students.

Commissioner Woods: They used it in (inaudible) two years ago for bicycles and it was a huge failure because there was no docking station and these bikes were every place you could possibly think of. So ended the bicycles and they are moving to the scooters now.

Glenn Chalder: Any other questions?

Booklet 15 is utility infrastructure, deals with drainage, etc., Newington is part of the MDC system so that we have the good water supply, and good watering structure in the community. The same thing goes with our sewer infrastructure, there is capacity, etc., The state statutes require that after I think it was 2015 that a Plan of Conservation and Development has to identify areas of existing sewer systems, areas where sewer systems are planned, and areas where sewers are to be avoided because of the capacity of the MDC system. As is basically stated on page two of this booklet given the sewer capacity available all areas of Newington are considered potential sewer service areas in the future and no areas are identified as sewer avoidance areas.

There would be areas that we would not extend sewers to, but we might by-pass that in other parts of the community, if you had a public policy change if you will, but it would be in Newington's best interest to consider that.

Storm drainage again is an important issue and as indicated, tight soils and the other challenges that we have with storm events becoming more frequent and severe so as a result we have tight soils and more intense rain storms and this is going to continue to cause problems throughout, so Newington in the last ten years has adopted the LID approach which can sort of take the edge off of that, but it doesn't solve all of the problems. It's really good for the first inch of rainfall but you could have a pretty massive storm in Newington because it is flat, because of the soil types, and it could be heavily impacted, so it is just an issue that may increase resident dissatisfaction in the future, because why isn't the town doing something, why aren't "they" doing something about this, and it's a big issue that is going to affect a certain area.

Electricity and wire communications, we're in pretty good shape with. Like most communities in Connecticut we can get ahead of the internet capacity and speed, it would serve us well. There have been efforts in that regard. We have a pretty good wireless coverage already. The siting council does offer a service to a municipality is that they will prepare maps for the town to show you the extent of coverage for both cellular and PCS service. My sense is that we are well covered all around, but if you wanted to this, it is a free request. We could ask for that date. Would you like that?

Craig Minor: Yes, I wasn't aware of that. I would like that.

Glenn Chalder: In terms of the strategies and policies and action steps, I think again we are on top of many of these issues, and we can't affect rainfall so we are going to have to deal with it as best we can. The action steps that I thought were important to lay out for your consideration was that we have a storm drain analysis that was done in 2010 which really wasn't that long ago, on the other hand, the evidence and assumptions that went into that report we are starting to sense are changing and now we have LID and it may make sense some time in the next ten years to undertake and update that study to make sure we understand that if we are going to have to address storm drainage issues in the community which areas are in fact the most important.

Commissioner Woods: I still think we have to address along the rail corridor, although we haven't had a flooding issue because we haven't had the rains, it's kind of hard to believe because we had a wettest year this year on record, but the whole area, Stamm Road, that didn't flood, but the water can get to two feet down there. That's a mess. It needs to be looked at. The Army Corps of Engineers has done some work which has been beneficial, completed it a year and a half ago, they moved things back, but it really has to work in conjunction with Amtrack.

Glenn Chalder: You remember the last plan, there were discussions along Piper Brook, there were efforts along Piper Brook to try to address the drainage impediments in there. Sometimes that involved trying to coordinate property owners because they were going to have to clear some vegetation to open up the capacity of the channel. There was some disagreement as to whether that was really necessary.

Chairman Sobieski: There's a big difference now.

Glenn Chalder: I thought that there would be so again, I think that this issue, having a study done so that we can identify and make sure we are on top of this.

Chairman Sobieski: Because it's not a problem until it is a problem, right? Because if there is no water, who cares? But once that water is in your building or your home, it's a big issue.

Glenn Chalder: Most residents don't appreciate the changing of the intensity of the storms so they say, yeah, we had big rain storms in the past, but they could measure and what used to be a fifty year storm has now become a twenty-five year storm.

Commissioner Woods: I also don't know about MDC, what work is going on now with the clean water act. They are taking less water into the sewers, they are separating it so that has to be helping us to a certain degree.

Glenn Chalder: I think that the separation of the sewer, the storm water, again the issue that we have the flatness.

Commissioner Woods: It was designed to make the sewer system work efficiently.

Glenn Chalder: Booklet 16 is actually implementation and really the planning process and laying out policies and actions that are helpful to the community, but the action steps really never get into the planning process.

Booklet 16 is really about conservation and development, most of the booklets have been four pagers, this is an eight pager. It talks about the concept of implementation on pages 2 and 3, it talks about some implementation goals and this could fall within the Commission's bailiwick in terms of deciding how to go ahead to establish a formal POCD process. Establish a committee which is not just members of Planning and Zoning and also other boards and commissions to work together to figure out how we can move these recommendations and strategies forward because they do involve coordination. It's not just this Commission that has to address some of these things. It recommends using the implementation tables in the Plan and as we continue to work on the Plan my suggestion is that we identify strategies and perhaps give them priorities, this is a top priority or a B level priority, and also identify who are the leaders and partners. So if we are talking about doing something, it could be that the Fire Department is the leader and somebody else is the partner with them. This designation of who is supposed to be the leader on this means that if something doesn't happen, people will know who to talk to about that. Most committees in town don't want to not do what they are supposed to do, so the fact that they are being identified as being responsible for something helps.

On page 3, Maintain the Plan of Conservation and Development. One of my regrets as a consultant, and it may sound funny, but a plan gets done once every ten years and in fact, Planning is an on-going activity. The Commission could, one night a year, have a plan review session and you could invite public comment in and get people to give you feedback and talk about possible changes to any of these booklets, agree on a short list, adopt the changes, and you have another ten year use on your plan. If you wait ten years to do it, things are starting to tail off, etc., and then it's a big deal.

Commissioner Woods: Interesting concept.

Glenn Chalder: It works very effectively in communities and the issues are always, remember in New York City, Ed Koch, he always went around the said to people, how am I doing, how am I doing? I think the plan should be the same way. How are we doing? Keep it up to date as new issues come up.

Commissioner Braverman: To add to what you were saying about every year have a planning session or at least review, you need to be able to back up and say, what have we accomplished up to that point. Say, what are the positives, what are the negatives, for what have we done right? I think that part of, we just can't go to another meeting and say, here, we'll review what we did because you need to be able to have additional information and data that supports the next phase.

Glenn Chalder: I think the reason that in the booklets we tried to break out policies from action steps. Policies are on-going statements that you can never really say to somebody, we've finished this. The red text is red so it will jump off the page at you and they you can cross those off and say, last year we crossed off seventeen different action steps. We did those. People will know that the plan means something so that they can get something from your red action steps that could be done within a year or two. You again create a culture of compliance. There are some suggestions in here about updating the land use regulations and also implementing the plan through the budget. Some of these issues will require some budgetary decisions.

It then gets into pages 4 through 7 which talks about this concept of capitol planning and projects. There is a section in the statutes, Section 8-24, which basically gives the Planning Commission the authority to review municipal improvement expenses. They receive a referral from the Council, they indicate acceptance of the Plan and send the referral back. That is because the Planning Commission has a responsibility and involvement in long term capitol planning for municipalities. I think advocating in the plan, not for a capitol budget, but a capitol plan. West Hartford I understand has a capitol plan for five to ten years. They get issues on there right now for 2029, so if a move is coming up, they are going to know about it for ten years, they may advance or push it back, but just is a better situation where you are honest with yourselves about these things rather than, let's not touch that, let's put that down. The information that is in here is meant to talk about the value of multi-year financial plan, some of the lives, if that is what you want to call them, whether it is pavement for parking, so again, advocating for your financial plan have some benefits.

On page seven is a rating system which looks at certain policy goals that we have in our community related to health, safety and welfare, or some sort of legal mandates, or operational necessity or community demand, or strategic goals, and they weighed these, so when a project comes down the pike, if something scores extremely well as the highest ones in here were health, safety and welfare and regulatory matters, let's get those out of the way. So, if it's required and it benefits health, safety and welfare, it's probably going to get funded sooner than something that is lower on the list. That can help accomplish the planning goals of a community, not just the goals for P & Z, but the goals for the community as well. So again, it's sort of a recommendation in the plan which is I think something the Commission could incorporate.

One page 8, the action steps, number one is establish a plan implementation process, number two is to update the Zoning Regs and Map and implement some of the policies and action steps in the POCD, subdivision regs as well, not as important because there aren't many subdivisions going on these days, but having the regulations reflect the recommendations would be important.

Now one of the things that the Commission has talked about in an earlier meeting was give new members of key town boards and commissions a copy of the POCD once they are seated so that they are familiar with the issues. Thoughts or questions?

Chairman Sobieski: Any questions from the Commissioners?

Commissioner Woods: I think a job very well done. Thank you.

Chairman Sobieski: I'll open it up to the general public. Any questions on what we just covered?

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (Briefing Booklets No 8 through 11)

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: I don't really have any questions, but sitting here listening to what was said, it all sounds good, sounded good ten years ago in which case there was a joint committee for community safety and had a subcommittee for walkable Newington. Those recommendations from there and other things from the committee went to the Town Council. As far as I know, nothing has been done. We're talking about bike lanes on Garfield Street, I'm hoping that all of these things come to fruition, the talk about drainage, and I think that former Mayor Woods can testify to the fact that the parking lot, the money that was spent on the parking lot, the drainage issues, what is being done now to maintain that area? The \$25,000 or whatever comes out of CIP that's not very much. Same way with Piper Brook and Mill Brook. DEEP as far as I know has been trying to work out an agreement with the town of Newington; the MDC project, I'm familiar with that because I actually back up to State property and town property and MDC has put their plans on hold. I'm hoping that all these

people in all of these files or tracks, or what ever the trending word is now these days, come together and come up with a master plan. What TPZ may see as being a vision may not be Conservation's vision, and may not be the Town Council's vision. I just showed Glenn before the meeting Mayor Wright's vision for the center of town. It was great ten years ago and here we are in 2019 and Local Market has come and gone, Keeney Manufacturing, whatever it is right now is coming and going, big people have to get together. The Community has to get together and be part of this too and the idea of coming together once a year and discussing what was planned, how far it has come along, what can we do to make it better, I think it's a great idea. Unfortunately people don't come to the meetings. It's not being televised and I really think that the information has to get out to the public, not at the last second when the 2030 Plan is being voted on, but prior to that. Thank you.

Barbara Skillacote, 275 Field Street: I just want to know if this plan is available to us so we can take a look at it? Is this available to the public?

Craig Minor: Yes. The booklets that Mr. Chalder has presented over the last few months, yes, they are on the town web site. You can go to the Town Planner website, you can follow the links to the booklets. Now the ones that we discussed tonight will be up tomorrow, well tomorrow I should say, but the twelve that he talked about previously they have been on the web site for the past couple of weeks.

Barbara Skillacote: Okay, so if I go to the website I would be able to find it.

Craig Minor: Yes, the booklets that Mr. Chalder had been presenting as well as the old Plan that is about to expire, that is on the town web site also. On the Town Planner web page.

Commissioner Woods: You won't find the 2030 Plan because it is a work in progress so all you are going to find are booklets one through sixteen. There is no 2030 Plan yet. This is just a draft of that plan. You will find the 2020 Plan, that is on there. The 2030 doesn't exist yet, we're working on it.

Barbara Skillacote: There is no way of getting the draft copy?

Chairman Sobieski: Booklets one through sixteen, that is the draft copy.

Barbara Skillacote: Okay, well, that I can find out there, thank you.

Glenn Chalder: That was a great segway, I thank you very much. I think the next step with the Commission's blessing, normally the meetings are on the second, the meeting in December would be right around Christmas...so could we have a different meeting in December?

Craig Minor: You have been coming to the second meeting of the month, and there is no second meeting of the month in December so if you were to come at all, it would be the first one on the 11th, but I think you would rather not.

Glenn Chalder: What I would like to do, with the Commission's blessing is to take these booklets, incorporate the comments and suggestions that we have had, and compile them into what could be a first draft of the 2030 Plan. Then get that back to the Commission. Craig and I had been talking through possible scheduling options here, I had thought I had brought that with me tonight, I did not, so we have suggested some possible dates, but I will share that information back with Craig and get it back to you. There are two options for us going forward. One of which is that we have a meeting in January with the Commission to

look at the first draft of the plan and then the goal after that would be to schedule a public informational meeting, like we publicized the meeting in August to get people to hopefully show up and get the plan out there weeks in advance and get the comments. The other option would be, if the Commission didn't want to do that, the other option if the Commission was comfortable, is actually schedule that for the end of January.

Craig Minor: I was listening and just want to get this straight, the first option was to prepare a draft plan, make it available to the Commission some time before the January meeting so at that January meeting the Commissioners had looked at it and discussed it with you, and the second option was what?

Glenn Chalder: The second option just for the sake of discussion, say January 24th say that is when we get together and talk about the plan and then schedule a public meeting.

Craig Minor; But there is no draft in that second meeting.

Glenn Chalder: The two options that are available to the Commission are the next time that we get together is just a work session like this and we will talk about the draft plan. Or the next time we get together is actually a public meeting where the public is going to dominate an overview of the draft plan.

Commissioner Woods: I think we need to review it first. Then have a public meeting when we have a draft that we have kind of agreed to.

Glenn Chalder: Yes, so I will work with Craig on this schedule. The State does have target dates now for our plan not to be older than ten years. Craig and I worked out a schedule moving forward, along with your meeting schedule and I will get that to you so we have a plan as to how this will move forward.
That is all I have Mr. Chairman, have a Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

Commissioners: Same to you. Thank you.

V. ADJOURN

Commissioner Woods moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fox. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis,
Recording Secretary